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### Attila need not apply

I've been keeping tabs on the health of the various political parties in Pacifica longer than I'd care to remember. When I first arrived in town the Democratic party was close to 70 percent of the local registration. Republicans were somewhere in the low 20's. Those who declined to state their parties were a small group, almost forlorn.

A generation ago Democrats were at about 66 percent, Republicans at about 23 percent. When last I checked, December, 1995 Democrats were down to 59 percent. Should Republicans feel good? Not really. They too were down, to 22 percent.

Those so alienated from the mainstream parties they decline to state a preference are up to 14 percent. Six minor parties, ranging from the right wing American Independent party to the far left Peace and Freedom party pick up the remaining five percent. These include Green, Libertarian, Natural Law, and Reform. Five Pacificans seem to have created their own parties.

Those in the minor parties, added to those who decline to state, total 19 percent, only three points behind the Republican party. In Pacifica Republicans are only the largest minority. Even if you lump in American Independents, Libertarians, and the Reform party, those who might be listed as probably conservative total only 25 percent. How you should allot those who decline to state I have no idea. Undoubtedly some think of themselves as conservative, more as liberal, and quite a few don't know what they really are. Though I'm an active Democrat I appreciate the dilemma that causes so many Pacificans to throw up their hands and decline to claim a party. Now that we will be enjoying the concept of open primaries, thanks to the success of the recent initiative on the subject, I guess even more Democrats and Republicans will be leaving the main parties and either declining to state or joining the minor parties that have proliferated in recent years. If you can be an American Independent or a Green, and still vote for Democratic or Republican candidates, you might choose to do just that. It wasn't just the Democrat and Republican leaderships which were unhappy with the Open Primary idea. Leaders of the Pro-life movement dislike it because they feel it will weaken their cause.

I am that odd man out, a pro-life liberal Democrat. I catch flak from all sides. While I would have no problem voting in such a way as to cause maximum havoc to the mainstream Republican party, and I would expect equally underhanded voting by my friends in the Republican party if they thought it would disrupt Democratic plans, I think in the long run things will balance out and we will be spared future elections where the choice is between Attila the Hun and Barbara Boxer. Neither really represents the great central core of Californians, yet that was the choice we had when the delightful Ms. Boxer ran last time. I sincerely like Barbara as a person, but she needs to bring her views closer to the middle. Faced with an open primary, perhaps she will moderate her positions.