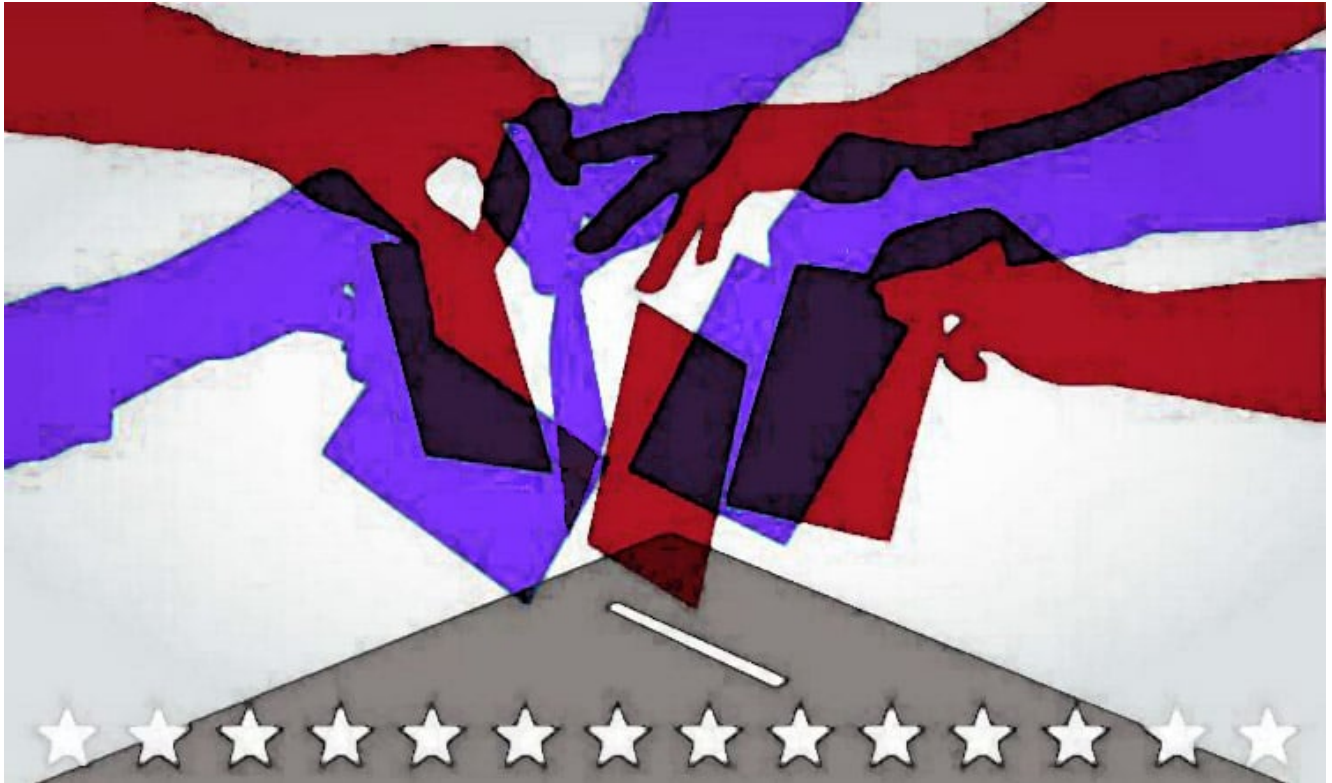


The Unity Party

A Tale of Politics in Vineland—a Fictional Place in the Near Future

by [Doug Hawley](#) (November 2024)



The Maroon Party had won the last presidential election. At their convention, they chose to run the sitting president Alan Jackson, and picked a platform which the delegates thought would finally put all their ideas in place, a significantly more extreme version of what their idol Bill Warren had proposed. All significant industries and companies would be nationalized and would be run by party appointees. As Jackson said “Why should we build more than three car models, and why should they change every year? It’s inefficient. We won’t need unions, because without the evil bosses, we’ll take good care of the workers.”

Maroon leaders also insisted that behavior and communications would have to be policed to insure acceptable and accurate things were said or written.

In another city at the same time, the Purple Party took a different tack while agreeing that speech and other communications needed to be monitored. Their candidate was a revered member of the core of the cult that had run the party for twenty years. Dan Himmler insisted when he was elected, only true Vineland people, whose ancestors had originated in certain parts of Europe were true citizens. The rest, which amounted to 52% of the population, would be closely watched and, if possible, deported or imprisoned. In order to reduce benefits, the party proposed higher taxes on the lower incomes, and cuts in Federal benefits.

Revered television reporter Jane Kramer took both to task after their conventions.

"In the last election, 51% of qualified people voted. Thirty-two percent claims to be Maroon and thirty percent are Purple. That means that the majority are unaligned. In my life time, the two major parties had minor disagreement, like \$15 or \$18 minimum wage. Nobody wanted to get rid of or harass a huge part of the population or destroy successful businesses. Both sides have gone crazy and are not looking out for the concerns or well being of regular Americans.

Karl Stevens, chief of staff for the first Purple governor of Willamette Province in twenty years was inspired and intrigued by Kramer's speech. He called up his boss Mark Landers late that night and said "Mark, you are going to be the next president."

Landers replied "Listen, you called just when I had started to put moves on Mary. Call me back tomorrow when you are sober, and I'm satisfied."

Stevens waited until the next day to call, but he sent the

transcript of Kramer's talk to Governor Landers that night. When he called he asked "Did you get the transcript?"

"OK Karl I see where you are going with this. The parties are broken and you think you can do something about it. Put out some feelers to the mass of people who are unhappy with the system."

Stevens had a contact at a major newspaper combine. His idea was a big hit. A week later the combine put out a survey: Jackson, Himmler, or Somebody Else." Result: Jackson 30%, Himmler 25%, Somebody Else 45%. That was enough for Stevens to whisper "Landers" in important ears. It helped a lot that Landers was not ideological; he worked for the businesses, workers, and all the people of Willamette.

Support for the old nativist cult of the Purple Party had been weakened over the many years since they had been in power. Most of the Purple Party was glad that Landers was a popular governor and was pro-business.

Many of the members of the Maroon Party did not sympathize with its leaders embracing hard socialism, and an anti-union stance.

Both of the legacy parties did their research to impugn Landers. They found nothing they could use. Landers had some Latin and Native American in his background. His wife was a beautiful black woman with two photogenic and charming children. The family background was completely clean with no scandals. Willamette was prospering, and Landers had a phenomenal 80% approval rating. Neither of the parties could think of a way to attack Landers without hurting the attackers.

The overwhelming endorsement of Stevens by the Governors Association ensured that Landers was taken seriously.

The election wasn't close.

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Doug Hawley is a former mathematician turned actuary (mathemortician) who writes, snowshoes, volunteers and hikes. He was a volunteer wheelchair jockey (pusher, roll model, unpaid escort) at a hospital, greeter at the Marine Mammal Center, “control” in a balance study at OHSU and docent at China Camp in California, and now is ... a volunteer book seller in support of his local library and a killer of invasive species at Tryon State Park and Lake Oswego’s Iron Mountain Park. He lives with editor and musician Sharon, and cat Kitzhaber. He currently resides in Lake Oswego, OR, but has lived all over the United States.

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