‘Thank Goodness its Almost Over’

Election cycles have always been trying, taxing, and generally painful but in the age of tribal politics and hyperpartisan behavior it downright stinks. The propaganda is so think that one wonders if any semblance of journalism will take hold again. The endless onslaught of campaign advertisements, many of which bend the truth in so many varied and imaginative ways, threaten the very sanity of the country. And, worst of all, is the sanctimonious prattle of frankly stupid people trying claim the moral high ground based on an amazing combination of ignorance and entitlement.

Thankfully it will all be over soon, at least the part where advocates and partisans campaign for the candidates. The part where people campaign against the newly elected will surely continue onwards for the foreseeable future.

Anyway, enough about the election. Now onto the columns.

[Aristotle To Digital](http://aristotle2digital.blogwyrm.com/) examines the very interesting and very disturbing notion that elections involving more than two candidates can be engineered so that any of them can win, regardless of public opinion, simply by the skillful choice of innocent-seeming rules for summarizing the votes cast. This theorem, called Arrow’s Impossibility Theorem, not only serves to sober one’s thinking about how statistical summaries can tell many stories but it also reminds us of the ambiguities surrounding the idea that we can ever hope to know just what is the will of the people.

This month’s [Common Cents](http://commoncents.blogwyrm.com/) presents some of the behavioral economics that lead to the very statistical tangles that are explored in the companion Aristole To Digital column. In particular, some of the most cherished myths many of us have about how government should work whither under the blistering analysis of how voters and politicians actually behave given their goals and the incentives under which they operate.

This month’s [Under The Hood](http://underthehood.blogwyrm.com/) journeys through the interplay between thermodynamics and fluid flow to arrive at one of the most important relations describing how one-dimensional compressible fluid flows can be made to produce supersonic flow in a converging-diverging nozzle. While not directly applicable to the current election cycle, we all may want to take advantage to rocket somewhere else the day after.

Enjoy!