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**The Mountain Democrat  
Newsletter Editor  
PO Box 760  
Oakhurst, CA 93644**



# **THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT**

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**April – May**

**2016**

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The Mountain Democrat is published bimonthly by the Oakhurst Democratic Club and the Mariposa Democratic Club, and is distributed to all current members of those clubs. For a membership application see the inside back cover of this newsletter.

### COMING EVENTS

#### April 2016

Apr. 2: Oakhurst Club Meeting  
8:30AM Denny's

Apr. 9: Mariposa Club Meeting  
9:00AM Miner's Inn

#### May 2016

May 7: Oakhurst Club Meeting  
8:30AM Denny's

May 14 Mariposa Club Meeting  
9:00AM Miner's Inn

For more information about our Democratic Clubs and Democratic happenings around the state and nation open your trusty web browser and visit our web pages at:

[YosemiteDems.net](http://YosemiteDems.net) or [MariposaDemocraticClub.org](http://MariposaDemocraticClub.org)

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## As I Told You Before

## Some Things

## Never Change!



## Both Sides Now

By Peter Cavanaugh

Politico scores him at one major new lie for every five minutes he speaks.

PolitiFact reports that more than three-quarters of his formal pronouncements are “*mostly or totally false.*”

FactCheck says he “*tramples the truth.*”

Donald Trump repeatedly lies about so many things at every turn, often contradicting himself several times in the same breath, that any attempt to discern lucidity in his rambling diatribes is doomed to failure. One might as well attempt to adequately describe the color of air.

The man is an utter fraud. The fact he is capturing such a loyal, fanatical following should bring deep pause and sleepless nights to all but the badly bewildered. Disregarding this danger is unpatriotic and un-American.

Things are coming to a head on both sides of the political spectrum.

Recognizing that Senator Bernie Sanders may be nearing the end of his long sought, valiantly fought, immeasurably impressive presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton could well make history as our first female President. If that’s so, why not double our pleasure and double our fun by choosing Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts as her running mate?

I was first introduced to Senator Warren in Michael Moore’s “*Capitalism: A Love Story.*” At the time, she was chair of a Congressional Oversight Panel created to oversee the U.S. banking bailout that involved hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars.

## Both Sides Now (continued)

A seemingly perfect choice to develop and oversee a new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Elizabeth Warren was named as a senior adviser to President Barack Obama on September 17, 2010, and then went on to earn her nickname “Sheriff of Wall Street”—ruffling more than a few feathers outside and inside the Obama Administration.

Five years ago while testifying before a congressional panel, Warren questioned the scope of state and federal investigations into alleged mortgage abuses and illegal foreclosures perpetrated by the nation’s largest mortgage companies, marking the very first time a senior White House official publicly broke ranks with the President over the issue.

She testified that government agencies might not have sufficiently investigated claims that banks such as JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Citigroup and Ally Financial illegally seized borrowers’ homes. Four days later, bowing to heavy political pressure, President Obama announced Warren was being passed over as his choice to become permanent director of the very organization she had created, instead choosing to nominate Warren’s second-in-command, thus caving in to those who decided Elizabeth Warren was being far too serious in her quest for meaningful banking regulations and reform.

Since she couldn’t beat the boys in the Senate, this former Harvard law professor decided to join them. Running for office against heavy odds and big money thrown against her, Senator Warren was elected to replace Scott Brown in November of 2012. Elizabeth Warren is now Senior Senator from Massachusetts—offering impeccable credentials—having consistently proven herself these last few years as an unwavering voice of progressive thought.

Both Sides Now (continued)

Senator Warren offers the Democratic ticket a perfect answer to those concerned about maintaining the allegiance and passion of youth this critical election cycle—without which victory cannot be assured.

Imagine.

Clinton/Warren in 2016.

*“It’s a Tennessee mountain point of view.  
If you’re gonna have one—might as well have two!”*

--*Miranda Lambert & The Pistol Annies* (2011)



## **Oakhurst Democratic Club Activities**

By Scott Hill

OOhh Boy...things got crazy during our first meetings of 2016!

First, on February 6<sup>th</sup> we heard from Madera County Auditor, Todd Miller, about "County Money: Where it Comes from and Where it Goes." That is not where things got crazy, although Todd did give us an excellent presentation, and skillfully handled the most pointed questions about County operations that our group could come up with.

But then on March 5<sup>th</sup> Officer Kaci Lutz, supposedly talking about "Cool New Things with the CHP," brought the house down several times as she did her most enthusiastic interpretation of a CHP Officer, in uniform, with sidearm, explaining to a motorist on Deadwood Mountain that "THE SPEED LIMIT REALLY IS 55 MILES PER HOUR!" Even Peter Cavanaugh, using his resonate vocalization at (near) full volume, could not restore order to the meeting. We finally gave up, laughed our way through the announcements and vacated the room.

Coming up on April 2<sup>nd</sup> Rhonda Salisbury, Chief Executive Officer of the Yosemite Sierra Visitor's Bureau in Oakhurst, will probably not be able to cause as much ruckus as Officer Lutz did, but she will be talking about a subject that is important to our community. Her presentation will be entitled: "The Yosemite Sierra Visitors' Bureau: Offering an Exciting Future with Latest Updates from a Brand New Location."

## Trump's One Good Idea

By Ben Leet

In 1999 Mr. Trump was running for president and broadcasting his ideas about the national debt. A November 1999 article begins: "Billionaire businessman Donald Trump has a plan to pay off the national debt, grant a middle class tax cut, and keep Social Security afloat: Tax rich people like himself."

By Trump's calculations, his proposed 14.25 percent levy on such net worth (individuals with net worth over \$10 million) would raise \$5.7 trillion and wipe out the debt in one fell swoop. "Personally this plan would cost me hundreds of millions of dollars, but in all honesty, it's worth it" Trump said.

This might be Trump's only good idea, I don't know. In the article, he called our Capitol "Disneyland-on-the-Potomac," showing his flair for denigration and humorous statements were alive back then. This "fell swoop" plan is absent in his present proposals. A 2015 article states that the head of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget estimates: "Trump's tax plan would increase public debt to 125% of the size of the economy by 2025, up from 74% today." The very professional Tax Policy Center states that Trump's current plan would increase the debt from its present \$18 trillion to \$33 trillion by 2036. Apparently Donald has parked his first "fell swoop" proposal. See:

<http://money.cnn.com/2015/10/28/news/economy/donald-trump-debt/>

I believe the controversy over the federal budget and the national debt is crucial to restoring prosperity to all Americans and should be a focus issue for all voters. Presently the **average** household annual pre-tax income is almost \$100,000, and the average net worth is \$700,000; but the **median** household income in 2015 was

## Trump's One Good Idea (continued)

\$53,657 (the same level as 1996) and median net worth stands at \$81,450 (less than it was in 1989). This is not shared prosperity. In the past 8 years, total household net worth has increased by a nominal 50%, from \$57 trillion to \$85 trillion. Perversely, during the past 8 years, the median net worth has dropped by 40%. Since 1996 personal income **per capita** has increased by 40%, since 1986 by 61%. The richest one percent received 19% of all income in 2015 and owned 42% of all private savings. This paragraph should shock a careful reader.

A Trump plan to eliminate the national debt would be very feasible since the debt is \$18.4 trillion and the national private savings is \$85 trillion. Our Congressman, Tom McClintock, and his Republican clan are calling for drastic spending cuts in order to balance the budget. Raising taxes is off the table according to this group. My neighbor and I walk around together for exercise. He votes for McClintock because McClintock "will balance the budget." You probably have many neighbors who say the same. I think Democrats should be able to explain why this Republican austerity program is a disaster.

For 20 years, 1943 to 1963, the top marginal income tax rate was 90% on income that exceeded \$1.6 million annually. The economic growth rate during those 20 years has never been surpassed, and prosperity enabled family income to double (inflation adjusted) at all income levels between 1946 and 1976. Between 1950 and 1970, the federal debt dropped from 90% of GDP to under 40%, even though the national budget was in deficit 15 of those 20 years; and infrastructure projects such as the Interstate Highway System and NASA's Apollo Project were paid for.

Trump's One Good Idea (continued)

Austerity does not work. We have to repair the economy by spending intelligently. This may sound counter-intuitive, but it has worked successfully since FDR lowered the unemployment rate (1933 to 1937) from 25% to 9.6%. Spending by government has increased prosperity, and deficits are manageable with shared growth, which we do not have now.

I wrote an essay that compares the 1950s' economy and taxation with today's. It is at my blog site: Economics without Greed.

<http://benL8.blogspot.com>



For those of you who missed Michael Moore's Latest...

All I have to say is:

**WHAT WERE YOU THINKING??**



Go See It Now! Today!! This Afternoon!!!  
(even if you have to drive to Flint)

## Climate, Fuels, and Wildfire

By Anne Brock

Dr. LeRoy Westerling, Associate Professor of Management, University of California, Merced, spoke to the Mariposa club on Saturday, March 12, 2016. Dr. Westerling discussed “Climate, Fuels and Wildfire: how forest management and climate change are shaping forest wildfire frequency, size, severity and emissions.”

Dr. Westerling, PhD, an Associate Professor at UC Merced, is a noted forecaster who studies the effect of climate change on fire forecasting. He has research interests in applied climatology, climate-ecosystem-wildfire interactions, statistical modeling for seasonal forecasts, paleofire reconstructions, and climate change impact assessments. He has also been affiliated with the Sierra Nevada Research Institute.

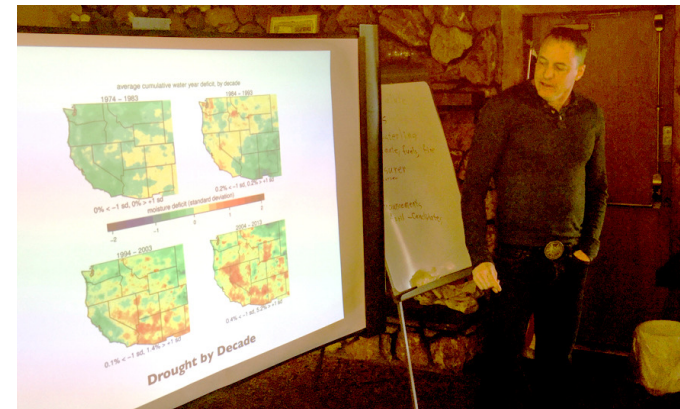
Dr. Westerling discussed how large amounts of data are needed to extract trends from among the normal up and down in frequency and severity of wildfires. Researchers use data from fires on federal lands because detailed record keeping provides the large amounts of data needed for meaningful analysis.

Some key points from his talk: Fires started increasing in the 1980s, particularly in the Northern Rockies. While forest fires correlate with temperatures—hotter summers mean more, bigger forest fires—grassland fires don't; they can happen in cool or hot summers. With climate change, the weather is getting hotter and we should expect more forest fires—at least until the trees mostly burn down and the areas become more chaparral in their makeup—which will eventually happen if the forests aren't thinned out.

## Climate, Fuels, and Wildfire (continued)

Another interesting point from his talk is how scientific analysis sometimes leads to unexpected conclusions. The wildfire record shows that dead trees have little influence on the severity of fires. Apparently that is because severe fires spread into the crown of trees and dead trees don't contribute so much to the flammable material in a tree crown (because their needles drop to the forest floor).

As a reminder, our April and May meetings will feature candidates running in the primary! The Mariposa Democratic Club meets the second Saturday of most months at Miner's Roadhouse Restaurant. Join us at 9:00 a.m. if you want to purchase breakfast or at 9:45 a.m. for the speaker and meeting. You can reach us at 209-742-1010 if you need more information.



Dr. LeRoy Westerling

## PAST ISSUES

Every page, every word and every picture...

Every "Mountain Democrat" since this 2005 issue is on the web at:

[yosemitedems.net/NwsLtrPage.html](http://yosemitedems.net/NwsLtrPage.html)



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We've published a newsletter every two months except for one memorable spring, when there was no electricity in the entire mountain area for up to 2 weeks (or longer for some people.) Do you remember when that was? You can find it by looking through the list of back issues for the one that is missing.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Mariposa: Annual Dues are \$10.00 per person  
(Jan. 1 – Dec. 31) \$15.00 family  
Lifetime membership \$150.00

or

\_\_\_ Oakhurst: Annual Dues are \$5.00 per person  
(Jul. 1 - Jun. 30)

\_\_\_ New Member or \_\_\_ Renewal:

How did you find out about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing** Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

**Physical** Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisorial District (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail form and check payable to:

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