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

# **THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT**

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**October –  
November  
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**

**October 2016**

Oct. 1: Oakhurst Club Meeting  
8:30AM Denny's

Oct. 8: Mariposa Club Meeting  
9:00AM Miner's Inn

**November 2016**

Nov. 5: Oakhurst Club Meeting  
8:30AM Denny's

Nov 12: Mariposa Club Meeting  
9:00AM Miner's Inn

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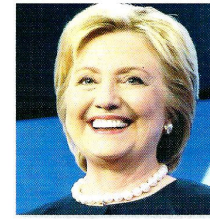
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<http://www.audubon.org/>

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)**

**CADEM**  
**CALIFORNIA**  
**DEMOCRATIC PARTY**  
**OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS**



PRESIDENT  
**Hillary Clinton**  
Tim Kaine



U.S. SENATE  
**Kamala D. Harris**

**PROPOSITIONS**

Prop. 51..... <b>YES</b>	Prop. 57..... <b>YES</b>	Prop. 63..... <b>YES</b>
Prop. 52..... <b>YES</b>	Prop. 58..... <b>YES</b>	Prop. 64..... <b>YES</b>
Prop. 53..... <b>NO</b>	Prop. 59..... <b>YES</b>	Prop. 65.....*
Prop. 54..... <b>NO</b>	Prop. 60..... <b>NO</b>	Prop. 66..... <b>NO</b>
Prop. 55..... <b>YES</b>	Prop. 61.....*	Prop. 67..... <b>YES</b>
Prop. 56..... <b>YES</b>	Prop. 62..... <b>YES</b>	* No official position

**LOCAL RACES**

**MADERA COUNTY LOCAL CANDIDATES**

**Dr. Robert Derlet**  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 04

**Jim Costa**  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 16

**Robert Carabas**  
STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 05

**VOTE ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8**

Polls Open ..... 7:00 am – 8:00 pm  
Mail-In Ballots ..... Must be postmarked by Tuesday, Nov. 8  
Questions? ..... Call 1-877-321-VOTE (8683)

**Paid for by the California Democratic Party (cadem.org)**

## Down the Stretch

By Peter Cavanaugh

Never toss college words at kindergarten minds.

Hillary Clinton recently told enthusiastic supporters at a Manhattan fundraiser, *“You know, to just be grossly generalistic, you could put half of Trump’s supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables.”*

For those suffering from laggard learning, Hillary might better have replaced *“grossly generalistic”* with *“badly overstating”*—this being a perfectly acceptable, Webster-approved substitution for reasonably sophisticated ears. But reason is rare in certain circles.

Almost immediately, Trumpty-Dumpty was bellowing from his golden fortress in Trump Tower, *“Wow, Hillary Clinton was so insulting to my supporters. I think it will cost her in the polls!”*

So signaled, Vice Presidential candidate Mike “The Poodle” Pence then belligerently yapped before Christian conservatives in Washington, *“Hillary, they are not a basket of anything. They are Americans and they are due your respect.”* Assumedly, Poodle was including those torch-bearing, pitchfork-waving Neanderthals howling, *“Lock her up!”* at every perceived rally prompt. Yes, Neanderthals. Science says those recessive genes still reside in some. There was cross breeding 600,000 years ago. Check out your next Trump crowd. You can’t miss it.

Realizing her phraseology had ignited a new volume of viper venom, Secretary Clinton qualified her comments the next day, stating that use of the word “half” may have been a mathematical exaggeration.

Yet the fact that the Trump campaign can take (or fake) exception to perceived “insults” from Hillary Clinton is as ludicrous as

Down the Stretch (continued)

Dumpty’s run for the Presidency itself.

American media isn’t helping matters any in attempting to bolster ratings and readership by fostering an assumed equity between Trump and Clinton in a disturbing and mindless portrayal of false equivalency that is inexcusably irresponsible and dangerously misleading.

Each time some new crazy actions or accusations spring forth by, for or against Trump, the press seems obliged to trot out a corresponding negative story leveled against Hillary Clinton to provide an appearance of “balance” and “equal treatment” in their reporting. Thus, we keep repeatedly hearing thoroughly refuted nonsense about “Benghazi,” “Emails” and “The Clinton Foundation” ad nausea (to where it makes you sick, Trumpies)—when that’s evidently all they can try to hang her with against a continuing torrent of troubling Trump trip-ups.

Craziness continues.

Senator Elizabeth Warren’s Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has now determined that Wells Fargo employees, facing pressure to meet unrealistic sales quotas, opened more than two million deposit and credit card accounts for customers who never asked for them.

Almost immediately, the bank agreed to pay \$185 million in fines for these illegal acts in attempting to defraud its customers, and 5,300 employees in connection with the scandal were fired.

Their boss, 56-year-old Senior Vice President and Head of Community Banking, Carrie Tolstedt, has submitted her resignation. For diligent efforts on behalf of Wells Fargo, Ms. Tolstedt will receive a severance package totaling \$125 million.

Down the Stretch (continued)

In announcing her separation from the company, Wells Fargo Chief Executive Officer, John Stumpf, called Ms. Tolstedt, “*a role model for responsible leadership*” and “*a standard bearer of our culture.*”

Got that kids?

A role model.

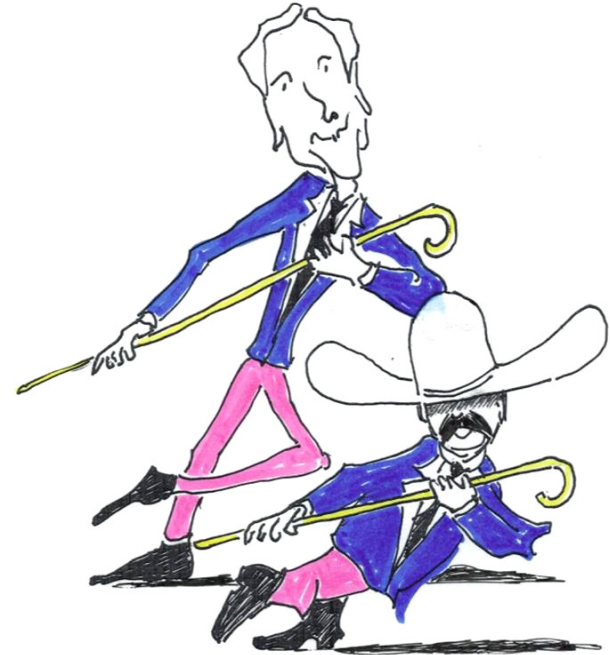
Donald Trump has promised to do away with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau as one of the first acts of his new administration.

On November 8th—let’s do away with Donald Trump.



## The Bigelow and McClintock Song-and-Dance

By Bob Carabas



Don't raise wages keep 'em low.  
Just Vote-No Bigelow!

For doing nothing I'm the pro!  
I'm 'Vote-No' Bigelow!

## **Did You Know that 30% of Americans Live in Poverty, Even After Government Transfers?**

By Ben Leet

I taught in the public schools of Oakland for about 18 years before moving up to the beautiful mountains. East Oakland, an extensive flatland, was and still is an extensive poverty swath. At my school, around 80% of the children qualified for free lunches, a federal program that stipulates the parents' income can be no more than 130% of the poverty threshold (not above \$33,258 for a four-person family in 2015).

As a result, I've taken an interest in the Supplemental Poverty Measure, the SPM, from the U. S. Census and also remedies to relieve poverty. The Census published the SPM just last week; it is released concurrently with the "official" poverty report every September. It is six years old and takes into account "many of the government programs designed to assist low-income families and individuals that are not included in the current official poverty measure.

The U.S.A can boast of an after-tax income of over \$43,000 for every human being, according to the [BEA.gov](http://BEA.gov) web page, Table 2.1. We are extraordinarily prosperous. Normally we would think that the average income for a family of four would be around \$170,000—presuming that the average would have half above and half below average. But the median—the dividing point where half are below and half are above—is \$72,520 for four-person households, and 56% of U.S. children live in households with less than \$51,166 for a four-person household, which is less than a third of the "average." In fact, 80% of Americans live with incomes below 60% of the "average."

When a current supervisor of Mariposa County spoke before election with the Mariposa Democrats at the Miners' Inn, he said that he had walked about his district visiting every house and shaking hands, and his first observation was that he had never

## **30% of Americans Live in Poverty (continued)**

believed there was so much poverty in this county. Mariposa County registers 16.2% in poverty, Madera 22.3%, and Fresno 27.5%, and all of California 20.6%, the highest rate in the nation. "Without safety net resources, 38.1% of children would live in poverty," states the Public Policy Institute of California.

Nationally the poverty rate, from the SPM, stands at 14.3%, down from last year's 15.0%. It shows that senior poverty was reduced by Social Security from 48% to 14%, better than last year when the numbers were 50.0% to 14.4%. The report details the number of Americans who are lifted from poverty by the social benefit programs of credits, in kind stipends, and cash. Another Congressional Budget Office report on income (in 2011) states that 6% of income is transferred by Social Security, 4% by Medicare, 2% by Medicaid, and 2% all other cash and in kind assistance—a total of 14%—but for safety net programs to the poor, only 4%.

The government does have programs that benefit the wealthiest among us. The reduced tax rate on capital income, the pension income tax deduction, and the mortgage interest payment tax deduction are programs that benefit the wealthiest households.

Why, I hope you are asking, does the title above state that 30% of Americans are living in poverty even after the transfers? The SPM states it as 14.3%. It has to do with the definition of poverty being too low. Last year the chief author of the SPM was Kathleen Short, a decades-long veteran of the U.S. Census. She had published many other papers, and one, Nov. 2013, stated, "The overall poverty rate [for 2012] using the updated modified family budget thresholds was 30.0 percent." This suggests that families with resources below approximately 140 percent of the SPM threshold, rather than 200 percent, may be characterized as not able to meet their basic needs and achieve a safe and decent standard of living, or as families with 'low income' (November 2013, page 2).

## 30% of Americans Live in Poverty (continued)

The 2014 SPM shows that 32% of Americans live with an income of less than 150% of the poverty level, and are “not able to meet their basic needs,” as stated by K. Short.

The SPM, page 14, shows that 51 million were lifted from poverty by support programs—that is 16% of the population—meaning that the safety net programs with Social Security decreased the poverty rate from 30% to 14.3%. K. Short implies that the poverty (or low income) rate is 46%, and it’s reduced to 30% by government programs.

As every Democrat knows, the Republicans plan to slash funding to the poverty programs. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities states 62% of all program cuts will come from programs serving the poor, and that these programs will shrink by 42% in the next ten years. This budget has Congressman McClintock’s support, so a vote for Bob Derlet is in order.

Inequality is excessive in our country, our home. The top-earning 10% of households received 50.5% of all pre-tax income in 2015, and the top 1% received 22%. The lower 55% received 16% of all income. Wages are too low, and it’s too easy to slip into poverty, and difficult to lift oneself out. I hope these details help Democrats to perceive and argue intelligently if they come across doubters who consider the poverty measures as giveaways, ineffective, bad ideas, or just too expensive. You might show this essay to a younger adult who knows better than we older folk know. Not since surveys began in 1888 have 31% of citizens, in the age group 18 to 34, lived with their parents in this nation.

The Center for American Progress has many reports on poverty, the web page for Hillary Clinton has many proposals, and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities also. I write a blog: “Economics without Greed” with essays about inequality.

## Republicans Poisoning the Zika Funding Bill

By Cameron Burley

The following is a letter sent to both the Mariposa Gazette and the Sierra Sun Times. The Gazette published it September 17 and the Sun Times earlier the same week. The subject is Republicans Poisoning the Zika Funding Bill with riders that were unacceptable to Democrats, thereby ensuring the bill would not pass. For followup, you can go the Sierra Sun Times for Tom McClintock’s reply and for Anne Brock’s demolition of McClintock’s arguments. I also sent a follow-up letter to the Gazette, but we have to wait to see what they publish.

## Zika Poison Pills

One kind of blame game is to insert elements into a bill that you know the other side will not accept and blame them for not supporting the bill. Those elements are called poison pills. That’s the case with funding for Zika.

The CDC came up with a plan to fight Zika that would cost \$1.9 billion. Last February President Obama asked congress to appropriate the money, citing the urgency to get going on the issue. First congress stalled. When public concern became too big to ignore, they came up with a \$1.1 billion plan. However, the Republicans attached several poison pills that they knew would cause the Democrats to reject the bill. Of course, they then blamed the democrats for not passing the bill.

What we need now is a clean bill without the added crap. According to a CNN report that I just read, the Zika damage so far is 2721 confirmed Zika infections.

## Oakhurst Democratic Club Recent Speakers



Robert Carabas



Dr. Andrew Fiala

## Oakhurst Democratic Club Activities

By Scott Hill

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, at our regular meeting place at Denny's in Oakhurst, our speaker was Troy Pope, Editor-in-Chief of the Collegian, Fresno State's student-run newspaper. Troy talked about "A Millennial's Perspective on Election 2016." Troy sparked a bit of controversy around Fresno and the country when he published an issue of the Collegian with a picture of Hitler on the front page. He shared excerpts from that issue of the Collegian, along with a sample of the email and telephone responses that were received in the Collegian office.

On August 5<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Andrew Fiala, Ph.D., who is Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Director of the Ethics Center at Fresno State University, spoke to the club on the subject of "God and Politics." Professor Fiala is well known to area readers for his "On Ethics" column that appears every Saturday in the Insight section of The Fresno Bee.

On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, our speakers were Dr. Robert Derlet, Democratic challenger for the Fourth Congressional District seat currently held by Tom McClintock, and Robert Carabas, who is running against Frank Bigelow for the California Assembly, District Five seat.

The two Bobs followed up their September 3<sup>rd</sup> presentations with a "Meet and Greet" on September 19<sup>th</sup> at the Pizza Factory in Oakhurst.

At our next meeting on October 1<sup>st</sup>, our featured speaker will be Beth Pratt-Bergstrom, California Director, National Wildlife Federation, and author of the new book, *When Mountain Lions are Neighbors*.

## The Nihilistic Voter

By Lucille Apar

Some years ago a French friend of mine, during a discussion about political events in France at that time, described the average French voter as “nihilistic.” Derived from the Latin word *nihil* meaning *nothing*, one interpretation could and should be *indifference*.

At that particular point in time, the French government was undergoing an upheaval such as could be compared with the traumatic revolution that cast out their monarchy: a new replacement of their chief executive seemed to be stepping up to their podium every other month. Yet one outstanding characteristic seemed to dominate the scene, that of the average French man or woman steadfastly going about their personal business with little or no interest in the political turmoil.

Here in the United States of America, we see many examples of such indifference today as a substantial percentage of eligible citizens fail to exercise their franchise to vote. In some cases, especially the mid-term elections, the turnout has been as low as 34 or 35 percent. What a different election this current run for the President of the United States would be if we were to overcome that tendency.

Of course, there are a number of ways to achieve higher percentages of participation in the electoral process, one of them being the use of force. But this is the USA, and we don't do business that way. Another might be to use incentives such as offering rewards, but that could and probably would open a Pandora's Box of “purchased votes.” Yet to offer a small personal tax deduction with proof of having voted would certainly carry considerable weight, perhaps even going so far as to tip the

## The Nihilistic Voter (continued)

balance. I understand that in Australia every registered voter is required by law to cast a vote. What their proposed punishment for failure is I have no idea, there seems to be little in the way of publicity about this practice, yet it seems to achieve the desired goal.

The outcome of nihilism or indifference with accompanying failure to show up at the polls is, of course, the loss of persons of quality among those ultimately winning the election. Not just at the highest level of government service but also at the merest small town mayoral or supervisory position. Invariably the loudest voices seem to win, in many cases promising unbelievable benefits even with little or no possibility of such promises coming to pass.

Yes there are persons of dedication elected to office, devoted to those who they represent, exercising the utmost care in their daily duties, but these rare individuals appear to be either increasingly unable to influence their colleagues or find their voices drowned out by the noise of demagogues.

I hate to place an extra burden on the registrar's office, but it does seem possible that a gentle reminder that everyone's vote is important could make some impact. Or, perhaps an advertising blitz shortly before election day emphasizing the importance of casting votes. The only answer lies in a strong, coordinated effort to encourage all citizens to register and to show up at the polls no matter what their affiliation. And education is the key.



# WHAT? ME WORRY?



## Mariposa Meeting Report

By Cameron Burley

Robin Hopper, superintendent of the Mariposa County Unified School District, spoke to the Mariposa Democratic Club September 10 about proposition L, a bond issue funding school facilities' repair and upgrade. Mariposa schools have way too much deferred maintenance. She illustrated the need with pictures of well-worn buildings including one building with a long-time tarp over a roof awaiting roof repair.

Also needed are upgrades with electrical modernizing and new air conditioners. These buildings mostly precede the computer age and some are so-called temporary buildings that are expensive to heat and cool.

The proceeds of the bond issue are restricted to building maintenance and related issues; none can go to operating expenses such as teacher salaries.

Hopper also presented financial data including the obvious question of: how much will our taxes go up? The answer is \$49 per \$100,000 of assessed value. Note that assessed value often is well below market value. Check your last tax bill for assessed value.

There was some concern about the ballot also containing Proposition 51, a state bond issue for school maintenance. Robin's answer is that Mariposa needs both. The state money requires matching local funds. If we don't pass our bond issue, there will be no matching local funds and the state money will go elsewhere.

After Robin's presentation, the Mariposa Club voted to endorse Proposition L.

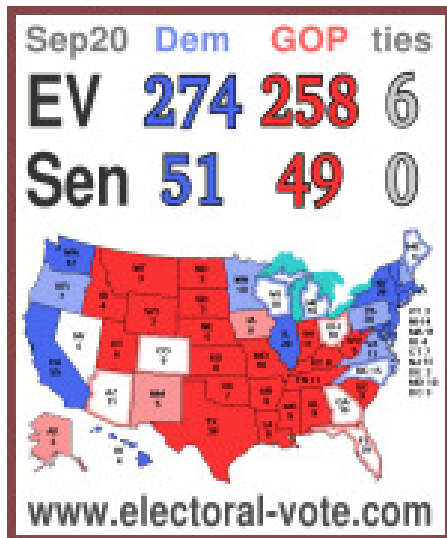
## CONFUSED ABOUT THE POLLS?

CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT?

WANT TO BUST THE NEWSCASTER IN THE MOUTH?

YOU NEED...[ELECTORAL-VOTE.COM](http://www.electoral-vote.com)

www.electoral-vote.com averages all the latest, accurate, non biased polls together and presents them in a very understandable graphic format. You can see the snapshot version (shown below) at the [YosemiteDems.net](http://YosemiteDems.net) web page, and click on the graphic to get more details...-or-...just go to [www.electoral-vote.com](http://www.electoral-vote.com)



## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please mail form and check payable to:

Mariposa Democratic Club -or- Oakhurst Democratic Club  
PO Box 5008-268 PO Box 760  
Mariposa, CA 95338 Oakhurst, CA 93644  
(209) 742-1010 (559) 641-6617