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## SECOND & FLUME

by **Melissa Daugherty**  
melissad@newsreview.com

### Fat cat

Man, was June 24 a dumpster fire day.

I woke up that Friday morning to the news that the Extremist Court—aka Supreme Court—had repealed the 50-year precedent on legalized abortion. Next up, Butte County's retiring right-winger clerk/recorder announced the final results of the primary election.

Don't come at me for that jab at Candace Grubbs. It's well-documented that she stopped conducting marriages in Butte County at the exact time gay marriage was legalized. I'd say good riddance, but then her successor is the guy who didn't have the ethical courage to turn in his sister, a Chico city councilwoman who moved out of the municipality she was elected to represent.

Then there's the election of Peter Durfee, the baseball umpire-turned-cop-turned-triple-dipping Butte County supervisor-elect.

Considering his campaign website basically touts only his law enforcement and baseball cred, Durfee evidently thinks catching balls and bad guys is all voters should know about him. Like, did the guy go to college? Earn a degree? What a mystery man, but not really.

See, Durfee has shown plenty of things that define his character.

First off, his motivation is money. We know that because he led the efforts to strong-arm the city into police pay raises when the coffers were on the brink of bankruptcy during the Great Recession. Unsurprisingly, he plans to keep his full-time job as a sergeant (\$112,000 last year, not including benefits) while working another full-time job as a supervisor (\$61,000, not including bennies and other compensation). Oh, then there's his teaching gig at Butte College's cop school. Triple dipping, with two public employee pensions. Cha-ching.

Secondly, he's a thin blue liner to his core. He died on that hill a decade ago, when he went to bat for a cop who got outed for posting racist images online. One was a picture of Barack Obama, witch doctor style, with a bone through his nose. It was the visual equivalent of calling the 44th president a "spearchucker." Another was Confederate flag related. Durfee held a press conference about the incident as though the cop was a victim. As I documented in my column, when asked directly by yours truly whether the images were racist, he brushed them off as "political satire."

I hadn't given much thought to Durfee until years later, when he began passing along juvenile comments to me through my colleagues. One of them was a new reporter who was covering a City Council meeting. Durfee went out of his way to ask her to "say hello to my good friend Melissa for me."

I had to search my mind for who he was, but Durfee obviously couldn't get me out of his. How flattering. The guy obviously had something to say but has never reached out to me. Instead, he's trolled the paper's website using his union email address. I mean, duh, those comments are anonymous to the public, but I can see who posts them.

That was a few years ago, granted, so when I heard he was seeking office, I thought it was possible the guy had evolved. You know, maybe he's no longer an immature, passive-aggressive misogynist who can't identify racism. Then I learned that he didn't participate in the CN&R's election Q&A, which is hilariously chickenshit. He's the only politician to duck that invitation during my time here.

One thing is certain: Durfee would never have been elected without help from the three right-wing ideologues already on the Board of Supervisors who gerrymandered the hell out of the district. There is a big asterisk next to his win.

Sadly, though, there is a ton at stake in this county, and I suspect Durfee will act as a tool of those who propelled him. If I'm wrong, I'll happily eat my words.

Melissa Daugherty is editor-at-large for the Chico News & Review