

When you hear hoof beats on the cobblestones of London, don't think of Zebras, think of horses. Common things happen commonly and if those hoof beats were to instill fear it should be fear of a bad outcome from missing the obvious.

The Book of Revelation tells of four ominous riders, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse who represent the forces of man's destruction: Pestilence, War, Famine and Death. In this election, I heard the thunder of other sadly familiar apocalyptic hoof beats. These steeds carry the riders that threaten the soul of democracy.

I have a standing date with my mother in law, a WW II era bride who lost her fiancé to Nazis and later married a South Pacific Army Ranger demolitions expert working behind enemy lines, trying to free allied prisoners. This weekend we sat in a half empty auditorium amongst a sanctuary of souls measuring in age well on heaven's side of their sixth decade, steeped in pride and patriotism. I took a careful poll; the mayor and twenty one year old councilman elect Matt Garcia were there in rapt attention.

So there was the long and short of it listening to benedictions, the tear teasing playing of taps and solemnly observing the symbolic remembrance ceremony of the five uniformed service hats of a band of brothers no longer there to fill them. Alive Music Orchestra was a home town guardian of patriotic music, speeches were made and memories aired. As I choked on some memories of my own, a few words seized me.

From the podium, one veteran's prayer pulled an ancient arrow of history from a Spartan quiver at the Thermopolis pass and shot it deep into the heart of the greatest man made God inspired document ever written, our Constitution. The words remanded us to a basic principle of freedom; its existence is dependent upon our discipline to tend it.

I clearly saw the fodder feeding the four horsemen of the apocalypse of democracy and remembered that all must be guardians at the gate against our greatest enemy; ourselves.

As the gut-American morning of one of Northern California's only Veterans Day remembrance ceremonies marched on; I reflected on the election and the names of the beasts that can tread upon democracy. There was fire red Antipathy. We heard it in accusations hurled by candidates and supporters alike. There was colorless white Apathy ridden by those who simply do not care. There was the pale mount of Absenteeism of both candidates and citizenry hell bent against becoming armed and informed with facts. Reared up and most threatening was the black stallion of Abdication braying the death knell of democratic principles as we did not participate in our own governance.

Citizens and candidates alike; study these facts. Slightly over half of those with the right to vote in Fairfield are even registered to do so. About a third of those registered voted. Thus, one fifth of those who create and consume our resources corralled the ballot box and did what? The leading councilman and the defeated Measure Q garnered about one-tenth of the vote of those with the right to vote and about one-fifth of the vote of those who bothered to vote. The second elected councilman did half as well.

So no more talk of mandates or messiahs duly elected or Fairfield's renaissance in the face of an ailing Republic. The hoof beats are loud and clear and it is us on the horses. The mandate that the vote branded upon us all is to dismount, engage and participate. The newly elected council clearly has high hopes and hard charging intentions. Perhaps we should get off our high horses of Apathy, Absenteeism, Antipathy and Abdication. Do not miss the obvious. Only a fool does not know that blindly asking someone to do something for you is tantamount to them doing something to you.