

Community Comment
June 21, 2013
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Local Events

This past weekend, two popular local events were held in Humboldt County. One was the much talked about Oyster Festival in Arcata and the other was the Trinidad Fish Festival. Both of these events seemed to be quite successful in terms of attracting a large crowd.

The Oyster Festival has turned into a very popular event. The numbers seemed to be growing. A report in the paper said some ten thousand tickets were sold this year. That's a lot of people for the Plaza if true. This year there was an admission fee and a fence erected for some crowd control. I know this was a bit controversial and different opinions were expressed. I know many people who choose not to attend this year because of the price of admission. I was fine with it. Especially over the last few years, my family has been referring to the event as the drunk fest. As neighbors of the plaza, we live and have a business about seven blocks away. We have seen the number of people who park around our house grow. But we also have seen more people come back for their cars loud and apparently drunk. Then they get in the car and drive. I've avoided the event because of the crowds recently but that's just me. It's the drinking to excess that is troubling. From what we saw in our neighborhood, the ten dollar fee and the fence made little difference in attendance or in the drinking. It's a great idea for a north coast event. I hope it doesn't turn tragic.

In Trinidad last Sunday, the Trinidad Fish Festival was held once again. It was a perfect day with warm weather, sunny skies and little wind. For the last several years I have volunteered at the event. It's a great event for the Chamber of Commerce and the City. I've been grilling salmon and white fish with a great bunch of people. I don't know yet how many fish dinners were sold but the line for tickets seemed to go on and on. Certainly nowhere near the numbers attended as did the Oyster Festival, but it still seemed well attended. I think we ran out of everything including some of the beers on tap. But no one I talked to noticed any drinking to excess or rowdy behavior. Maybe it's just the nature of the events and maybe it's my age but I prefer a quieter and less crowded event. I appreciate the Coast Guard opening the working Light House for tours. We seldom get to see the facility and it's good for relations with the Guard. That we need this service on the North Coast is an understatement of the highest order.

So we had two popular events this last weekend and they are very different. Excess drinking might be the most significant difference between the two. But a tone is set for any event. I hope the Oyster Festival can continue without an unfortunate outcome. I hope the price of admission and a fence made a difference. It's one thing for a spontaneous event to get out of control; I'm glad Arcata is trying to control a sponsored event.

Congressman Huffman had a nice event at the Arcata Community Center recently. He needs to get to know us a little better so I urge people to go to events like this. This is how our government works. If we don't give direction to our representatives, the special interests and the party bosses will. Let him know how you feel about issues that concern you. Your input is critical.

This has been Sam pennisi for community comment.