

Hello this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

Last Wednesday there was a meeting in Eureka that addressed the homeless problem we have here in Humboldt County. I was out of town and unable to attend. I haven't heard of any earth shaking solutions to this major dilemma. The bottom line is that our homeless problem is out of control. Last year I visited over fifty cities in the Western United States and there wasn't one single city that came close to what I see here. There are many reasons why it is so bad. Our weather is very mild, so the extreme cold or heat isn't something a street person in Eureka has to contend with. Our jail is at capacity, so there isn't any fear of being incarcerated. Our lenient legal system, as it pertains to drugs, is also a major attraction for the people who tend to wander our streets. These all contribute, but the number one factor in why we are overwhelmed with the homeless is that Humboldt County has a huge heart. We give and give and give to these people. My Mom died last year and she loved animals. There isn't anything wrong with loving animals, but my Mom, bless her soul, fed the stray animals daily. I would buy fifty pound bags of generic dog food, and then she would put it out every night for the poor raccoons and feral cats. There were just a couple animals in the beginning. Then there were more and more and more of them that came to her back deck. Opossums, raccoons, rats, skunks, cats and foxes came to her for a free meal. It was crazy. She kept buying more and more food. The animals showed up throughout the day. They would destroy her yard. The rats were everywhere. They would pee and poop all over the place. The raccoons would dig up her plants and tear up her paper plates and drag bowls

and other stuff from her deck out into her yard. Her deck and yard turned into a foul smelling area that our family avoided. The situation at my Mom's house reminds me of the homeless in Humboldt County. The more we give and give and give the more of them who show up on our "back deck". The more handouts they get, the less they respect themselves, and the less they respect those who give them the free stuff. They basically start behaving the same way the rats and raccoons behaved on my Mom's back deck. They are filthy, and they don't clean up after themselves. They use anything as a toilet and leave garbage everywhere they go. Humboldt County and my Mom's back deck have a lot in common. Like I said earlier, my Mom died last year. I went to her empty house for several weeks after she passed and fed the wild animals. I did this out of respect for her. It didn't take long for me to tire of the mess and the expense, so I just quit feeding them. I killed NINETEEN rats. Today, there isn't a single wild animal at my Mom's house. The backyard looks great, and I only buy dog food for my own pets. Unfortunately, Humboldt County can only clean up this rat infested backyard we call home by cutting off the services we provide to the lazy druggies who are wandering our streets. If this were done, we could take this tremendous savings and spend some energy on differentiating between the poor and lazy. I want my tax dollar to help the poor, that are willing to work, not the psychotic drug addict who is screaming on the street. Supply the poor with what they need. This does not include DRUGS, ALCOHOL, LOTTERY TICKETS, FAST OR PROCESSED JUNK FOOD or CIGARETTES. Let's start with that.

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