

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

There is a documentary being shown tonight at HSU in the Kate Buchanan Room called “Tricky Bidness”—Bidness--that deals with the issues of growing marijuana in this County. It doesn’t try to tackle the outdoor environmental devastation, but, what it does do, is look at the disturbing impacts of illegal indoor marijuana grows on our communities in Humboldt County.

While it focuses on Arcata, what it reveals is true for all of our communities.

It’s not making a moral statement one way or the other. It is a balanced look at the industry and the use and growing of medical marijuana.

On the topic of marijuana as medicine, the documentary features an MS patient who has legitimate reasons for needing the properties found in marijuana. And the people featured in the documentary make it clear that they are not objecting to the recreational use of marijuana or trying to take medicine away from those who need it.

But there are, of course, holes in the medical marijuana laws. I particularly liked when someone pointed out that if there are really that many young 20-somethings that are seriously ill and need medical marijuana in our County, then maybe the Centers for Disease Control should come in a check out.

Arcata residents interviewed for the story point out that people who grow pot illegally pull back from society. They don’t want to be visible because it’s about NOT being seen. The conversion of rentals into grow houses has meant a loss of neighbors—and neighborhoods--that have always been so important in Arcata.

What they found, too, is that many of the illegal residential growers are coming in to Arcata from out of town—and not just from out of town, but from out of state. They chose a particularly creative way to demonstrate that in the documentary.

What did I like the most about this 70-minute documentary? Being shown that something CAN be done about it. Arcata fought back.

They used zoning laws and enacted a new energy law. It took citizens to bring the problem to the City Council. They had to say enough is enough. And the Council listened. And most importantly, the Council acted. Part of what made it successful is that the argument was for having zoning laws enforced—not talking about actual use of marijuana.

If you are at all interested in this topic I urge you to see “Tricky Bidness” tonight at HSU. It starts at 5 p.m. at the Kate Buchanan Room. It is free and open to the public and is part of the HSU Marijuana Institute's lecture series.

This has been Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce.