

Community Comment
May 9th 2014
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Graduation 2014

This academic year has just flown by. If you live in Arcata, or many places in Humboldt County, you are naturally ~~are~~ aware of the rhythm of the school year. Each August, the stores and the theaters begin to fill up again. The morning traffic becomes routine; ~~Sam~~ ~~arrivals on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and 9 am on Tuesday and Thursday.~~ The five pm traffic minute becomes just a little longer especially at the intersection of L.K. Wood and the Sunset bridge.

Summers are wonderful for the variety of people that come to see the North Coast and these incredible redwoods, ~~that define this special part of the world.~~ The pace is slow and unpredictable. In the fall, the pace is fast but takes on a workable pattern. The University is Arcata's greatest asset and has been the foundation for many of the unique and diverse small businesses that have developed and thrived here. Faculty and staff were key to the birth and development of the Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary; oh, and our sewage treatment facility. Over the years, students and faculty have played key roles in local politics. I was in the Forestry Club when we developed the plan for the Redwood Park Nature Trail. The City then sponsored the creation of that plan. The forestry club supplied the labor every Saturday for about a year and a half. The City provided tools and wheelbarrows and got donated wood chips delivered. The club designed the bridges on the trail and the building inspector made sure they were up to the task.

Later, as a member of the faculty, I ran for a seat on the council and served 16 years. Dan Hauser and Wes Chesbro were elected two years before me. ~~Dan and Wes~~ ^{and} had both been students at HSU. Dan became our Assembly Member and Wes became our Senator. Other students and faculty have served on many other community, city and county boards and commissions. Likewise, many city and county residents have served the University. The University provides a rich academic environment for young and old alike. Advanced high school students and regular undergraduate and graduate university students take advantage of the college. Older people can take classes of interest for a reduced fee. Top rate entertainment comes to the campus year round. It is accessible and affordable for most. Often, free performances are available to local elementary schools.

My point is that HSU is a great resource, a cultural and educational asset and a business that shares imported dollars with all the rest of us.

But for all that, the real drivers of everything the University brings us are the students. HSU students come mostly from Southern California and the greater Bay Area. But many local families find having Humboldt in our backyard makes college more affordable and acceptable. We get students from most states in our Union and from many countries around the world. And students, like the rest of us are diverse. They are liberal and

conservative, well to do and financially struggling, with goals and dreams and failures and heartaches. But they are the lifeblood of HSU. Recently, many incoming students are the first in their family to go to college. The terrible bus accident ~~that~~^{that} happened recently told this story all too well.

So to those of you graduating this next week, I congratulate you. Best of luck in your chosen career. Thanks for making Arcata your home for awhile.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment