

Community Comment, Oct. 13th, 2014
By Jon Sapper

This is Jon Sapper for Community Comment.

Some friends I haven't seen in years drove up from the City last weekend for a visit. It was an exceptional weekend with warm temperatures allowing us to sit outside in the evening. Two of them had never been here and commented on the beautiful drive up 101 through the vineyards, coastal mountains and redwoods. "You sure live in a beautiful place," one said. "It's even nicer than the brochures. We've been trying to figure out what we're going to do tomorrow. There are so many options the five of us can't make up our minds. Maybe each of us should just pick one thing that is our favorite and see if we can piece it together." I replied, "That's a good idea. Just don't pick a walk on the beach in Crescent City, a hike on the Lost Coast west of Garberville and a drive over the Wildcat to the tide pools by Petrolia. You might not have enough time for that."

I went fishing in the ocean the next morning and caught some nice lingcod, thinking I might be able to cook them up for dinner. So late the next afternoon I gave my friends a call and asked, "Where did you go today? What did you see?" I wasn't quite sure what they might say given a lot of the stuff we deal with around here. But, they were laughing on the phone and said, "We had more fun than we've had in a long time. We started out in the morning with a quick breakfast on Main Street in Ferndale. We felt like we were in Mayberry with local folks saying hi and welcoming us as we walked down the street. Then we drove to Arcata and went to the Farmers' Market on the Plaza. What a great farmers market! We bought enough fresh veges for lunch and dinner. We were going to stop at the Apple Harvest Festival in Fortuna, but we didn't think we would have enough time. After Arcata we drove to Fern Canyon. What an incredible place! We've never seen anything like it. Then we headed to the Redwood National Park for a hike. It was like being in nature's church. We've travelled around the world and this was as good as anyplace we've ever been. Coming back, we took a walk on Moonstone Beach. There were only four other people there. We couldn't believe it. We did want to spend more time in Eureka for Arts Alive, but we were just too tired. Maybe next trip."

I said, "Boy, that's a full day. But it sounds like you had a lot of fun." I asked them what they thought of all the homeless people and the people panhandling on the corners....and the drug addicts doing their non-verbal antics clearly under the influence..... and the empty stores that several years ago used to be filled..... and the high cost of gasoline to get here.... and limited shopping compared to where they live and oh, yea, the folks smoking dope all over the place?

They replied, "We really didn't notice."

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.