

April 14, 2015

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

Oh my, Peter Pennekamp really rattled some cages with his well-written Times-Standard editorial a few weeks ago titled “We have met the enemy, and it is us: County Gone to Pot.”

He is appreciated for calling it like it is with the Humboldt County Pot Industry. It’s powerful because he was sharing his first-hand experience.

Mr. Pennekamp eloquently said what many of us know too well: the pot industry as it stands today is ruining Humboldt County.

I am going to quote part of his editorial:

“Try to imagine this: Humboldt County is contacted by a hypothetical industry that will bulldoze and compromise every major watershed in the region, poison our wildlife, murder industry workers...give rise to gun violence, astronomically increase property crime while reducing each resident’s safety. We are told that we do not need to worry, since this industry will basically self-regulate. And then we choose to believe that this offer is in the interest of our families and our environment. That scenario has already been accomplished with our homegrown industry.”

End quote.

That got the usual suspects motivated and I’m sure you’ve been reading the onslaught of pro-pot letters to the editor and my word pieces in the Times-Standard.

Not one to be silent, there was a letter from Ken Miller, a self-described cannibas physician.

And he almost had me—for the first few paragraphs, as odd as it was, I was sort of agreeing with him about the small parcels being the answer to environmentally sound pot grows and avoiding the water disaster they've created. He talked about the sun-grown, salmon-safe gardens, and the microclimates assuring diversity and the patients that need the medicine. He is romanticizing the pot industry, but hey, he's a pot doctor.

But then, he just couldn't help himself. After the pastoral language about pot he had to make the jump to demonize the timber industry and warn of the destruction that will come down on us when the Richardson Grove road is adjusted. He reminded me of EPIC at that moment--we want to talk about how to stop environmental degradation—including the decline in spotted owls—brought on by the pot grows, and they just can't stop themselves from bringing up the evil timber industry.

The news out of Arcata last week was interesting. They are discussing the idea of developing a marijuana business park—a growing, manufacturing and processing facility at the rundown Flakeboard plant.

There are hurdles ahead as the City discusses the possibilities. And there are apprehensions about the carbon footprint for growing indoors. As though that's somehow worse than the water and other environmental ruin.

There's a lot of hypocrisy about the pot industry when it comes to environmental issues. Peter Pennekamp gave us hope that the truth about the grows will finally be acknowledged—even by those who are still trying to convince us it's a sun-kissed, magical industry.

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