

*Times-Standard*

I noticed in the ~~paper~~ last week that our largest industry got top center headlines: "State tax officials tour pot sites." ~~By now,~~ perhaps you know I am not a great fan of the marijuana industry: it's peddled as the universal panacea; yet, I believe a growing body of research and ~~anecdotal evidence~~ <sup>demonstrate</sup> ~~lead me to believe~~ it's the drug that notably slows your mental processes: certainly for teens who use it a lot—brain drain is often the result. But then, the State Board of Equalization is not one of my favorites either. Years ago I cut down a redwood tree because it was threatening a neighbor's house. It hurt to cut down the big beautiful tree, but hey: I didn't want a bunch of neighbors being squished ~~to~~ <sup>flat</sup> ~~death~~ by a big Sequoia Sempervirens falling on their house during a windstorm. I made no money, paid no money, no currency changed hands and yet the Board of Equalization wrote me every year and wanted all kinds of paper work because they were certain I was a big time timber company. One tree! You can see why people want to do an end run around government altogether. Anyway, Fiona Ma 2<sup>nd</sup> District Representative of Board of Equalization came up and toured the pot sites in Humboldt. "This is the first time that I have ever met and talked to growers," she said. "I think everyone was very open and honest about the industry and the history of ~~and~~ what they are actually doing." Really, like destroying water quality through use of fertilizers and pesticides, stealing water from rivers and streams so they can provide a product that rots the brains of our youth. All the while making a bundle of money and paying no taxes. She's hoping to flush them out from an underground black market economy and make them all upstanding tax-paying citizens. <sup>I hope she can.</sup>

*like Robert Mondavi*

Meanwhile, browsing further down the front page of the Times Standard I ~~passed the many dogs sniffing at Eureka Dog Park, and an article on more troubles for the spotted owl.~~ ~~Finally,~~ I noticed CNN has filmed a show featuring Dick Taylor Chocolate. If you haven't sampled their chocolate products you should, because I consider myself a chocolate connoisseur, and this stuff is ~~really,~~ really good. ~~In fact,~~ I developed a taste for fine chocolate while living in Switzerland a couple of decades ago, and whenever I get a chance to buy any Swiss milk chocolate from the Lindt factory in Kilchberg, Switzerland, I jump at it. Four years ago my wife and I were there in Kilchberg just before Easter and the aroma in the air made me feel like Charlie in Willie Wonka's Chocolate Factory. Awesome. When I first heard about Dick Taylor chocolate I was skeptical, but the taste test has made me a believer. The local chocolatiers are making a fine product right here, in Eureka at their new 7,000 square foot factory on 4<sup>th</sup> street. I understand CNN has also done a show on Cypress Grove Cheeses and plans to do an episode on Fire and Light glass crafters. I am heartened to hear about these local entrepreneurs who are taking some risks, employing local people and making a fine product. ~~It's a good thing: because the marijuana industry is soon to be rocked to the core by the legalization that will assuredly come with the passage of time.~~

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment