

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

When looking over last Sunday's Times-Standard newspaper, I noticed the usual front page article on the subject of Marijuana. This particular article covered the grow limits for the "Emerald Triangle" which consists of the counties of Humboldt, Mendocino and Trinity. You would think that the growing, harvesting and selling of medical marijuana are the most important industry that ever hit these parts. (That also includes non-medical marijuana.) It rates high in importance on the agendas of all of our incorporated cities and county government. Now it is on the ballot for the coming election in November urging you the voter to legalize it. The product has caused widespread environmental damage that will take years to correct. It has been associated with numerous crimes from petty theft to murder. Many would like to 'sweep it under the rug' and make it all go away by legalizing the use of it. If it is legalized I am afraid that we are in for a new chapter which probably will be no better than what we are experiencing now. Those organizations that are on the front lines fighting lung cancer can get very noisy when speaking of the threat caused by tobacco smoke yet they are spooky quiet when it comes to marijuana smoke which like any other smoke caused by burning is hazardous to the lungs. While marijuana news repeatedly grabs the front page other more important stories are either omitted or relegated to the back pages such as what happened to some of our Veterans. The story is about nine thousand seven hundred California Guard vets who must repay enlistment bonuses that they received during the Iraq-Afghanistan conflicts. The California Guard, in order to fill ranks and hit enlistment goals made overpayments to many soldiers. The Pentagon found the discrepancies during an audit and now want the money returned. The serviceman now feels betrayed and some have now gone into debt when trying to repay. Both federal and state governments are involved and, in my opinion, should not punish the soldier as the soldier has done no wrong. Someone had to be in charge of disbursements during the period and that would be where the guilt lies. Other soldiers in other states are also ordered to pay back like sums. My point is the burying of the news about the way our servicemen and women are being treated while constantly trying to make the use of marijuana a good thing that everyone is behind. In closing, I would like to bid a fond farewell to a man who was one of Humboldt County's finest physicians as well as one of its outstanding citizens. Doctor Jack Walsh was our family's physician for many years and delivered three of my four children. Rest in Peace Doctor Jack, you certainly have earned it.

Fred Nelson for Community Comment