

Community Comment
12/30/16
Sam Pennisi



Good Bye 2016- Hope for the best in 2017

~~It's finally time to bid 2016 a not so fond farewell. Actually 2016 was not a bad year. The job market has been increasing at a very good rate. Even employers in our local market have had a hard time filling positions. Not surprising since many of our potential employees are university students who have a higher competing obligation and that schedule must be worked around. Still, the unemployment rate is down.~~

The stock market is way up and has been trending that way for some time. This is a good indicator of the overall state of the economy but ignores the state of those who are least affected by it's gains. What the working poor and the middle class need is stability in the employment sector with jobs that can lead to better positions; not minimum wage service jobs that are a dead end. It's fine that testing is going on for driverless vehicles. But where does that leave the many people who drive our trucks long distances. These are good paying jobs that you can raise a family on. ~~They are a symbol of progress without a thought to short term impacts.~~ Sort of like oil and coal. These energy sources are important but over time will be less and less a part of the energy mix we require. The new technologies will also employ people but will take different skills and knowledge to fill those jobs. As a society we have to sort out how we make this transition. As individuals, we have to take responsibility for getting the education or training required to fill the new work opportunities.

Health issues are coming to a head. The affordable care act was a start in the right direction. ~~It would have been even more successful if both parties had bought in to the idea.~~ The reason this issue cannot be left to individuals and private business alone is that health issues affect all of us and the functioning of the economy as well. ~~Just look at the cost of health care.~~ It cost us all in time off the job. It takes a large chunk of total income to deal with insurance and medicines, and treatments. It affects lower income people more than the affluent which leads to more income inequality, which leads to more social instability. ~~Those who think to each his or her own simply do not understand that we all will pay for health care costs on way or the other.~~ We can do the emergency room approach and pay the higher cost of crisis care, or we can manage a more equitable system. It's a choice.

Climate change is real and is already affecting us. ~~To ignore this is, like all the other environmental impacts we have had, to our own peril.~~ The planet is our home. It and it alone provides us with the opportunity to survive and thrive. But we are an animal with very basic needs; food, water, shelter. We have learned to manage these needs to our advantage over time. But to ignore that we can and do damage the very environment that we rely on is just plain stupid. ~~This problem will only get worse as there are more and more of us.~~ Unlike animals, we can reason and think and manage. We need to get with it for the sake of our children and generations to come.

We have a new federal administration coming into office which shows no sign of future vision. But, in most aspects of our lives, what we make of our time on earth is up to us. This is a luxury we have created for ourselves in America. We can resist the ignorance at the top and maintain the quality of life we enjoy at the local level.

and hate, and racism
and sexism, & bigotry

Have a safe new year and a prosperous one. Humboldt County is a great place to live and raise a family. We all have made it so. Happy new year to each and every one of us.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.