

Community Comment
November 17, 2017
Sam Pennisi

Friday Fishwrap closing in on Thanksgiving

So many things going on it's difficult to know where to start. So, I'll start locally. Thanks to Supervisor Virginia Bass, teaming up with Senator McGuire, for holding a town hall meeting on the opioid crisis. This is truly a health crisis around the country and is hitting Humboldt County hard. For a number of years, doctors have been encouraged to do better pain management for patients. Over time, opium based drugs have been the answer. The problem, of course, is that these drugs are highly addictive. Like any drug, too much can kill you. I heard an estimate that up to 65,000 people across the nation will die from overdoses or related factors from this type of drug this year alone. ~~This puts this under the category of a community problem. The Trump Administration has fallen short of declaring it so, so federal monies are not in the works.~~ What do we do? Most Americans don't accept the path of doing nothing and that's especially true in Humboldt County. Some specific things come to mind. The core is probably going to center on personal responsibility. We can be our best health care advocate by knowing what our doctor is prescribing and how to manage it. Our families need to help by being aware of our reaction to these drugs and assisting in the control of supply. ~~These drugs need to be closely tracked and used as prescribed. They cannot fall in to the hands of children or others that might abuse them or try to sell them.~~

The medical community needs to be very careful in the use of these drugs and be aware of any alternative that might be of less concern. Doctors and Pharmacists need to coordinate patients who are using these drugs so they cannot shop pharmacies. This is where computers have real value.

Finally, there needs to be accessible treatment available and encouraged. Perhaps a model like AA? Maybe there are better ones out there. These would only be a start and the community will have to support any reasonable path we chose or it wont be as successful as we want it to be.

There is a National effort to get people to run for elective office. ~~This time it's in response to the Trump disaster as President.~~ I've been encouraging this for years. But running for office is not about the run. In the end a run for office has to be about governing. Holding office brings with it tremendous responsibility. A candidate needs to do their homework and know that they can bring some value or expertise to the position. One has to be willing to know the history of the office and the agency. Positive change comes best when it builds on past success. It's easy to complain; it's much harder to find doable solutions. One also has to remember that this is a representative democracy. Once in office, you represent everyone. We may see a surge in fresh faces and young people in upcoming elections with a new perspective on issues. If you meet the young people that I meet, you might agree that the future is bright.

Once again, Thanksgiving is just around the corner. I like the Fall and I like Thanksgiving. It's an all American tradition and is centered on family, food, the success of the harvest, and on being grateful for what we have.

So think about what you have to be grateful for. I'm willing to bet the list is longer than you might think. I know mine is.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.