

THE GENEROUS SPIRIT OF CANNABIS

I live on the dark side of the hill, on dry land, here in SoHum. That's why I can afford to live here. We don't have enough sun or water to grow weed, and we're off the grid, so no greenrushers are clamoring for our place, but we love it here. We enjoy the shade in the summertime and we're protected from the worst of the storm winds in winter. It's a nice place to live, but not for growing weed, so I don't bother.

Humboldt County is probably the easiest place in the whole US to find weed. Practically everyone else around here grows way more than they need. You can smell it everywhere, and hardly a hubcap falls off of a truck around here without revealing a secret garden or stash of weed hidden behind it. I nearly tripped over half a dozen recently harvested plants in grow-bags, just yesterday, on the sidewalk in front of Ray's in Redway. God knows how they got there.

Around here, cannabis usually finds me before I have to go looking for it. I've been paid for work in cannabis, traded art for cannabis, received cannabis as a bonus for a job well done and I've been gifted cannabis, but on occasion I have had to buy cannabis for my own consumption, here in Humboldt County. I thought I was approaching one of those times recently when I found myself in a conversation with a couple of local land owners. If you read this column regularly, you know that I don't give land owners much reason to like me, and they both admitted that they don't agree with everything I say in this column. One of them was explaining to me why he thought the black market really isn't so bad. "It's just friends helping friends" he told me. "Besides," he continued, "No one around here spends money to buy weed because everyone's got so much."

I had to differ with him on that point. I told him that I occasionally buy weed, and that I was looking to buy some weed right now. He looked at me with a look of genuine concern, "Really, you're out of weed?" he asked.

"Just about." I told him.

"I've got a jar of weed in the car I can let you have." He said, adding, "No one around here should have to pay for medicine."

I accepted his generous offer and conceded the point. Both of these gentlemen seemed genuinely

concerned that I, or anyone, should have to do without cannabis. I thanked him for the gift. It warmed the cockles of my heart and got me nicely stoned. I really appreciate it. I don't mean to diminish this magnanimous gesture in any way. After all, it was his compassion, his weed, and his idea to give it to me, despite the fact that I have probably offended him many times with this column, but there's something about this sentiment that, I think, every cannabis enthusiast understands.

There is something about the spirit of cannabis that wants to be shared, freely. Once cannabis comes into your life, you begin to understand why it is so important to people, and she encourages you to share. Cannabis is everyone's best friend, and it just seems cruel to deny her to anyone, or even to ask for money for her. That's just how she makes you feel. Even when pot sold for \$400 an ounce, people shared their weed. We started passing the bong around instead of joints, but we still shared. In my whole life, I've only been offered a line of cocaine once, but thousands of people have shared cannabis with me.

Here's another example: I have another friend, who I really enjoy talking to. He has no home, no car, no phone and barely gets enough to eat most days. He doesn't read this column because he has no internet access. He also expressed concern that I might run out of weed, and has given me weed many times. It's always excellent weed. He never asks for money for it, and always gives it with the same look of genuine compassion and concern, and with the same words, "No one should have to go without medicine, especially around here."

That's real class. When someone can endure that level of poverty and yet maintain enough humanity to be sympathetic and generous to others. That's real class. It's also classy to be generous and compassionate to people you don't necessarily agree with, or even know that well, as was the case with the land owners I spoke of earlier. It speaks well of people around here, and it speaks well of cannabis, so I think we should celebrate that spirit of generosity that cannabis exudes.

This generous, magnanimous spirit of cannabis, inspired me to start working for legalization back

in the '80s. No one, anywhere, should have to go without medicine, and if it weren't for prohibition no one would. That's the message I got from cannabis, along with a vision of a world where cannabis was freely available to everyone, and cheaper than alcohol. It looked like the kind of world I wanted to live in, and that vision motivated me to work to end prohibition. Even though we haven't quite realized that goal, it's great to see the generous spirit of cannabis in action, in my community, and to be the beneficiary of it.

On the other hand, that's why I find it so offensive to see dispensaries that look like banks or high-end jewelry stores, or cannabis companies that rely on snob appeal to justify high prices. Every attempt to market cannabis as an expensive luxury for the well-to-do, flies in the face of the spirit of cannabis herself. Instead of making cannabis classy, they make her into a whore, to profit from the love she gives so freely. There's nothing "classy" about that at all. It's just ugly and shameful.

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CLEAR & PRESENT DANGER

There are serious safety issues with the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station and the tons of nuclear waste stored just a few miles south of San Clemente, California. Since the San Onofre reactors are permanently shutdown, our main focus is on the management of the nuclear waste. A major radiation release at San Onofre could require a permanent evacuation of parts of Southern California, damage the nation's food supply, jeopardize our health, the environment, and our national security. It could affect the economic and political stability of California, the nation and potentially other parts of the world.



I've lived in San Clemente for many years and always assumed the San Onofre nuclear plant was managed as safe as possible. However, after reading reports in the local newspapers that employees are harassed and even fired for reporting unresolved safety issues to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) or to the public, I investigated further. I could not believe such a story might be true. To my shock and dismay, the stories were true. My research on nuclear waste shows there are no good solutions to store the nuclear waste. However, we must find the safest solutions possible and as soon as possible, which is currently not being done. One of my priorities is to continue working with nuclear engineers and others who put safety over industry profits, and to continue my research in this area.

The NRC consistently reports San Onofre has the worst safety culture and has an on-going problem of "...not making conservative assumptions in their decision-making..." This should not be tolerated at a nuclear plant! In addition, the NRC also has a "safety culture" problem.

I love living in San Clemente and want to do whatever I can to make this city and the rest of our communities as safe as possible from a nuclear disaster. That will not happen without public involvement.

The Southern California Edison San Onofre Nuclear Waste Dump being built near the border of Orange County, inches above the water table, and 100' from the Pacific Ocean will use the Holtec UMAX dry storage system to hold 75 nuclear waste canisters. Each Holtec thin-wall canister can hold 37 fuel assemblies. Located directly behind the Holtec system are 51 Areva NUHOMS storage canisters, each stored in a horizontal concrete overpack. Each Areva NUHOMS thin-wall canister holds 24 fuel assemblies. Both storage systems require air vents so the nuclear fuel waste does not overheat. The steel canister walls are only 5/8th of an inch thick and are susceptible to short term cracking. The majority of U.S. nuclear power facilities are storing highly radioactive nuclear waste in thin-walled canisters (mostly 1/2" thick) May leak after 20 years, other countries use thick-walled metal casks 10" to almost 20" thick that do not have these problems.

Each canister contains about as much highly radioactive Cesium-137 as was released from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

The California Coastal Commission, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, California Public Utility Commission, Department of Energy, California Energy Commission all know these canisters are susceptible to short-term cracks and leaks; that the canisters cannot be inspected for cracks and cannot be repaired, maintained or monitored to prevent radioactive leaks. Edison has no approved plan in place to deal with cracking leaking canisters. Canisters with even partial cracks are not approved for transport and have no seismic rating. In spite of all this, these agencies are allowing Edison to build this nuclear waste dump which the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission acknowledges might stay here indefinitely.

Action needed: The Shimkus bill H.R. 3053 Nuclear Waste Policy Amendment Act of 2017 will make us less safe and not solve the nuclear waste problems, yet preempts existing state and local water and air rights and other rights. It removes safety requirements needed to prevent radioactive leaks. Learn more and find documentation and handouts to share with elected officials and others at:

SanOnofreSafety.org

-Donna Gilmore