

Eye on Del Norte: A solution to homelessness that works

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Delivering criticism to those who serve us in an elected capacity without offering solutions to the problems facing our community is disingenuous. Mea Culpa.

From this very column, I will render opinion and suggestion to address elephantine challenges facing rural Northern California and Del Norte County.

Does this community suffer from a homelessness crisis? No!

Del Norte County and Crescent City suffer from:

- (1) an explosion of drug-addiction;
- (2) alcoholics;
- (3) mentally ill individuals;

(4) a growing segment of the population that has chosen a selfish vagabond lifestyle that ignores any consideration for our fellow man; and

(5) a tiny number of folks who have fallen through the economic cracks of life.

The result: systemic homelessness.

The crisis starts with the massive expansion on items 1 through 4.

This disparate population of perhaps 161,000 in the Golden State has a benefactor, an apologist, a cheerleader in the form of local, county, state and federal governments.

At the risk of appearing uncompassionate to those who are suffering, I was instilled and raised with family values which believed in a hand up, not hand out. My Jewish heritage taught me to never ignore those in need. And I don't.

I asked myself, "why does California attract so many of those who come to the Golden State with nothing in their pockets but problems?" Florida and Texas (with the exception of Austin) have almost no homelessness.

Blue states California, Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, Illinois and New York can't seem to look within themselves and figure out how to fix the deteriorating conditions of lawlessness and homelessness. These states keep throwing more money into the caldron of dysfunction. Conditions only worsen.

Red states don't appear to have the huge explosion of social ills we seem to take for granted as normal, everyday life, in Crescent City. Lots of folks are moving to these Red states for a better life. One can't blame them.

State lawmakers and the courts have aggravated the so-called homeless problem by subverting existing law. The federal 9th Circuit Court in *Martin vs. Boise* exploited the opportunity that those living the aberrant lifestyle may continue to do so, effectively compelling cities to provide homeless shelters before enforcing homeless ordinances.

Through "Realignment," the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in 2015 started releasing inmates from its prisons to save money. Many of those released are on the street homeless, right now.

Here are some of our solutions to address the social problems that are deteriorating our quality of life:

Enforce laws. California and a significant number of district attorneys have ignored felony prosecution. Simultaneously, law enforcement continues to be handcuffed, marginalized and scorned by the majority of state lawmakers, Governor Newsom, and the ubiquitous leftist media.

To those who suffer from conditions mentioned above, here are my suggestion: Work. Break a sweat. Pick up after yourself. Clean up trash you encounter, whether you created the mess or not. Take pride in your accomplishments, however modest they may be. Practice independence.

God helps those who help themselves. Break away from destructive dependency. Free money isn't free, because someone must pay for your needs. Help yourself, but don't allow others to keep you dependent and control your life.

It saddens me to report the largest department in a bloated California (and by extension, Del Norte County) government is Health and Human Services. Much of the Board of Supervisors' Consent Agenda – which you never hear about – is more funding for the Department of Health and Human Services. The footprint of onerous, bloated government, nationally, state, and county, festers in these bureaucracies.

This gravy train of free stuff must stop. The explosion of free or low income housing espoused by State Senator Mike McGuire has not and will not help. It only enables more dependency.

McGuire's office crows about \$223 million already spent on projects like No Place Like Home and Operation Homekey. Look around and honestly tell me conditions are improving (crickets).

The estimated \$14 billion California will spend to create homeless housing neighborhoods should be directed instead to enhancing existing programs and facilities where willing volunteers can enter an Alcoholics Anonymous format of education, develop skills to be successfully reintroduced into society, and participate in skill development workshops to become employable.

The Board of Supervisors holds the future of this impending doom. A board majority of three votes is needed to put a stop to this dysfunction. We currently have three board seats up for election in June and November. Now is the time to vote.

Failure to return to normalcy translates to the destruction of our society, more chaos and the road to perdition.

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