

Why I support the Northwest California Wilderness Act

FROM KENT COLLARD, DIRECTOR
BAR 717 RANCH, CAMP TRINITY

For the past 90 years, my family has welcomed children to Camp Trinity on the Bar 717 Ranch, a summer camp in Hyampom. Life at camp is rustic and unplugged, with days spent swimming, hiking, riding horses, caring for animals, gardening, making music and art. Campers live, work, and play in a co-educational, non-competitive setting where kids are free to be themselves, building a strong sense of community and a respect for each other the environment.

Like many other businesses in the area, ours is fueled by people seeking to experience the wild beauty of Trinity County. Our business is recreation, and recreation is a growing industry as California's population increases and urbanizes. As an industry, we need wilderness, clean free-flowing rivers, trails and healthy forests, just as we need economic development in our communities for our employees and their families to thrive. How we choose to manage our forests today will impact the future of all recreation-based businesses in the county.

Public forests — including those near Bar 717 Ranch — are facing significant challenges. And that's not just a long-term, far-away notion for my family or our local communities. We worry about our forests today, and how to ensure we will remain in business if threats to forest health are not addressed proactively. For example, we know that a single lightning event can quickly overwhelm local resources and spread fire over tens of thou-

sands of acres. We've seen that happen twice recently in Trinity County, in 2008 and again in 2015. And then the Carr and Camp fires last year showed us just how quickly fire can devastate forest-adjacent communities.

We also worry about crime in our forests, where illegal cannabis grows potentially threaten many domestic water supplies, and thus the health of our citizens and visitors. And because most of these illegal operations are on federal forest lands, we need our federal partners to help keep the land and our communities safe.

Our Congressman, Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael, has introduced the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act that addresses many of our concerns. Rep. Huffman's bill puts us on a path to better management of the public lands around our summer camp, the county, and the region. In addition, the bill calls for greater communication and coordination among federal agencies. It would strengthen consultation between our rural and urban leaders, which is critical to fighting large fires that spread quickly. And it would put us on the path to stopping and cleaning up the toxic remnants of large-scale illegal cannabis grows in our region.

Huffman's bill would designate the Pattison, Chinquapin, South Fork and Underwood wilderness areas, thus creating tracts of undisturbed forests that protect and promote old growth characteristics thereby increasing fire resistance and resiliency when the next fire comes.

Studies show that old growth forests are more fire resistant than fire-starved timberlands or neglected plantations.

Common sense, and my personal observations confirm this fact. Big trees, wider spacing, less undergrowth, and thick fire-adapted bark reduce the potential for stand-replacing fires. In addition, Huffman's bill addresses the need to strategically reduce fuels along roads (where most fires start) to encourage a more fire-resilient landscape.

Finally, Huffman's bill recognizes and promotes the economic opportunities that recreation presents to our rural communities. His bill would authorize the construction of new trails, drawing more visitors to the area.

New wilderness areas mean more opportunities for hikers, backpackers and those seeking backcountry solitude. The bill proposes adding visitor's center in Weaverville to educate and inform those who come to see the natural wonders of Trinity County.

I recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to tell Congress that I back this plan. I talked about the importance of recreation-based business to our local economy, and the need for proactive fuels reduction along our roadways. It was the beauty and abundance of our forests that first drew my family here more than a hundred years ago. We are still here today because of these forests and the opportunities they hold for teaching the next generation about life on a mountain ranch.

Let's act now to preserve these wild places for our kids to explore, to hike, to ride, to swim. Support this bill as a good first step toward ensuring that the forests and rivers we cherish are preserved for next 90 years of shaping children's lives.

Diversity of people enrich country

FROM KENNETH C. BALDWIN
DOUGLAS CITY

Dr. Veltmeyer's guest column on racism and the nation-state was a bit myopic in its focus on English colonization of America in 1620, as if that was what created our identity as a nation. Is he forgetting that this land we call America was already populated when the Pilgrims from England first arrived here? And that the California coast got most of the names it has today from a 1595 sea expedition by the Spaniard Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeno? And that California was colonized by Spaniards from Mexico in 1769 and loosely governed from Mexico until President Polk's "War of Acquisition" with Mexico resulted in its acquisition by the United States in 1847?

My point is that our nation's identity is derived from the great diversity of people who originally occupied this land as well as all the rest of us who migrated here from many other countries or are progeny of those immigrants. We are strong as a nation because we have embraced diversity, not in spite of it.

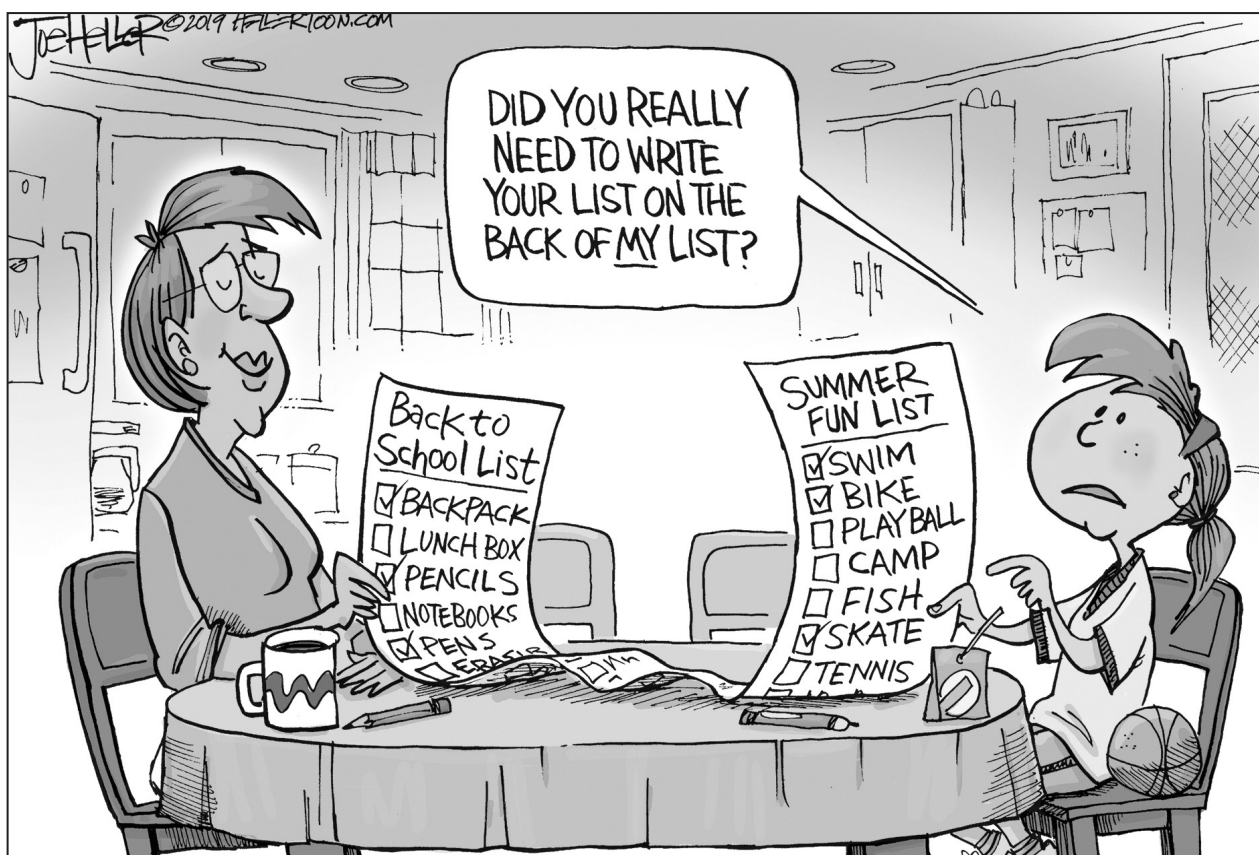
Undoubtedly diversity of culture, language, religion and history will continue to cause friction between people. It always has, especially during each new wave of immigration. Some will celebrate diversity, others will tolerate it, and still others will reject it. As some-

one who has traveled and lived in other countries, I enjoy learning about cultures that are different from mine and meeting people from those cultures. It expands my mind and enriches my life.

However, to paraphrase someone from the Middle East, "I like Americans, but I wouldn't want a lot of them migrating to my country." When it comes down to it, isn't that really the basis of the antagonism many people are feeling toward the Central American immigrants (and incidentally those who support them)?

I suspect most of us have compassion for the people who are escaping intolerable conditions in their own countries and want to make a better life in ours, but we are afraid of the changes that mass migration will bring to our own country. Are we afraid because we think we lack, in this incredibly wealthy nation, the resources to accommodate them? If so, that is a misplaced fear.

A line in the Simon and Garfunkel song "It's All Happening at the Zoo" goes, "orangutans are skeptical of changes in their cages." I must be an orangutan as I'm often skeptical of the potential benefits of change. But I believe that history amply confirms the benefits that people bring to our nation when they come to create a better life. That is especially true when they bring their children. Wouldn't it be the same for you?



Applauding the Grand Experiment

FROM RAY SCHAR
WEAVERVILLE

For 1,500 years religion ruled the world, and that time wasn't called the Dark Ages for naught, with Christianity and, from 700 CE on, Islam ruling people with iron fists and swords and the mechanics of torture and destruction. Then a secret society arose from the shadows to oppose these outdated reigns of debasement and death, the Freemasons founding the United States of America as the "Grand Experiment," i.e. founded on reason, not religion, with a Constitution as a blueprint for its government.

There is no mention of the Bible or its "God" in the Declaration of Independence (which mentions a Creator and "Nature's God," which everyone knows as Mother Nature), the Articles of Confederation, or the Constitution of the United States, and those are the documents that matter, with the U.S. Constitution being the law of the land, and not the Bible. The Constitution's 1st Amendment states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." That is certainly not a Christian concept, whose idea of "religious freedom" applies only to themselves but not to all others.

George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson (who looked upon Christians as demon worshippers), John Hancock, Thomas Paine and Paul Revere, among many others, were Freemasons, and their god was not the Christian deity but the "Grand Architect of the Universe." with the 'G' also representing Sacred Geometry which is evidenced in the layout of Washington, D.C. George Washington wore his Masonic apron when he laid the

cornerstone of the Capitol building in 1793, and Washington, D.C., was intentionally planned according to Masonic geometry and design, with edifices like the Washington Monument, an Egyptian-style obelisk. There are Masonic symbols all over our Great Seal and our paper money, and the words "In God We Trust" weren't added until the 1950s to placate the Christians who have been intent on including their god in something official ever since the nation's founding.

One curiosity is the nation's Congress, where above them all at all times is the rotunda painting depicting George Washington sitting in the clouds, god-like, among a plethora of ancient Greek and Egyptian gods, but nowhere is the Judeo-Christian god of the Bible.

Our nation was never considered a Democracy, it was set up as a representational Republic. Our Pledge of Allegiance doesn't state "... and to the Democracy," it clearly states "...and to the Republic, for which it (the flag) stands, one nation..." Going further, no one forces anyone to add "under god" and I make a point of saying instead "under Goddess" - no one has ever corrected me or called me on it, because we have freedom of speech as well as freedom of religion here.

Which brings me to the charge of being "godless." Atheism is also a choice guaranteed by our Constitution, as is the right to worship or revere any god or goddess besides the angry mass-murdering deity portrayed in the Bible. I would rather worship a rock than the right's version of a "loving" god who tried to wipe out humanity in one instance and tortured people in others, but fortuitously I revere Gaia, or Mother Nature/Earth, on which we all depend for our existence, like it or not.

The Statue of Liberty is a representation of the Egyptian goddess Isis, conceived, built and

brought here to a site pre-selected by Freemasons, with the United States government's approval. Written upon the base of the Statue are the words "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore." We are a nation of colonists/immigrants, and the state of the humanitarian crisis in the world today demands that we take in as many refugees and immigrants that present themselves because of intolerable conditions resulting from war and/or oppressive governments. Currently waiting at the U.S. Southern border are 19,000 awaiting approval of asylum, and 325,000 waiting to apply, according to CBS News, July 17. We cannot turn away these human beings just because the current president and Senate is racist and anti-immigration, though the current hypocritical president is married to an immigrant and provided safe passage for her family. A more fitting solution is to oust the current president and all members of a hateful racist party. So, on to 2020....

Sunday Drive deserves support

FROM JUDI PARSELL
LEWISTON

On July 14 I participated in the Sunday Drive event in Weaverville. This activity was created to support more businesses on Main Street.

I made some good money and the tourists turned out and were in love with our little gold mining town. They did express some disappointment that more businesses weren't open where they could shop and eat.

Some very good artists attended and there was space for more. Financially, for me, it was worth attending. I hope to see a better turnout of merchants and artists in August. We had a great time.

Caterpillar vs. butterfly

FROM JOHN LINDSAY HAMILTON
WEAVERVILLE

What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly.

The other day a very nice lady came in looking for Varney's Confectionary, the old soda fountain, which use to be on Main Street. So I walked her up to Ned's Collectables and Gifts where the confectionary used to be. Fred and Lucille Varney were her aunt and uncle, we had a very nice talk about how Lucille use to make the pies, and if the soda jerk asked what you wanted, you better not have said "I don't know, uh, or well," that was what you got (he had a recipe for every word). My favorite was the Weaver Bally Mudslide. I told her where the different parts of the counters went around town. As she was getting back into her car, I asked her if she remembered the sign "Henway for sale," her answer "What's a Henway (4 to 6 pounds)." She did remember.

This reminded me of all the stores and business we have lost over the years. Why is this? One reason, I cannot believe how many people buy things online and wonder why there is no place in town to buy things. I would rather have Tammie's Books buy my books from Amazon and have her make money then have another business gone. I buy my shoes from Main Street Shoes and my food from Holiday, CVS or Dollar General. I hate it when I

have to buy in Redding because I cannot find what I want in town. I have to buy somethings from WinCo because Holiday doesn't carry what I want.

I remember when 15 percent of employment used to be governmental jobs, now it is way over 70 percent if you think of all the federal, state, and county offices, departments and agencies. Then you have to look at all other jobs that are fully funded by the taxpayers through grants or other monies.

So when you don't buy locally the sales tax does not come to the county and help support all of the jobs. And when the businesses go out of business then there is no property tax paid to support all of the jobs, so what happens then the jobs go away, and the people lose their job and their property, then what?

I also remember when the lowest wages were government jobs, not anymore. The BOS just hired someone who is paid more per month than I live on in the whole year. I do realize that it costs a lot more today than yesterday, but still we the taxpayers have to foot the bill. Now the BOS wants to raise the sales tax, but if we buy out of county what good would it do?

So the answer would be more non-governmental funded jobs, more places to buy the things we need and want, and people who want to live here just because.

Are we the caterpillar or the butterfly?

THE STAFF

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