

GUEST EDITORIAL FROM THE ALBANY-DEMOCRAT HERALD

Bust in Idaho highlights woes for industrial hemp

An editorial last month about some unexpected bumps facing industrial hemp producers reported about an Idaho case in which law officers seized a truckload of hemp being shipped from Oregon because — well, because it looked just like marijuana. In fact, Idaho authorities thought it might be the biggest marijuana bust in state history, and said so in press releases.

Big Sky Scientific, the Colorado company that owned the truckload, protested the bust, and authorities duly sent a sample of the plant off for testing. But authorities continued to hang onto the alleged contraband, which had been sold to Big Sky by a hemp farmer who was licensed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Here's an update: The results of the testing are back. As advertised, it's industrial hemp, not marijuana, and so those dreams by Idaho authorities of the biggest pot bust in state history have gone up in smoke, if you will.

Industrial hemp, you'll recall, was legalized on the federal level in the 2018 Farm Bill. That bill also removed hemp from the federal list of controlled substances. It's true that hemp bears a striking family resemblance to marijuana, but the main difference is that industrial hemp contains less than 0.3 percent tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the principal psychoactive constituent of cannabis. Nobody gets high smoking industrial hemp. But the crop has considerable promise and U.S. farmers, always interested in exploring new ways to make a buck, are looking for ways to enter the hemp market, estimated as being worth \$820 million annually, a figure that's only going to grow in the future.

The problem for law enforcement officers is that there's no easy way to test a plant to determine if it's hemp or marijuana; hence the wait endured by Big Sky Scientific while its load of plants was tested at a Kentucky lab. (A fortune awaits the inventor who finally figures out a way to do field tests to accurately determine THC levels.)

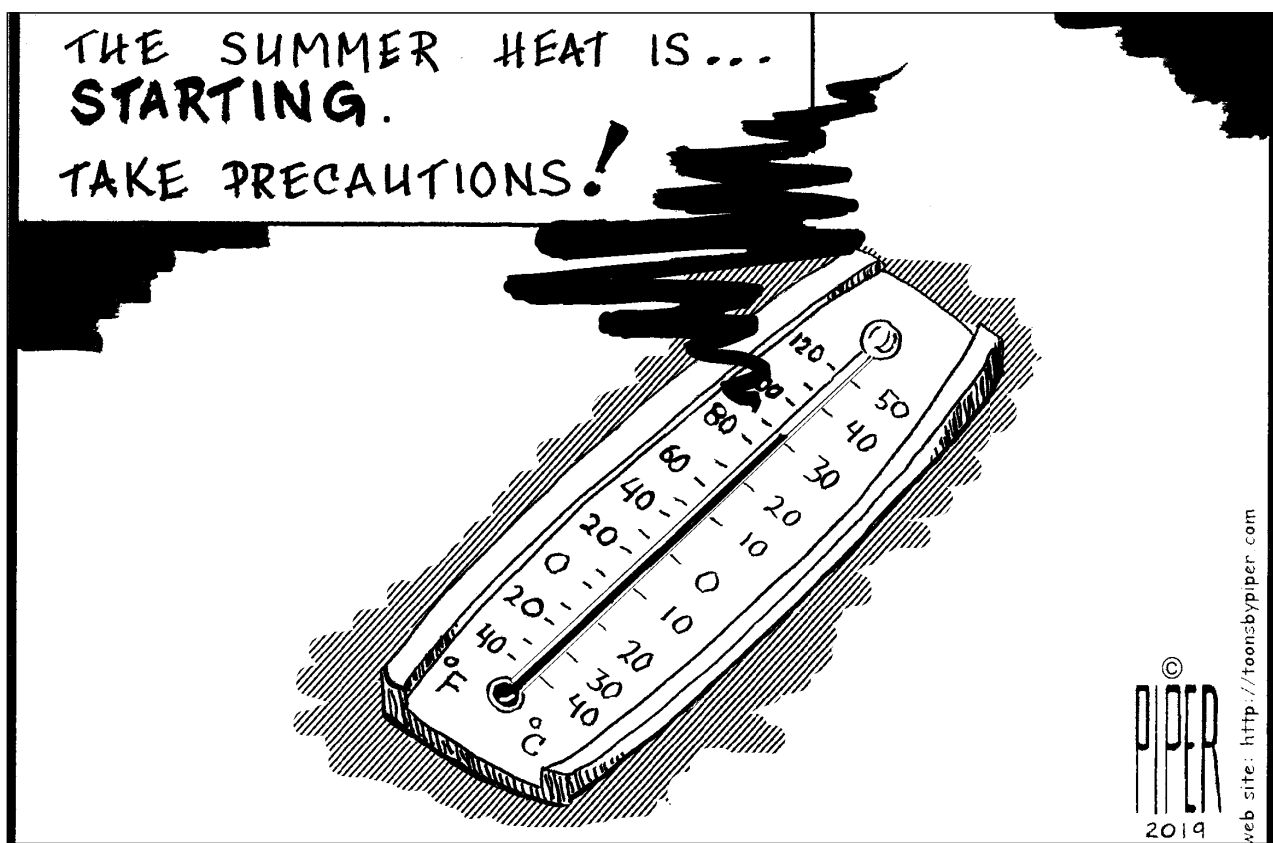
So, now that the test results are back, you would think that the state would be taking pains to return that load of hemp to Big Sky Scientific, perhaps with a note of apology.

No such luck, and here's why: Even though industrial hemp has been legalized on the federal level (and, of course, in Oregon), it's still illegal in Idaho, regardless of the THC level. Any person possessing hemp faces the same punishment as a person possessing marijuana — even as Idaho grocery stores sell products containing hemp oil. Idaho authorities, at last word, still had not yet released the shipment to Big Sky. (In fact, a press release from Big Sky reported that the truck itself remains impounded and that Idaho authorities have asked a state judge to let them sell the truck and trailer — presumably to help pay for Idaho's robust war on hemp.)

More seriously, the driver of the truck, 36-year-old Denis V. Palamarchuk of Portland, still faces felony charges of drug trafficking-marijuana, a crime that carries a mandatory five-year minimum prison sentence if convicted. He's pleaded not guilty to the charge and is out on bond.

In the meantime, Oregon Department of Agriculture officials have issued a formal warning urging hemp growers not to ship their crop over state lines. The warning likely isn't that necessary, seeing how trucking companies often are reluctant to have their rolling stock seized by law enforcement officers. It all is vaguely reminiscent of the plot of the first "Smokey and the Bandit" movie, if you substituted hemp for Coors beer.

These hemp issues eventually will be ironed out, but it likely will require action on the federal level. And, as demand grows for hemp products, the pressure will be on states like Idaho to legalize the substance. The only question is whether this will be a minor hiccup for a growing industry or something that could do lasting harm.



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Your views

McCracken: Motherhood is only one of unlimited options

To the Editor:
The Observer's May 6 Opinion page is topped with a (three-column-wide, 6-inch tall) Piper cartoon of a single rose and the attributes of perfect mothers, followed by another Glenn Mollette column, "Celebrate Mother's Day, May 12," and finally the guest editorial, "We cannot forget those who served." What a trio.

Forget the maudlin platitudes about mothering. They are not what many experience as children or attain as mothers. Mothering for most species requires willingness to sacrifice your life for your offspring. Most species are hard-wired for that.

Parenting in our society is demanding, varied and complicated. I have occasionally told my students that their parents are probably doing the best that they can and that they do love them, regardless of how it appears. The job description for mothering reads like the Piper cartoon — patient, brave, loyal, understanding, unselfish — for the rest of your life. Coincidentally perhaps the very qualities that make "good wives."

The Observer could have asked a woman to write an Opinion page about motherhood. For most genera-

tions, women had few options: join a religious group, clean and cook for others, stay home and care for aging parents, become a prostitute. Other jobs were not considered women's work.

As history shows, becoming a mother for lack of other options contributes to poor parenting. Limited options/opportunities for girls deprived society of half of its potential contributions in every endeavor and field. Fortunately, times have changed radically since I was a girl. Now, girls can dream big. Girls can follow those dreams. Motherhood is one of unlimited options.

I thanked my mother for her full devotion to mothering us, although her life may well have been more satisfying personally doing other things. Her example helped me realize there were other things I'd rather do with my life. She understood.

"We cannot forget those who served" is the title of the article about forgotten remains of soldiers from World War I and since. Nice juxtaposition. Mothers should raise children surrounded in love. Then the government sends them to war and has to be reminded not to forget their remains. The media is not allowed to cover children returning in boxes from wars. Too upsetting? Would it cause people to question and resist our government going

to war without congressional consent? War is a huge money maker for the 1%.

Honor is particularly due to mothers today guiding the next generation to become the change we so desperately need.

Mary McCracken
Island City

Ogier: Consider national security implications of climate change

To the Editor:
In 2015 the U.S. Defense Department released a 14-page report on the national security implications of climate change underlining the importance of acknowledging that it's happening now, and identifying the associated international and national security risks. The security risk stems from degraded living conditions, human security and the inability of governments to meet the basic needs of populations.

Climate change will have huge implications for our national security interests over the foreseeable future by aggravating existing problems of poverty, social tensions, environmental degradation, ineffectual leadership and weak political institutions that threatens domestic stability in a number of countries. The acknowledgment of how climate change affects ongoing security should stun everyone.

Write to us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Oregon can begin to address the climate crises we face by passing House Bill 2020. The Oregon Climate Action Program it establishes would target only the largest climate polluters in the state which, for too long, have been allowed to fill our atmosphere with greenhouse gas emissions. Let's band together to address what the Pentagon calls our greatest national security threat. I urge you to read this report and then immediately call or email your local representatives to urge their support for House Bill 2020. For more information visit <https://socan.eco/cej>.

Vanessa Ogier
Grants Pass

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