

# Flower town's shift to pot creates stink

Marijuana has become new crop of choice

By AMY TAXIN  
Associated Press

CARPINTERIA, Calif. — This picturesque coastal town cradled by mountains and sandy shores is a scene out of a Southern California postcard. Residents of Carpinteria say they feel lucky to live in what they consider a slice of paradise.

But change is in the air. And sometimes, they say, it stinks.

That's because marijuana has become a new crop of choice in the farmlands surrounding this tight-knit community of 14,000, which has long helped fuel the U.S. cut flower industry.

Residents say a thick, skunk-like odor from the marijuana plants settles over the valley in the evenings and before dawn. To keep out the stench, they have tried stuffing pillows under doors, lighting incense and shutting windows, a reluctant choice since it also keeps out the cool ocean breezes that are part of the town's allure.

"We don't want a marijuana smell," said Xave Saragosa, a 73-year-old retired sheriff's deputy who was born and raised in the town and lives near a greenhouse that grows marijuana. "We want fresh air." Saragosa said the odor pervades his hillside home at night and keeps his wife up coughing.

Carpinteria, about 85 miles from Los Angeles, is in the



AP Photo/Jae C. Hong

Workers in a greenhouse growing cannabis plants in Carpinteria, Calif.

southeast corner of Santa Barbara County, a tourist area famous for its beaches, wine and temperate climate. It's also becoming known as a haven for cannabis growers.

The county amassed the largest number of marijuana cultivation licenses in California since broad legalization arrived on Jan. 1 — about 800, according to state data compiled by The Associated Press. Two-thirds of them are in Carpinteria and Lompoc, a larger agricultural city about an hour's drive to the northwest.

Virtually all of Carpinteria's licenses are for small, "mixed-light" facilities, which essentially means greenhouses.

The result is a large number of licenses but small total acreage. Only about 200 acres

of the county's farmland is devoted to marijuana, compared with tens of thousands sown with strawberries and vegetables, said Dennis Bozanic, who oversees the county's marijuana planning.

The area's greenhouses have their roots in Carpinteria's cut flower industry, which was sapped after the U.S. government granted trade preferences to South American countries in the 1990s to encourage their farmers to grow flowers instead of coca, the plant used to make cocaine.

In an ironic twist, some California flower growers weary of import competition have started trying to grow cannabis, a plant that, like coca, is deemed illicit by the federal government. Others have sold their green-

houses to marijuana investors.

"We have literally no carnation production in the United States any longer because South America grows them so cheaply," said Kasey Cronquist, chief executive of the California Cut Flower Commission. "Farmers had to move crops, and that is what we have seen happen over time — they've gone to crops that are more valuable or more difficult for Ecuador and Colombia to ship."

Domestic cut flower growers saw their share of the U.S. market drop to 27 percent in 2015 from 58 percent in 1991. Sales of imported cut flowers grew to more than \$1 billion during the same period, according to data compiled by the commission.

# California teacher pension system targets gun sellers

By DON THOMPSON  
Associated Press

WEST SACRAMENTO, Calif. — One of the largest public pension funds in the nation has voted to use its financial might to pressure gun retailers across the country to stop selling military-style assault weapons and accessories like rapid-fire "bump stocks" used at the 2017 Las Vegas mass shooting.

The \$222.5 billion California State Teachers' Retirement System said it will try to unseat board members at companies that resist and could dump its stock in those retailers if they still refuse to conform to laws already in effect in California.

The fund plans an accompanying publicity drive to leverage the student-led nationwide push following the February massacre at a Florida high school. Fund officials also are lobbying other pension funds and investors to join their drive. The system funds pensions for more than 900,000 public school educators and their families.

Aside from outlawing bump stocks and restricting assault-style weapons, California bans sales of magazines holding more than 10 bullets and assault rifles that can rap-

idly be reloaded.

Opponents said the board is setting a dangerous precedent.

If Congress and other states won't act to prevent schools "from becoming killing fields, then let's take the battle to where the money is," said state Treasurer John Chiang, a Democrat who led the push and is running for governor in next month's primary election.

The board acted as Democratic state lawmakers introduced legislation that would require the nation's largest public pension system to similarly pressure retailers to stop selling military-style weapons and attachments. The \$350 billion California Public Employees' Retirement System declined to do so in March.

Both the teachers and public employee funds had already divested from assault weapon manufacturers after the 2012 slayings at a Connecticut elementary school.

San Diego area teacher Jessica Moore told board members Wednesday that her job now includes plotting exit routes and comforting children during lockdowns. "I think in terms of taking a bullet for them," she said tearfully.

# California National Guard begins border training

By JULIE WATSON  
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — After a contentious standoff between the state and federal government, California National Guard troops started training Thursday with the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol to be camera operators, radio dispatchers and to fill other support roles.

President Donald Trump ordered National Guard troops to deploy to the U.S.-Mexico border to help federal authorities combat illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

California's all-Democratic leadership has positioned the state as a national leader in battling the Trump administration, especially on immigration issues. Government leaders at the state level and in big cities have condemned mass raids and deportation efforts, Trump's call for a border wall with Mexico and Attorney General Jeff Sessions' "zero tolerance" order to prosecute people caught illegally entering the United States for the first time.

Gov. Jerry Brown agreed to contribute 400 troops to the National Guard's deployment to the Mexican border to help go after drugs, guns and criminal gangs — not immigrants.

The governor has said under the terms of the agreement the state reached with the Trump administration, the Guard cannot handle custody duties for anyone accused of immigration violations, build border barriers or have anything to do with immigration enforcement.

Some troops could start their new jobs as soon as Sunday, which will free up agents to patrol the Mexican border but keep National Guard members away from the international line so they do not have contact with migrants.

Maj. Kimberly Holman told The Associated Press that some of the 250 troops who volunteered for the call to help Border Patrol agents started their on-the-job training Thursday after meeting their Border Patrol supervisors in San Diego.

"This will free up the green shirts — the badge agents — and get them out on line," Holman said, adding that troops volunteered for the mission because they want to keep California safe.

"Nobody has been ordered to come here," she said.

"Everyone is here by choice and has said, 'I would like to support this mission.'"

So far, 250 are in place but more troops may be added as the Border Patrol needs them, Holman said.

William Rogers, supervisory Border Patrol agent for the San Diego sector, said troops are being put in jobs that will keep them away from migrants. For example, he said National Guard camera operators will work monitoring video inside Border Patrol facilities and will not be assigned to manning a camera from a vehicle parked at the international line.

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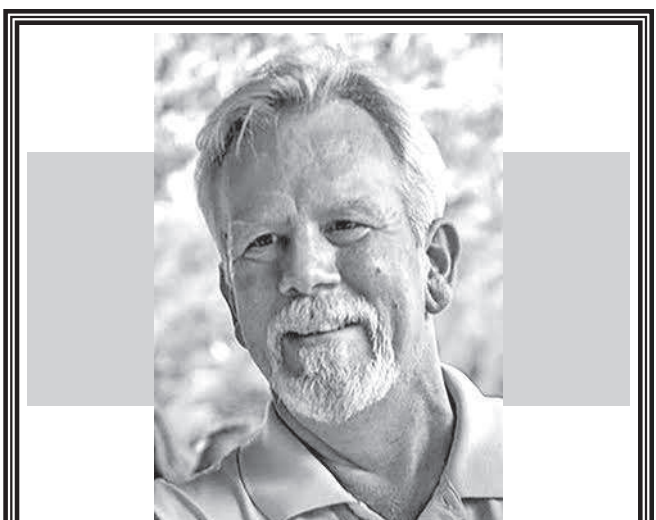
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The Morgan family is so grateful for the love, kindness and support received since Doug Morgan passed 2 weeks ago. Thank you for the condolences, prayers, calls, texts, cards, flowers, and donations to the Knappa Kids Wrestling in his honor. Doug's Celebration of life was on Sunday. Thank you to all that attended, it was a beautiful tribute to an amazing man. Thank you to Knappa High School for the use of your facility and thank you Lavonne, Scott, Heidi, Sharon, Heidi, Brian and Pam Dutton, and Pastor Gary and Sandy Geer, for the hours spent preparing, cooking and cleaning. There are no words to describe how grateful we are for you. For everyone behind the scenes that helped or offered to help, we are so thankful for you. We are so fortunate for the love and compassion from this wonderful community and our family and friends. Doug will love on in our hearts forever."