

BECON
10/24/25

Today's meeting was much less spicy today – very m e l l o w. I might even say we were a bit dazed and confused but maybe that had to do more with our speaker's topic than anything else. Everyone seemed to have a really good appetite though – it's like they had the munchies or something? There was a weird smell wafting through the room though – must have been a skunk in the parking lot.

Guests

- Darryl W. introduced Mike Gordon, a high school friend and retired Air Force officer and OBGYN.
- Charlie L. introduced close friend Jennifer Owen, who, together with Charlie, did numerous Fairground/MetraPark master planning workshops and presentations. You may recognize Jennifer's name as she is running for Mayor and is also a Heights Exchange member.
- Mary Jane Spicoli – I can't remember who's guest she was but only that she drifted into the meeting like smoke in a gentle breeze and just sat in the back with a little grin and giggled a lot.

Announcements

- Shawnee – You Can't Call Me Four-Eyes No More – Krauszer, began the announcements by promising not to swear at the meeting, which was kind of boring but I guess more Presidential and if we see her wearing glasses after her Lasix surgery we'll know she is just doing it for the Presidential look.
- For everyone who participated in the Dress A Child event last Saturday – thanks much! A huge success – again. And we were able to help with that as well as providing a big check to the Salvation Army (I hope that is what I heard).
- Unfortunately, the Halloween Pub Crawl had to get cancelled due to a low signup but thanks Tanner and the Social Committee for offering this up – hopefully, this comes around again.
- Put the Pancakes for Prevention (as in the prevention of child abuse – the national project for X-Chng as you know) on your calendar for the morning of Nov. 22nd before the Cat/Griz game as you probably are already aware. Watch party following – both at the Legion.
- A couple of money-making concerts (we hope) are coming up at the end of the month with Zach Topp on the 31st and Mercy Me the next day. Check the list to see if you are working.
- A speaker is needed for our December 5th and 19th meetings, so if you know of someone/something to offer up to the group, let Madam President know so she can get that scheduled.

- A group from our club is planning on heading to the capital city – Helena that is – for their Exchange Club’s annual Wine Fest, which is supposed to be pretty darn fun and a good fundraiser for them. So, if you want to join, let Shawnee know so you ’al can get coordinated.

Speaker

Our very own Tanya Tweten was our speaker today and spoke to us about the cannabis industry, with whom she has been working in for the last couple of years after her retiring from her legal career – out of the fire and into the frying pan so to speak. And my apologies to Tanya for my clever (or not so clever, as the case may be) quips on ganja, pot, weed, grass, reefer, dope (I wonder why there are so many names for this?) here because she is very professional and her talk was super informative and interesting.

First off cannabis products can, or do not, have THC – the stuff that makes you high. The other cannabinoids like the CBDs, CBGs, CBNs of the magic plant, provide the pain relief desired by many, and it is the Terpenes (plant-based chemical compounds) present that give the cannabis its sensory attributes (i.e. aromas, colors, flavors) and the cannabis specific effects.

Tanya works for High Mountain dispensary who both grows and distributes their products that come from the Apple Fritter plant. (note: a dispensary does not have to grow their own plants). High Mountain has five stores in MT but are sourced by their one grow room located in Billings that is typically continually growing 400 plants.

This industry is highly regulated and still illegal on the Federal level but legal in some states like MT although the counties themselves determine if they are “green” and will allow cannabis sales; and all sales are still cash because of the limitations on where this cash can go because of Federal laws. Once a plant reaches a height of 12” that plant is tagged and on the radar of the state regulators until sold. The state does schedule annual inspections of cannabis shops but also does surprise inspections to make sure everything is on the up and up.

The THC concentrations in the modern pot plant are a lot higher than your father’s pot up to a max concentration of 35%. As such, each plant gets tested at a lab in Kalispell that assays the concentration % of the cannabinoids. And you don’t just smoke the stuff anymore as you probably already know – edibles like gummies, are very popular and then of course there all of the non-THC products - rubs, creams, lotions, etc., that are used for pain relief. The good stuff from High Mountain (red label) goes for \$14 a gram. The lower grade (red label) is \$10 a gram – one gummy weighs about 10 milligrams.

Tanya filled us full of interesting facts and figures including:

- It takes about 10 months for a plant to grow to the sale size, and a harvest occurs about every 2 weeks at High Mountain.
- The plants themselves are cloned so the lineage of the best plants can be continued.
- Even though the THC concentrations are higher, weed actually does not create a life-threatening addiction as its use can be stopped without the side effects and withdrawal symptoms of other drugs and alcohol.
- Cannabis can't be marketed, and you must be 21 to purchase the products.
- Grow/distribution licenses are still cheaper than liquor licenses, at least in Billings, but will still run in the quarter-million dollar range – up from about \$5,000 when these first went on sale.
- Yellowstone County has a lot of casinos but not to be outdone, there are currently 87 dispensaries in our county which is part of the reason that House Bill 27 was passed to place a moratorium on issuing more licenses.
- Cannabis taxes include a state Adult-Use tax of 20% and 4% Medical Marijuana tax, and Yellowstone County imposes another 3% local option tax. Six-million dollars of the tax money goes to the Healing and Ending Addiction through Recovery and Treatment account with 20% of the remainder going to FWP.
- Any product sold at a dispensary leaves the store in an “exit” bag, which is a non-descript bag that is not supposed to be enticing to children. Kind of like the plain brown wrapper on your Playboy magazine . . . I heard (is Playboy still sold?).

Congrats to Craig for winning the raffle this morning. I think I heard him saying something about buying shots with the proceeds – or maybe I was just high?

Have a great weekend!