



## **What Is New at the Abbey: CBD Laws and Business Mountains**

The Fall harvest isn't quite complete, although we've begun with the annual tradition of having all the carpets cleaned, filters changed, ducts cleaned, in the aftermath of bringing in the crops. The Sisters of the Valley was a dream, three years ago, and today, I am happy to report that I share the view from the mountaintop with Sister Darcy, and she shares my vision of what we shall become.

I can't speak for the people's whose lives intersect with mine, but I feel like my personal view of life is that I climbed an impossible mountain and now, *uitendelijk*, I am breathing fresh air, hope, progress once again. I look down on the many plateaus upon which I got stuck, and the many times I

circled hopelessly at the bottom of a precipice, making no progress, working so hard just to stay in place. The theme song from Orange is the New Black speaks to my heart, to the sadness that overcame me when I was stuck: *“Taking steps is easy, standing still is hard.”*

After imagining Sisters of the Valley as a business, as a life-style concept, after fomenting ideas and concepts for years, this was the year she was born. And she was born to the world with dignity and honor and five-star testimonials. A year ago, we were focused on supplying California dispensaries at wholesale, [high-THC tinctures](#), salves and teas. Today, we are focused on retail sales of high CBD products that we sell nationwide and internationally. It’s kind of like the business was born a boy, but turned girl by the time she was one year old. THC medicine is the masculine side of cannabis, where CBD is the feminine. (I just made that up.)

I think, sometimes, dreams are like cats. You have to ignore them, for them to come to you. It had always been my dream to drag the poverty out of the valley (or at least a few residents or a community), by infusing the valley with income from the rest of the world. It was how the wine and almond and pomegranate businesses were born here, and how they thrive. (You can’t really understand the poverty here until you’ve lived here.) When I began Sisters of the Valley, however, I was just focused on making a living for myself, in the aftermath of the family calamity and my personal brush with homelessness.

As part of a market trial, halfway through the year, we put our non-psychoactives in an on-line store and our focus and our prayers and our energies were suddenly brought to where they belong. The dispensary bread-and-butter business comes

from the stoner population. The CBD customers are those that are interested in the healing and physical pain relief. The turn of direction brought us home.

I don't know why the folks in the industry decided to get on the CBD internet sales band-wagon just this year, when the law changed eleven years ago. But this past year has certainly been the year that CBD products went mainstream. I suspect it has something to do with the special strains that have been bred to be high CBD and that has to do with modifying Mother Nature, and that's a process that takes awhile.

On February 6, 2004 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a unanimous decision in favor of the HIA (Hemp Industry Association) in which Judge Betty Fletcher wrote, **"...non-psychoactive hemp is not included in Schedule I. The DEA has no authority to regulate drugs that are not scheduled, and it has not followed procedures required to schedule a substance. The DEA's definition of "THC" contravenes the unambiguously expressed intent of Congress in the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) and cannot be upheld"**.

The net effect of this ruling nearly twelve years ago, is that we had to mess with Mother Nature, not to improve her, but to [satisfy laws](#) that are silly, anyway. Some people complain that the [CBD medicine](#) (alone) give them headaches, but if taken with THC, they don't get that side effect. So local folks with chronic pain, or with cancer, can buy the CBD tincture from us, but have to get a cannabis card to acquire the THC tincture through a licensed dispensary, and basically, what I see happening is that we are breaking up Mother Nature, just to discover she was better in one piece. (Bernie wants to take the whole plant off the Schedule I drug list, and, yes, he's our man and yes, we will be 'activating' for him.)



In the past weekend, we held an 'all weekend conference' with the newly-formed Sisters of the Valley board. We made some strategy decisions. We reviewed financials. We took a tour of the farm. We narrowed our marketing focus. We decided on Equity. We decided on Incorporation State. Many things.

The City has [refused us our business license](#) and we have to figure out a way to appeal that decision. No surprise, but the local planning office doesn't know CBD from catshit. The farm mortgage people have demanded a ton of documents... yet we are hoping to go out on a road trip next week to Humboldt County to acquire CBD wholesale for our next batches. Winter crop planning is in process. We have the college kids coming for Thanksgiving, followed by a special visitor coming from Croatia on December first, then farm-house interior painting and floors to lay, a college graduation ceremony at UC Davis December 13th, and a move to the farm just after Winter Solstice.

We have more mountains to climb for the [business](#), of course. The one we just climbed was the first of four. We had to produce a quality product. The second mountain to climb is in securing profit. We are beginning this month to put 15% of receipts in a 'profit savings' to treat profit as if it is an

expense and, thereby, protect it.

The third mountain is quality of life and ease of operations. That means, once we climb the next mountain, the Sisters can work on toning down the twelve hour work days. And after we climb those, we climb the one that's all about legacy and making a system-built enterprise that goes on long after we are all six feet under.

More mountains. But as the song says, taking steps is easy, standing still is hard.



