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Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

I was so shocked it took me a moment to get mad. I have been a member of the Moraga Country Club for years, and my daughter had participated in their youth programs throughout grade school. So why did it take me this long to notice that the annual tennis classic paid out more than twice as much to the men's winner than the women's winner? It's probably because I don't play tennis and was just there to get some balls for my dogs. But there it was, proudly posted in black and white. I spoke to several people including the pro and club manager, researched the history of pay inequity in tennis, and read varying opinions on the matter. There are a lot of opinions, and a few interesting facts. Since 1973 the USTA has offered equal prize money to men and women, and in 2007 Wimbledon became the last of the Grand Slam events to do the same. Arguments for and against equal prize money center around the number of actual competitors (there are more men), the men's five vs. women's three game sets, play per point or actual playing time comparisons (women tend to have longer rallies), entertainment value, and the sources of revenue streams. These vary widely from match to match and year to year. This year for instance, America's top women's player, Serena Williams, has been much more successful and popular than the top U.S. men's player, John Isner.

Local clubs are the fertile ground from which young athletes develop into world-class professionals. I was assured that MCC's 25 year tournament tradition of pay disparity against women tennis players is consistent with the model of other USTA tournaments. In this case however, tradition is over-rated, but my strongest objection to this situation is based on the fact that MCC promotes tennis programs for kids from ages 5 to 18, bringing hundreds of our children into the sport. What kind of message does this send to our young girls when they see the prize money totals? Are they too stupid to do simple math? What kind of message are we sending to our young boys? Are they inherently worth more than girls? USTA Jr. Team Tennis touts itself as "promoting important values." What kind of values are we communicating by perpetuating this practice? The Board members of MCC need to revisit this issue and understand that they have a moral imperative to become true role models. Let them know what you think by emailing them at boardofdirectors@moragacc.com.

Editor:

A rift has developed between Gov. Jerry Brown and Orinda Mayor, Steve Glazer, according to the Los Angeles Times (July 30). The rift is significant because Glazer managed Brown's 2010 election campaign and is, according to the Times, Brown's "top fund raiser."

In the November 2012 election, Glazer is supporting a one-half percentage point increase in the Orinda sales tax. The Orinda City Council, which includes Glazer, voted unanimously on July 17 to put the Orinda sales-tax hike on the November ballot. For the same election, Brown wants a one-quarter point increase in the sales tax. If both measures pass, the Orinda sales tax will go from its current 8.25 percent to 9.0 percent.

Apparently, Brown is worried that Orinda's tax measure will jeopardize the governor's own tax plan. According to the Times: "... Brown's clout apparently doesn't stretch to Orinda, where the City Council voted unanimously to ask voters to raise local sales taxes to help raise money for road improvements." Currently, California has the highest statutory sales tax in the nation. The Orinda and Brown tax plans will make the sale-tax tax burden even higher. The hike in the Orinda sales tax will go for the repair of Orinda's bad roads.

Brown's plan will give California the highest top personal state income tax bracket in the nation: 13.3 percent. Currently, California's current top bracket of 9.3 percent begins at an annual income level of \$48,000.

Orinda's roads do need repair, so the Orinda tax plan may produce higher home values. The Brown plan will only make California less competitive with such states as Texas. Voters should soundly reject Brown's tax measure. Perhaps Glazer should tell the governor that California should be lowering taxes statewide to create more jobs and investment in the Golden State.

Richard Colman
Orinda

Editor:

Some years ago there was a weekly television program featuring country music and down-home humor... "Hee Haw." Each week there was a short sketch in which a "patient" would wiggle his finger or bend his elbow or lift his arm above his head and tell the "doctor," "It hurts when I do this," to which the "doctor" always responded by hitting the "patient" with a rubber chicken and saying, "Then, don't do that!"

I was reminded of that routine the other day when I listened to a longer-than-usual National Public Radio report about a growing water shortage in the second-most-populous state in the nation, Texas. One of the interviewees said solving that problem would require "thinking outside the box" because, as another interviewee explained, the Texas population is expected to double by 20-something-or-other. Meanwhile, in the most-populous state in the nation, California, teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, our legislature took on several billion dollars of additional debt to begin a "high-speed" railway project and our governor wants to pump billions of gallons of Northern California water to Southern California, because our population is expected to double by 20-something-or-other.

Where is that "Hee Haw" "doctor" with his rubber chicken when we need him... to pummel politicians and say, "Then, don't do that"... don't keep doubling America's population. Apparently, "thinking outside the box" does not include thinking about stabilizing our population. Too bad... especially for our descendants.

So, all together now, let's join our governor in singing: "Under the Delta and through the tubes, to Grandmother's pool it flows. The fish know the way, they'll die in the Bay, unless it really sno--ows!"

Edward C. Hartman
Moraga

Diana Stephens
Orinda

Editor:

Your Aug. 1 story about new Miramonte basketball coach Drew McDonald was short a couple of points. He was an high school All-American water polo player at Miramonte, a college All-American at Stanford, and has a silver medal from the U.S. Olympic Water Polo team.

The balls are different colors but let's hope the results are the same.

Donald Tafjen, Sr.
Orinda

Editor:

To all my Lamorinda friends, as I leave my position as Community Liaison for the late Supervisor Gayle B. Uilkema, I extend my gratitude for the rich experience I have had in this role. In Gayle's words, I served to channel information between county government and local citizens. She wanted to be always connected to her constituents and I was honored to be part of that process.

I have met and enjoyed becoming acquainted with you, my Lamorinda neighbors. It has been invaluable to me to participate in the heart of the community.

Thank you for the gracious reception I always received at meetings and events. I look forward to seeing you while I am out and about in our community.

With warmest wishes,

Carol Yates
Lafayette

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