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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POSTED: July 25, 2010

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VIEWPOINT: District voting proposal should be on ballots in November

By LANCE D. COLLINS

Everyone on Maui cares about protecting the environment. We all care about ensuring that there are enough good-paying jobs. Keeping the cost of living down is a universally shared concern. We look to our local government as the primary place where these goals can be achieved.

One way to improve our county government is to elect council members by individual districts. District voting is not a new idea. Since the first Maui County Charter Commission in 1964, the idea has been discussed. From the start, the people of Molokai came to every Charter Commission asking for district voting. But, by majority votes it was decided that the system in place worked for our community, which was still primarily an agriculture-based economy.

As the 1980s wore on and tourism came to replace sugar and pineapple, the population and the diversity of needs of the community grew. We became like a patchwork quilt with different ideas and needs tied together by a common thread. Like other areas of the state at the time, these changes renewed calls for district voting. The idea was adopted in Honolulu and on the Big Island.

On Maui, however, a compromise was reached between the proponents of district voting and the old system. It is our current system. In this system, the district is countywide, or at-large, but each seat has a different residency area requirement that was set permanently in 1991. This compromise attempted to get area representation without offending the constitutional requirement of one person, one vote.

Yet, Maui as a diverse community has continued to grow and change. The countywide at-large system has been unable to efficiently or effectively respond to the diversity of needs and desires of our community. It's very difficult for any one person to be one of nine people who have to represent the same diverse group of 140,000 people.

The Maui County Council is considering a proposal by the West Maui Charter Working Group to put on the ballot in November, a measure to change our current system to nine single-member districts. A scientific poll conducted by Honolulu research firm Qmark Research in mid-April found that 65 percent of Maui County voters support single-member district voting. While Lanai support is slightly lower at 60 percent, the number is higher than average for East Maui at 69 percent, and 75 percent on Molokai.

Like the state House and Senate and federal congressional districting method, an apportionment commission would be convened every 10 years to review the population changes and draw up nine districts in a fair and reasonable manner after careful and transparent deliberations.

A few people oppose this change. They say that the voters don't understand district voting so it shouldn't be put on the ballot. They say that district voting will destroy small towns. And they say that Lanai, Molokai and East Maui are better represented under the current system.

The Big Island has had single-member districts for 20 years now. While sugar has disappeared, small

### Fact Box

#### GUIDELINES FOR LETTERS

In order to expedite the process of receiving, editing and publishing submissions to Letters on the Opinion pages, The Maui News has established the following guidelines:

- Letters must not exceed 250 words.
- Writers are limited to two published letters per month.
- Handwritten letters are not accepted.
- Every submission must include the writer's name, community and a phone number where the writer can be reached. The number is not published.
- Letters submitted via e-mail ([letters@mauinews.com](mailto:letters@mauinews.com)) or the Virtual Newsroom on The Maui News Web site ([www.mauinews.com](http://www.mauinews.com)) are given priority.
- Poetry is not accepted.
- All letters are subject to editing.
- Viewpoints are limited to subjects particular to Maui County or the State of Hawaii, and the writer must have proven expertise in connection with the subject.

The Letters section is among the most popular features of The Maui News and submissions on subjects of general interest are welcome. Adherence to the guidelines above will allow for the publication of a greater volume of letters on a wider range of issues from a more diverse group of writers. Thanks to all contributors to the Letters section for your cooperation.

-- The Maui News



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towns around the Big Island continue to thrive as Hilo and Kona also grow.

Currently, Lanai has a 2 percent influence in all nine races - including the Lanai seat. Under single-member districts, that would be about a 20 percent influence in the district that includes Lanai. Molokai has a 5 percent influence in all nine races. Under single-member districts, that would be almost a 50 percent say in the district that includes Molokai. The Big Island has shown that single-member districts can be effectively used by rural areas to increase civic participation and influence in county decision-making.

I wholeheartedly reject the idea that the people in our community do not understand single-member district voting. I also reject the idea that the people in our community do not have the ability to compare the two systems and make an informed decision. I urge you to contact all council members and ask that they put this important and timely proposal on November's ballot at their Aug. 6 meeting. We ought to spend the next months debating the merits of the proposal and not whether it should be on the ballot.

\* Lance D. Collins is an attorney and is secretary of the West Maui Charter Working Group.

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VIEWPOINT: Maalaea association will continue seeking alternatives to injection wells

By PAM DAOUST

For the past two-and-a-half years, the Maalaea Community Association has considered former Council Member Michelle Anderson to be our heroine. She was the first public official to agree to help us find alternatives to injection wells that we feared were contributing to reef collapse at Maalaea.

Early in 2008, MCA's then-president met with Anderson to ask for help in obtaining funds to find out what was killing the reef and what could be done about it. Anderson soon informed us that she was preparing a federal grant application to address these issues. She asked for injection well information which we eagerly provided. When she left Maui, Anderson's assistant, Jock Yamaguchi, urged us to remain involved. In March 2009, Rep. Mazie Hirono's office informed MCA of the grant's approval.

Before releasing funds, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration asked for the grant to be rewritten. Yamaguchi, now Council Member Wayne Nishiki's assistant, submitted a rewritten grant that called for nitrogen-15 isotope testing and a plan of attack to address pollution sources revealed by testing. It seemed the best possible use of the curtailed amount of money.

The county's Department of Environmental Management decided to rescind this effort and submit its own rewrite calling for a verification of past studies and leaving specifics up to bidders.

When we vigorously pressed for nitrogen testing and solutions, department officials offered the option of a preliminary engineering survey for a package sewage treatment plant for Maalaea. We asked: Will such a plant rely on injection wells? Answer: Yes. Will the county help build or obtain funds for it? Answer: No.

We chose to keep supporting what Anderson's own former assistant and Nishiki had recommended. Of the five bids received, we understand that two addressed these goals, yet department officials chose to go with a general study of the bay and very inconclusive testing.

We apologize to Anderson for believing - and acting on the belief - that this grant was a direct response to the MCA's 2008 request (Viewpoint, July 16).

However, we will continue to cry wolf when necessary. The county's behind-the-scenes maneuvering to avoid nitrogen-15 isotope testing indeed may result in lost opportunities and wasted funding. Done elsewhere on Maui, nitrogen testing has shown that the county's own injection wells are implicated in causing reef-destroying algae blooms. Perhaps this grant could have identified solutions for them as well as for us.

The MCA will continue pursuing alternatives to aging septic systems in Maalaea. But we need a solution that doesn't allow harmful nutrients to continue seeping into the nearby ocean via injection wells or other sources. We have sent a revised scope of work to the council's Infrastructure Management Committee and respectfully await its decision.

\* Pam Daoust is the chairwoman of the Maalaea Community Association's Environmental Committee.

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APOLOGY WANTED FOR ARAKAWA'S COMMENTS

Alan Arakawa's radio comments about how to shoot Mayor Charmaine Tavares were way over the top and shocking. Furthermore, he made the comment very publicly on his own radio show.

In these days of terrorism and acts of violence - even on our own island - his words are especially irresponsible and unacceptable. If he made those comments on the Mainland against a mayor, I wonder if it wouldn't be a case for Homeland Security. Arakawa should be sanctioned both publicly and by the radio station.

Arakawa needs to apologize to both the mayor and the residents of Maui County. Paying for his own radio show does not give him the right to incite negative and violent behavior. Those words show that this man is not fit for public office.

Melinda Clarke

Kihei

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URGE LAWMAKERS TO STAND UP FOR PACE

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) is an innovative program that holds tremendous opportunity for

our community.

PACE allows property owners to make energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements and to pay for the cost over time through their local property assessment. It's a voluntary program that creates local jobs and saves on energy.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac recently declared that such programs violate the terms of mortgages owned by those companies, which are by far the vast majority of American mortgages. Their actions have temporarily shut down PACE throughout the country.

There are 37,000 special assessment districts that have been used to finance sewers, sidewalks and business improvement districts yet federal regulators have singled out PACE and announced that clean energy assessment districts should not be permitted. In addition to violating state rights, this action impedes our nation's efforts toward fossil fuel independence.

On July 15, a bill was introduced in Congress to rectify this - the PACE Assessment Protection Act of 2010. As our voice in Congress, Rep. Mazie Hirono and Sens. Daniel Inouye and Daniel Akaka should stand up for PACE and help resolve this dispute with Fannie and Freddie once and for all.

Between our weak economy and overdependence on oil, now is not the time to turn our backs on this promising program.

Brad Parsons

Lahaina

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#### PENALTIES DON'T SEEM STRONG ENOUGH

It's possible that a life of crime might be a viable solution to today's financial woes. I'm definitely considering it. The penalties, should you not make a clean getaway, don't seem to amount to much when compared to scratching for a living legally.

On this island, anything shy of 50 prior convictions combined with a woeful "I'm sorry" is a veritable get-out-of-jail-free card

As reported in this paper on July 12, a recent violent crime that took place at a cockfight, which I believe is in itself an illegal activity, garnered a painfully stiff probation for the offender. One of the stipulations was that he not attend any cockfights.

I, honest citizen that I currently am, would think that engaging in any illegal activity would forfeit one's probation.

Does this mean he is free to do other crimes without having his probation revoked?

One begins to wonder when the probationers will outnumber the rest of us.

Sometimes I think Judge Joel August ought to change his name to Judge Scott Free.

I've already rehearsed my tearful apology, now all I need is a ski mask and a bar of soap I can carve into a pistol.

Robert Shaw

Pukalani

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#### ADA HELPS STUDENT SUCCEED

On July 26, 1990, the Americans With Disabilities Act became law. Back then, I was unaware of the impact this document would have on my life. Twenty years later, I'm much more informed but still marveling at just how profoundly ADA has assisted me. It's more than a law. It is the embodiment of the ideal that all are created equal.

When I was 14, I was diagnosed with autism. Among other things, it explained my difficulty concentrating when overloaded with sensory input. It wasn't until I enrolled in university that I realized how much that impacted my class performance.

A kindhearted professor directed me to the Office of Disability Services. There I was educated about a radical concept: I didn't have to grit my teeth and deal. I could ask for a private testing area and earplugs. With these accommodations, my grades soared. I felt proud of myself. I realized that with help and understanding I could flourish.

ADA guaranteed me those accommodations. It promised one of my dear friends, a very talented journalism student who uses a wheelchair and vent, the equipment to become a talented photojournalist and writer and the ability to attend all of his classes in accessible rooms.

It's ensured that we are all respected as students and human beings deserving dignity.

ADA for me has made the difference between living as an independent, productive individual and a bleak existence that's difficult to even contemplate.

To all who supported, advocated for and passed ADA, mahalo.

Leah Grantham

Lahaina

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#### FINANCIAL PLANNING HELP IS AVAILABLE

Many residents in our community are asking if the economy get even worse before it gets better.

This is a real worry. And it's driving many of us to re-evaluate how to best manage our complex personal finance goals.

The good news is that there are qualified people to whom we can turn for answers. A timely new public opinion survey from Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc., which celebrated its 25th anniversary recently, shows that Americans in search of the answers are turning to financial planners for help.

As a certified financial planner professional who lives and works here on Maui, I wasn't surprised to learn that nearly two out of three Americans have financial concerns that are now much or somewhat greater than at the start of the financial crisis two years ago.

In 1985, when CFP Board was created, there were just a handful CFP professionals nationwide. Today, there are more than 61,000 CFP professionals in the United States working to help their clients live better lives through the process of financial planning.

With the future direction of the U.S. economy still in question and with the stock market and job market in turmoil, more and more Americans will turn to professional financial planners for experienced assistance with their finances. That's a good thing for investors and it's a good thing for people who want to see our financial markets reinvigorated and back on their feet.

Janis Casco

Lahaina

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#### LAHAINA TURN SIGNAL BEING INSTALLED

Lahaina Bypass Now, a volunteer community group, has been working closely with the state Department of Transportation on issues affecting West Maui roadways.

We, early on, identified a problem with the Keawe Street intersection and suggested to the DOT that it accelerate its timetable to fix and improve the intersection of Keawe Street and the highway, and not wait for the completion of Phase 1-A of the Lahaina bypass. The DOT agreed to do so.

As everyone knows, exiting the Gateway Shopping Center and exiting Walgreens on the other side if you are planning to go south toward Lahaina has been extremely difficult and time consuming. Construction is now under way with an end of July targeted completion date to install a dedicated left-turn lane with a green arrow, making it a lot easier and faster to exit the shopping center and go south.

LBN has developed a mutually respectful relationship with the DOT and continues to have excellent communication with the department and with Hawaiian Dredging, the general contractor on this project.

We sincerely appreciate their cooperation and their willingness to keep LBN updated on their progress so we in turn can update all of our residents.

Bob Pure

President, Board of Directors

Lahaina Bypass Now

Lahaina

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#### GOVERNOR WAS RIGHT IN VETO OF HB444

In response to "Veto is not an issue of civil rights" (Letters, July 19):

Now there's a pastor if I ever saw one. Thank you for the eloquently stated viewpoint on the veto of HB444.

I wholeheartedly agree with the letter writer and Gov. Linda Lingle. I especially agree with the governor's words: "The legislative maneuvering that brought HB 444 to an eleventh-hour vote, on the final day of the session, via a suspension of the rules, after legislators lead the public to believe that the bill was dead, was wrong and unfair to the public they represent."

In my humble opinion, what the advocates of HB 444 are now experiencing is called bachi - loosely defined as what goes around, comes around. Finally, their uncitizenship calls to "buy-cott" law-abiding entrepreneurs is despicable.

Greg Correa

Wailuku

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#### PRO-CIVIL UNIONS STANCE MAY HURT CANDIDATES

Is there some reason a number of candidates in this year's run for the state House take such little stock in the prevailing wind of thought blowing across our state?

For example, Netra Halperin, a pro-civil unions candidate for the House in District 11, told me that 10 percent of all resident citizens in Hawaii are gay. If her statewide estimate of 10 percent holds up in the 11th District, she can count on a minimum of 848 pro-civil union votes going into the election. (In 2008, there were 8,485 votes cast in 11th District.)

If she's wrong, however, she'll be looking at the backsides of approximately 7,514 other voters in her district who may not see it the same way.

At that juncture, not even Paul the Octopus can save her.

Martin DuPont

Pukalani

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A VOTE FOR KOPELMAN IS A VOTE FOR IDEAL SOCIETY

The famous mythologist/psychologist Joseph Campbell beckons us to do what we love for our work, to follow our bliss. Now, you say you have to first worry about survival in this dog-eat-dog world. Good point.

How about taking small steps toward doing work that you love? Suppose you want to work as an airplane mechanic but lack the training and skills. Why not take employment as a car mechanic to pay the bills and attend classes that will qualify you to become an airline mechanic?

Or, if your passion is teaching children but you currently lack a teaching credential or a university degree, why not find work in a children's store while attending classes toward your degree? Soon you'll become a teacher and help guide the future members of our society. The joy you'll feel from performing your unique role will reward you with health and happiness. It will also help create the new future or Mauitopia.

Candidate for mayor Ori Kopelman intends to create this ideal society. You can read more about it online at mauitopia.org. I'll be voting for Mr. Kopelman because we need to shift into this new society. Many of us have held the vision of this new world in our hearts for so long. Now is the time to step forward. Won't you please join me?

Elyra Easton

Haiku

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JENCKS IS WRONG PERSON FOR STATE COMMISSION

Gov. Linda Lingle brought us the Superferry, which cost taxpayers \$45 million - translating into deficit. Her administration then slashed education and services needed by those already challenged by recession.

Now, she has appointed Charlie Jencks to the Land Use Commission (The Maui News, July 17). This is the kind of revolving door which corrupts government.

Jencks parlayed his years as director of public works to get approval for Wailea 670 (Honua'ula). The development is a disaster. The high-density condo development stretching above Wailea into Makena does not have adequate water. This endangers water supplies for the residents of South and Central Maui who rely on the Iao and Kamaole aquifers. The plans included destroying the vast majority of one of Hawaii's last native dryland forests and bulldozing an area rich with Hawaiian cultural sites.

Jencks violated prior agreements with Maui Meadows and put a road in the so-called buffer zone. In spite of using Maui union construction workers in the hearings, he worked out a deal where Wailea 670 will not be required to hire them when the development is built.

Jencks understands how to violate the needs of the community, the workers, Hawaiian culture and the environment.

Chandrika McLaughlin

Kihei

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CONSTITUTION WOULDN'T LET WOMAN HOLD OFFICE

I applaud our Tea Party's anointing a County Council candidate, Lisa Gapero. Supporters and her self-written profile describe her as a "Constitutional Conservative," which I interpret binding her to the Constitution as written. Does she support these precepts from the original Constitution?

- "Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons."
- "No person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen."
- "The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice-President chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows . . ."

The original Constitution, the guiding Tea Party document. Unfortunately, she wouldn't been able to vote, much less hold office.

Am I overly factitious? Maybe. However, all I can uncover about her stances, as enumerated by her supporters, is she believes in the original Constitution and she will end the recession. (By herself? How?)

I await responses.

M. J. Duberstein

Kihei

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#### BAG ORDINANCE MEANT TO HELP ENVIRONMENT

There is no exemption for any nonreusable plastic bag. The July 18 article announcing the plastic bag reduction draft rules hearing contained a serious mistake.

The concept of a compostable plastic bag is a dream, not a reality. While some manufacturers claim to produce such an article, they require a technically advanced, high-temperature, industrial-composting facility for any breakdown. We do not have such a facility nor are we likely to see such built on Maui in the foreseeable future.

This ordinance encourages citizens to share the responsibility of preserving our environment. Carrying you own reusable bag or basket reduces trash in the landfill, trash in the ocean and litter on the roadside. The bag that holds your lettuce or loaf of bread will still be disposable trash but is more likely to be disposed of in a responsible manner, and useful for those needing bags for pet waste.

Businesses should not be feeling challenged. They will be helping us all by just asking, "Do you need a bag for that?" with every purchase.

Carry bags with you and help make this transition seamless.

Marjorie Bonar

Pukalani

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#### RACISM AND HATE ARE RIDICULOUS

I would like to speak about racism.

I know many cultures think of the white man as the devil, and Hawaiian history shows that white people and their governments have taken every advantage of their host for the sake of power and money, depleting resources and oppressing the very people that welcome them in.

Many years ago, I was lucky enough to experience the feeling of ohana and learn the meaning of a real aloha. I try my best to share that with others.

I experienced the feeling of real hate for the first time in my life at the rodeo in Olinda. If the kanaka maoli want to hate white people, I understand all the reasons for that. But taking a momentary break from harassing me, a white man (with a Hawaiian heart, by the way), in order to face the American flag during the national anthem was absurd and sickening.

Do you not see how crazy it is to call me a haole when you're pledging allegiance to the same country that has made you hate me? Think about what you're doing and maybe you'll see how ridiculous racism and hate are.

Edward Bonse

Makawao

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#### FAITH-BASED BELIEFS HAVE NO PLACE IN LAW

Our forefathers were so wise when they decided to separate church from state. How are we to choose which religion gets to rule? I should say: Which form of Christianity gets to rule?

It's like they somehow knew that the religious persecutors from England, who liked to burn perceived witches, weren't done yet. It was a practice to first warm the fires of hell by throwing a homosexual on prior to the witch.

The framers of our Constitution somehow knew how distorted their versions of Christ's message could be. I believe in their wisdom, they knew that faith-based beliefs have no place in the law of the land.

Civil unions is a civil rights issue (Letters, July 19) and one politician did decide, while she refused to uphold the state's constitution on discrimination against sexual orientation at the same time.

To those who think gay is a choice, your argument is weak. I believe you believe that to be true. Makes me wonder - are you really gay and choosing a heterosexual lifestyle?



To those who write their anti-Christ words here and all others whose wish to persecute me or deny me my rights because of the way God created me, I say, "You are the ones who are not living true to God and especially Jesus' ways."

Know that I forgive you and ask my heavenly father to forgive you, for you know not what you do. Jesus is love and compassion and has room for nothing else.

John Hilt

Kihei

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