



Business

Mental health
video course: 22



FOUNTAIN HILLS TIMES

INDEPENDENT

Ballet

Annual show
returns this
Thursday: 24



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OPINIONS

Take the Civility Pledge

Yes, I will do my part to help my community become a safe place for people to engage in civil discourse about public issues. Visit iniusa.org/civility-pledge/ to take the pledge.

Your Opinion

Our opinions page is to provide an open forum for our readers. We hope to stimulate debate, not to dominate or control it. We reserve the right to edit our opinions, and we insist on civility. Please include your name and phone number, so we can contact you for clarification or confirmation. We welcome your photo. All opinions must be no more than 300 words.

Those that are judged as personal attacks or complaints about neighbors, businesses or other opinion writers will not be considered. No person may submit more than two opinions for publication during a calendar month. Two submissions in the same issue will not be published. The content of a submission is the responsibility of the person who submitted it.

Speak Up

We support the use of pen names. Too many people don't speak up because they fear intimidation or even danger to their families and/or careers. Pen names are an important part of our nation's history.

Corrections

We will promptly correct all factual errors. We offer a "right of reply" to the people about whom we write. Readers who disagree with a news story are welcome to respond with a letter.

Golf and water conservation

In these pages it was asserted that golf, among other Arizona water users, should have "real limits" and golf course "caps" imposed. Yes, it certainly should.

In 1980, now 46 years ago, Arizona passed its historic Groundwater Management Act regulating golf course water use in active management areas, thus limiting golf's water use. Additionally, the act mandated that golf face ongoing reductions that strongly encouraged shifting away from groundwater toward recycled wastewater. Innovatively, the act also capped acreage to 90 turfed acres for future 18-hole courses.

Thus, "desert golf" was born. Courses surrounded by desert. Tees, greens and fairways as islands in an otherwise native landscape made for a striking visual effect. This was new and stood in stark contrast to long-established "parkland" style courses.

Here, Desert Canyon opened in the early 70s, whereas SunRidge, Eagle Mountain and Firerock were born in the 90s, accounting for their difference in design. Notably, in each case golf was built to attract consumers and sell real estate.

For players and course superintendents alike, wetter is not better. Firm and fast is the goal. And water savings aren't happening by accident. Today's superintendents manage water using technology that golfers and non-golfers alike never see including weather stations, precise computerized irrigation controls, soil-moisture sensors, hand-held moisture meters and wetting agents.

Moreover, the golf industry is not simply adopting new technology. It's helping develop it with drought-tolerant turfgrass varieties established within its industry. Locally, Firerock Country Club just completed a turf renovation by transitioning to a drought-tolerant year-round grass that requires signifi-

**Please send your comments to
AzOpinions@iniusa.org.
We are committed to publishing a wide
variety of reader opinions, as long as
they meet our Civility Guidelines.**

cantly less water.

Golf participation continued its record-setting pace in 2025 with more than 16.6 million rounds played right here in Arizona that generated more than \$6 billion in economic impact using just 2% of Arizona's water. Visit azallianceforgolf.org.

Jeff Lessig
FOUNTAIN HILLS

Secular means neutral

A recent letter defended the influence of Christianity in public affairs. The author included the statements, "Religious morality is condemned as 'sectarian' while secular progressive ideology advances under the camouflage of 'neutrality.' But that is not neutrality. It is secular privilege."

Let's parse this out. Nobody is condemning religious morality, so let's eliminate that phrase. Calling secular ideology "progressive" is just adding a label meant to demean, so we take that out. "Neutrality" is not a "camouflage," it is how the Constitution demands we act under the First Amendment. Finally, the phrase "secular privilege" suggests an unfair weighting towards neutrality when in fact this is what our Constitution requires.

So, we are essentially left with the complaint that the Constitution puts up an inconvenient barrier to those who wish to force religious (and particularly Christian) principles onto those who don't share that (or any) religious belief system. Sorry, but not sorry.

You want a religious government? When one religion gets privileged status, the next one in line will want the

same. If you can't see where that leads check out European history for the past thousand years.

Our only hope is to keep our government rigorously religiously neutral so that all religions may thrive. We're the only nation in history to manage this feat, but now some want to throw away our greatest achievement. Shame.

Ted Blant
FOUNTAIN HILLS

Schwelkert has abdicated congressional responsibilities to Trump

Congressman Schwelkert, our national debt just hit \$40 trillion. Way to go. This happened on your watch, even though your congressional website states that one of your "top priorities is to protect citizens from unnecessary and wasteful government spending." So much for that.

The way I see it, you appear to have totally abdicated your congressional responsibilities to Trump and his executive orders. He spends what he wants without any congressional oversight or approval. The ballroom project the Trump Arch to glorify himself, the cost of the war with Iran which you failed to authorize as a member of congress, the tariff taxes, the list goes on.

So, where is congress? On vacation running for governor, collecting a paycheck and their government healthcare while doing nothing to protect citizen from a budget deficit that continues to grow. You just sit by and watch while the spending continues on a host of wasteful projects.

Personally, I'm not sorry to see you gone as my representative and, unfortunately, if Jay Feely gets elected to succeed you it will be more of the same

Rodney Gifford
FOUNTAIN HILLS

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