LETTERS
Big buck contests not bad

Editor: This is a reply to the editorial on Big Buck contests. First of all, why does the author equate Big Buck contests with “the manly thrill of bloodshed?” Is this thrill inherent to men only? If there is a thrill to bloodshed, women hunters are just as susceptible to it as men. Personally, I get no thrill out of killing an animal for fun or money. I can’t even stand the sight of cleaning it, which is its only repulsive aspect.

However, shooting a deer is preferable to buying an equivalent amount of meat at the store. Some families, such as mine, this gives more money to spend on frivollities like clothes for the kids, tuition and books.

To many, a Big Buck contest is an incidental chance that they may win something in addition to getting the meat. I realize that there are those who choose to try for the larger deer, and those who would cheat in order to win a prize. Those people exist in all types of contests and situations. Look at the people who use extortion, the women (and men) who offer sexual favors in exchange for services, or race car drivers who use unethical devices on their cars, etc. It is unfair to pin it on only hunters.

The author of the editorial compares these contests to a “soldier who can bomb the most villages.” This is not a war, but a very well-regulated hunt designed to give people the opportunity for providing food for their family at a nominal cost. The contests don’t necessarily encourage hunters to kill only the older and stronger deer.

Many people think of deer as they see because they may not have a second chance. Encouraging hunters to go after the smaller deer presents the same problem; the chance of not getting one, which is the main purpose of hunting in the first place.

Finally, our author refers to the monetary reward and the earning of the respect and admiration of fellow hunters. I see nothing wrong with this. If a fellow is lucky enough to shoot the biggest buck, he deserves any prize that is offered for that purpose.

The book author states that Big Buck contests are of no value. They are not, and should be abandoned. This is ridiculous. If we abolished everything in our society that has no recognizable value we would have few, if any, pleasurable pastimes (gives the author’s apparent definition of value). Why do they have to have a value?

Mr. Author, grow up and look at the real world. The majority of hunters are not the barbaric, bloodthirsty, monsters that you have represented. They are few. You can find that faction in any society, in any context, anywhere. Instead of complaining about the contests themselves, why don’t you try to find a way to weed out those few bad examples of hunters so that the rest of us can hunt in peace?

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Hunt contests barbaric

Editor: The Chronicle should be commended for its Oct. 25 editorial on the immorality of Big Buck contests. Even though it is generally useless to employ reason to dissuade the macho hunter types from participating in their annual festival of slaughter, such editorials are needed for raising public awareness.

The obscene Big Buck contests are just the latest extension of the barbaric social ritual of hunting as sport; hence we must take a closer look at the issue of hunting itself.

First of all, it is true by definition that hunting as a game is killing for fun. This does not mean that the only reason deer hunters kill for fun. Most hunters engage in this sport to eat venison. But the primary motive for hunting as a sport is killing for fun, regardless of what the hunters do with the dead deer.

If venison were available, purchase or given away free, still the hunters would no longer hunt because it is, after all, a sport. Admittedly, in some economically desperate areas in this country some hunters do hunt for survival, but theirs is a different case.

Hunting as a sport, then, is savage because it caters to one’s primal instincts. Such killing sprees endanger the lives of nature-loving non-hunters as well.

The fact that our society not only condones but also promotes such savagery in the guise of a sport raises some serious issues: whether killing for fun has any place in a civilized society, how this institutionalized killer mentality affects us as human beings and as a nation, and whether these slayings are needed to maintain an ecological balance (as many hunters believe) or whether the plight of the deer population is a man-made problem designed to ensure a good supply of targets for the hunters.

If the hunters don’t realize what it is to be defenseless targets of high-powered rifles, I suggest they wear deer costumes next time they go deer hunting.