

## MEDIATE THIS!

## A QUERY FROM THE FRONT LINES OF THE SCOOTER WAR

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

## Dear Mediator:

I get my daily exercise by walking two miles on neighborhood sidewalks. Every day, motor scooters zip around me and scare me to death. I want to confront the riders — it's illegal to operate scooters on sidewalks! — but they whiz by too fast. Lately, I've noticed that a frequent sidewalk rider lives down the street. I could go to his house and call him out. Or I could take a picture and send it to the police with his name and address. Which is the better option?

Besieged in Burlingame

## Dear Besieged:

Road rage and its new iteration of sidewalk rage are how we react instinctively when threatened by transgressors who will never face consequences.

If someone flouts the law by running a stop sign or riding an e-scooter on a sidewalk, his chances of getting a ticket are close to zero. For many miscreants, the thrill of this anarchy adds spice to the satisfaction of getting whatever you want because you are defiant and your needs are paramount.

For the rest of us, the immediate fear of being harmed is eclipsed by a smoldering fury: How dare

that person intimidate me with such snarky recklessness?

Conflicts dehumanize us because they shrink our capacity for reason and amp up our animal impulses. Conflict resolution seeks to restore our humanity by putting reason back in control of our thinking and our actions.

In mediation, we seek to *personalize* disputants by helping them see each other as something more than loutish irritants. As parties communicate thoughtfully, they rediscover one another as human beings who try to navigate stresses (and shortcomings) to get through each day.

So, yes, it might be a good idea to approach this rider. But no, you shouldn't hope for a showdown that could get ugly or a police enforcement that seems far-fetched.

Like cities nationwide, San Diego is struggling to resolve our scooter war. Elected officials seem perplexed. Physicians sound alarms about a rash of serious injuries. A class-action lawsuit against e-scooter companies has set the stage for a court battle.

The one thing no one has tried yet is a conversational *détente*. This might be an opening for you and your neighbor to experiment with a peacekeeping effort.

You can take the initiative by



HOWARD LIPIN U-T

This week's questioner asks for advice about approaching neighborhood scooter users who ride on sidewalks instead of streets.

mailing a friendly letter to his house. Write that you're interested in learning more about e-scooter-riding, and you've seen him riding around the neighborhood, so you'd like to invite him to meet for coffee.

When you are sitting face to face, it will take a superhuman effort to restrain yourself from an angry tirade. Listening attentively can be the toughest challenge in conflict resolution. But it is the

single most productive thing you can do.

If you just let him talk, he may surprise you by expressing his own trepidations about scooter safety issues and legal ramifications. If he doesn't, ask him if he is concerned about the surge in accidents and rider hospitalizations.

Like motorists who drive at excessive speeds, scooterists on sidewalks know they are taking

risks. But they push that from their minds because in the moment, personal convenience is uppermost.

Dialogues between pedestrians and scooter riders would help everyone contemplate those risks, explore ways to minimize them, and develop social empathy.

Pedestrians could ask riders to visualize the threat of being hit by a speeding scooter. Riders could convey their own anxieties about the hazards of driving scooters legally in street traffic.

Scooter technology may eventually end this war by preventing or pinpointing illegal ridership. Until then, we all have to travel the same thoroughfares. If both sides could work together on extra-legal solutions, the easing of public contentiousness (which is already at surplus levels) would benefit us all.

Steven P. Dinkin is a professional mediator who has served as president of the San-Diego based National Conflict Resolution Center since 2003.

**Do you have a conflict that needs a resolution?** Share your story with The Mediator via email [mediatethis@ncrc-online.com](mailto:mediatethis@ncrc-online.com) or as an online submission by visiting [www.ncrc-online.com/MediateThis](http://www.ncrc-online.com/MediateThis). All submissions will be kept anonymous. If you have questions, email me at [lora.cicalo@suniontribune.com](mailto:lora.cicalo@suniontribune.com)

## NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

## OUTDOORS: ERNIE COWAN

## Bird count coming in December

Fall and early winter are wonderful times for nature lovers in San Diego's outdoors.

Mild temperatures mean the natural environment from our coastline to the arid desert are all open to exploration and discovery.

For bird lovers, in particular, this is a time when a host of migrating species arrive here, providing you with a chance to add some new birds to your life list. It's a great time for birding.

December will also bring an annual birding event to several areas of the county that allow the veteran birder a chance to check on the latest populations and the novice to learn from the experts, all while gathering valuable information.

Every year, a citizen science project known as the Christmas Bird Count happens across the nation where birders spend a day counting bird species they see within designated areas.

This will be the 119th year for the count, sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Information gathered provides valuable data about the migration, condition, effects of changing land use and numbers of bird species around the country and in many other parts of the Western Hemisphere.

The count began on Christmas Day in 1900 when ornithologist Frank M. Chapman offered the idea as a new holiday tradition.

The first count involved 27 birders in 25 locations from Toronto, Canada, to Pacific Grove. A total of 90 species were recorded.

Now, more than 80,000 counters participate each year, tallying as many as 60 million birds at more than 2,500 locations. Counts are no longer on Christmas Day but are conducted in late December through early January. This allows volunteers to participate in more than one count if they desire.

Each designated census area is known as a "Circle" and includes an area with a diameter of 15 miles.

In San Diego County, those circles are centered in San Diego, Borrego Springs, Lake Henshaw, Escondido, Rancho Santa Fe and Oceanside.

Each circle has a volunteer coordinator that compiles and submits the results of the count. Volunteer counters are encouraged.

If you would like to join in the count, contact the circle coordinator to register. Be-



ERNIE COWAN

Michael Wittmer of Escondido during the 2017 Christmas Bird Count.

ginning birders should sign up as early as possible to allow time for them to be connected to more experienced birders.

The first count will happen on Dec. 15 in San Diego, followed by Anza-Borrego on Dec. 16, Lake Henshaw on Dec. 17, Rancho Santa Fe on Dec. 22, Oceanside on Dec. 29 and Escondido on Jan. 5.

For additional information and contact email for circle coordinators, visit [sandiegoaudubon.org](http://sandiegoaudubon.org) and click on the birding tab.

For the past several years, I have participated in the Borrego census, traveling by off-road vehicle into a remote area of Coyote Canyon. Last year, two of us spent five hours in the field, hiked 4.5 miles and logged 19 species and a total of 125 birds.

The annual Christmas Bird Count is one of the premier birding events of the year, and a great chance to learn about resident and migratory species in San Diego County.

Birders can participate in another monthly bird count at San Dieguito Lagoon from 7:30 a.m. until noon Dec. 2. The event hosted by the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy is offered on the first Sunday every month.

Participants will meet at the Interpretive Kiosk on San Andres Drive, just east of the Del Mar Fairgrounds and Interstate 5 at Villa de la Valle.

Birding experts led by Jayne Lesley will provide information on bird habitats, behaviors and migrations during the count.

For additional information, contact Lesley at [jaynelesley@earthlink.net](mailto:jaynelesley@earthlink.net) or (858) 663-6568.

Email [ernie@packtrain.com](mailto:ernie@packtrain.com)

## THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

## Planning and teamwork critical in newsroom election night coverage

Election night at the Union-Tribune means all hands on deck. It's a team effort among reporters, editors, photographers, graphic artists and online producers.

Here is an inside look at Tuesday's Election night.

U-T reporters arrived in the late afternoon and early evening with the intention of updating their online stories with the latest results until around 2 a.m.

Their directions were to post stories online as soon as possible after the first results came in from the Registrar of Voters about 8:15 p.m.

After that, reporters turned their attention to print. All election stories appeared in the A-section. The section had 10 full pages, including A1, dedicated to the coverage.

Editors gave reporters the lengths for their stories. Reporters had the bulk of their articles already written. That left them with just topping the stories with the results from the early returns.

All stories had assigned deadlines for them to be moved to the copy desk. The times were staggered — 9:30, 9:40, etc. — to prevent a bottleneck.

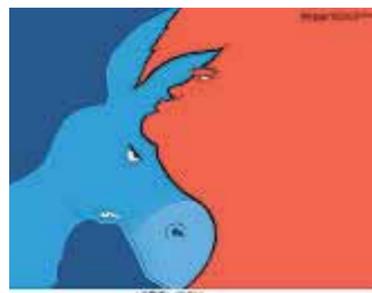
After reporters filed for print, they returned to their online stories and could update freely as fresh results arrived.

Ricky Young, the U-T Watchdog and government editor, took the lead in organizing county coverage, which involved print and digital.

"So many of my goals centered around getting election results up online as fast as possible. That's the first thing people want to know — who won?"

"The ballot was punishingly long. So we came up with a plan to have results split into regions, so there would be a web page for statewide results, one for San Diego, one for East County, etc.," Young said. "That broke down the overwhelming volume of results across a digestible geography for people. Each web page was prepopulated with stories. From the Julian fire district to San Diego City Hall, we had stories queued up and arranged so that when results hit, there would be an orderly set of headlines — in addition to online charts for people who wanted results that way."

"With that online setup in place, the



Steve Breen's election night cartoon.

stories flowed pretty easily into a pre-arranged layout in print, so things went fairly smoothly."

Coverage in print also included stories by The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Associated Press, and the Los Angeles Times, the U-T's sister paper.

Editorial cartoonist Steve Breen was drawing on deadline. He had several topics, such as the San Diego ballot measures on the stadium property, floating in front to him. But he said that when he saw the House was swinging Democratic he had his topic. He came up with the Democratic donkey staring at a depiction of President Trump, with the word "Gridlock" in the upper left.

The cartoon, however, plays much better in color. The editorial page, which moved into the A section for the election, did not have a color position. The cartoon had to run in black and white for print. Breen said he heard from some people who couldn't make out the artwork. (I didn't see Trump until I saw the cartoon in color.)

A1 was the last page sent to the press. It cleared at 11:15 p.m. — 15 minutes late. The sticking point was a five-column-wide graphic that showed in red and blue House, Senate and governor outcomes nationwide. The results keep changing so rapidly that graphic and A1 editors were struggling with getting the most accurate information in print.

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES | LOOKING BACK OVER 150 YEARS

## ARMISTICE SIGNED, ENDS WAR

The San Diego Union-Tribune will mark its 150th anniversary in 2018 by presenting a significant front page from the archives each day throughout the year.

## Monday, November 11, 1918

In 1918 the Allies and Germany signed an armistice to end fighting in the World War. The guns on the battlefields of Europe were finally silenced at 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, 1918 — the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the year.

In honor and recognition of the veterans of World War I and veterans of wars thereafter, the nation now celebrates Veterans Day every Nov. 11.

Here are the first few paragraphs of the story:

## WORLD WAR ENDS

(Associated Press)

WASHINGTON, Nov. 11. — The world war will end this morning at 6 o'clock Washington time. The armistice was signed by the German representatives at midnight. The announcement was made by the State Department at 2:50 o'clock this morning.

The announcement was made verbally by an official of the state department in this form:

"The armistice has been signed. It will be signed at 5 o'clock a.m. Paris time and hostilities will cease at 11 o'clock this morning, Paris time."

The terms of the armistice, it was announced, will not be made public until later. Military men here regard it as certain that they will include:

Immediate retirement of the German mil-

itary forces from France, Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine.

Disarming and demobilization of the German armies.

Occupation by the Allied and American forces of strategic points in Germany as will make impossible a renewal of hostilities.

Delivery of part of the German high seas fleet and a certain number of submarines to the Allied naval forces.

Disarmament of all other German warships under supervision of the Allied and American navies, which will guard them.

Occupation of the principal naval bases by sea forces of the victorious navies.

Release Allied and American soldiers, sailors and civilians held prisoner by Germany without such reciprocal action by the associated governments.



There was no information as to the circumstances under which the armistice was signed, but since the German courier did not reach German military headquarters until 10 o'clock yesterday morning, French time, it was generally assumed here that the German envoys within the French lines had been instructed by wireless to sign the terms.

Forty-seven hours had been necessary for the courier to reach German headquarters and unquestionably several hours were necessary for the examination of the terms and a decision. It was regarded as possible, however, that the decision may have been made at Berlin and instructions transmitted from there by the new German government.

Germany has been given until 11 o'clock this morning, French time, to accept. So hos-

ilities will end at the hours set by Marshal Foch for a decision by Germany for peace or for continuation of the war.

The momentous news that the armistice had been signed was telephoned to the White House for transmission to the president a few minutes before it was given to the newspaper correspondents. Later it was said that there would be no statement from the White house at this time. The armistice terms signed by Germany under which hostilities will end at 6 o'clock this morning, Washington time, 11 o'clock Paris time, will not be made public by the state department before 8 o'clock this morning. This was stated officially.

This story behind the "World War Ends" headline appeared in the next day's Union:

## UNION GAVE NEWS TO CITY AT 3 A.M. AND IN A FEW MINUTES CELEBRATION BEGUN

The whirr of The Union-Tribune press at 3 o'clock yesterday morning started the big celebration. It was press time with but a few gathered at the window above. After a few papers had been whirled off, the press was stopped, and the big type "World War Ends" could be plainly seen from above.

"Give me a paper, quick," an individual called down.

He was informed it was contrary to the rules under the circumstances, the pressmen not being part of the circulation department. "Oh, have a heart," he pleaded.