

MEDIATE THIS !

UNDERSTAFFED, OFF THE CLOCK AND ON THE BRINK

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Dear Mediator,

I work at the customer service counter at a large retailer. The store has over 100 employees, but my department has just six. Over the past year or so, we lost a few people in my department and never rehired for their positions. This has caused my supervisor and manager to constantly call the remaining staff in early, ask them to stay late, or call people on their days off. I get paid hourly and have repeatedly not answered their calls on my days off. My bosses take this personally and think that I am not answering their calls because I don't care about my job or helping them out. I feel like I have no obligation to handle work matters when I'm off the clock. How do I stop this cycle from driving me to a new job?

Sick and Tired in Rancho Peñasquitos

Dear Sick and Tired,

It's a common situation that every employer has to deal with when a valuable employee is lost: They're



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This week's question comes from a retail customer service representative who is dealing with the overtime demands made by managers of a small staff.

forced to look for a replacement, which can be a long and costly process. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, employers spend the equivalent of six to nine months' of an employee's salary to find their replacement. Finding someone reliable and qualified is difficult, and there may be roadblocks that prevent your depart-

ment from getting the staffing it needs, such as budget restrictions or low sales figures.

Your first step in stopping the cycle is to clear up the misunderstanding you have with your bosses. Find an appropriate time to speak with your manager or supervisor, and any other relevant superior, and explain that you are not ignor-

ing their calls because you don't care about your job. Let them know that you are simply setting a boundary between your personal life and your work life. See if any of your co-workers feel the same way, and if so, you could include them in the conversation with your superiors.

Your next step is to see if your managers are willing to

engage in a brainstorming session. Brainstorming is a great process to use to help everyone feel included in solution-building, producing better results than a management-only solution. This is an issue that not only affects you, but also affects your bosses and your co-workers. Therefore, the solution should be collaborative and inclusive. The brainstorming session will be more effective if everyone feels comfortable sharing ideas. There should be no judgment, and employees should be encouraged to think outside the box. All ideas should be written down, so that everyone knows their input is being valued equally. Discuss one idea at a time, and refocus the group if things get sidetracked. Everyone should get a chance to contribute something, even the most reserved ones in the room.

Come prepared with your own ideas for distributing the extra work, such as establishing a rotating call list, where everyone rotates positions for getting called in on a day off. Perhaps you or another co-worker don't

mind being scheduled an extra day; you just want to be able to plan for it beforehand. Try to work with your leadership going forward to see if you can plan for busy days ahead of time. Since this is a department-wide issue, try reaching out as a department to your store or regional manager, explaining your need for increased staffing.

Whatever strategy you decide to pursue, it is important that you work together. Mediation is a collective effort, just like teamwork. The more voices in the conversation, the more impactful the solution will be. A good strategy implemented in collaboration with your superiors and peers will put a stop to this cycle.

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 at mediatethis@ncrconline.com or as an online submission by visiting www.ncrconline.com/MediateThis. All submissions will be kept anonymous.

NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

BIOTECHNOLOGY: BRADLEY J. FIKES

Ionis honors its navigating CEO

CARLSBAD

Carlsbad's Ionis Pharmaceuticals has named its main campus after its longtime chairman and CEO, Stanley T. Crooke. It's one of the tributes Crooke is receiving as he draws back from day-to-day work in 30 years at the company he co-founded.

The Stanley T. Crooke, M.D., Ph.D., Center for RNA Therapeutics name was unveiled at a brief ceremony Wednesday. Ionis officials paid tribute to Crooke's vision in advancing its "antisense" technology, which modifies genetic activity.

Crooke's role in antisense was likened to that of Prince Henry the Navigator, the 15th-century Portuguese prince who showed Europeans new routes of exploration.

Crooke said he was flattered but a bit embarrassed.

"This is the first time in my life I've ever been compared to a navigator," Crooke said. "I get lost going to the bathroom."

The honor comes as Crooke is winding down his role as CEO in favor of Brett Monia, his longtime lieutenant at Ionis.

In January, Monia will take over as CEO. While Crooke will remain involved with Ionis as executive chairman, Monia will shoulder the main role of running Ionis.

While Crooke said many people made Ionis possible, industry observers generally credit him as the main visionary and force in starting and growing the company.

Three decades ago, Ionis, then known as Isis Pharmaceuticals, was a startup with a dream — Crooke's dream of applying new genetic technologies to serious diseases that had no cure or effective treatment.

Today, Ionis has multiple drugs on the market, including the blockbuster Spinraza, sold by partner Biogen. And many more are following in human clinical trials.

With a market value exceeding \$8 billion, Ionis has become one of San Diego County's most valuable biotech companies.

This vista, and the tributes it inspires, would have astonished Crooke's boyhood self.

Crooke said he was saved by mentorship and sheer inexplicable good fortune.

"I was not a very good student, but I was a good hard worker, not that I ever studied," Crooke said. "I mean I always worked. I got into Purdue, I don't really know how."

At that time, Crooke wasn't thinking of medicine. Caught up in the excitement of the space program, he decided to become an aeronautical engineer.

But after a couple of years at Purdue, he had to move back to Indianapolis for personal reasons. There, he enrolled in a pharmacy school. Having worked in a drug store, the field was more familiar than rocket science.

"I became interested in cancer, got asked to go to graduate school at Butler (a private university in Indianapolis), which is where I went to pharmacy school, and then somehow got admitted for the MD-Ph.D program at Baylor," Crooke said.

His life changed after meeting cancer researcher Harris Busch. "Harris introduced me to the joy of science, the privilege of being a physician, and demanding more from yourself and others," Crooke said.

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Ionis board member Michael Hayden (left) and Stanley T. Crooke, hold the astrolabe Crooke was given.



BRADLEY J. FIKES U-T

THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

Explain what's unknown in a story

Journalism tells readers, viewers and listeners what is known. It can, and should, tell them what is unknown too.

Reader Dale Rodebaugh of San Diego wrote in last week about a short crime story that ran on B3 last Sunday. The article was on series of thefts at local gyms.

"The Union-Tribune desperately needs veteran copy editors," wrote Rodebaugh, who worked as a reporter for 23 years at the San Jose Mercury News. "I offer as proof ... 'Carlsbad Police Seek More Victims in Series of Gym-Locker Thefts.' The story is full of holes — unanswered questions. To wit:

- "Corporate gyms or smaller stand-alone gyms and approximately how many?"
- "Why was suspect able to do this at gyms around the county?"
- "What was the suspect's connection to the gyms?"

The story should have been sent back for more information, he said. "If the questions I pose couldn't be answered immediately, it should have been so stated."

I think Rodebaugh is right. If information is unavailable, in this case from Carlsbad police, then the story should address the unanswered questions.

This was the lead of the story: "Police on Thursday arrested a woman suspected of looting at least 30 lockers inside San Diego-area gyms over the past 10 months, making

off with wallets, car keys, credit cards and other property while the victims exercised."

Carlsbad police made the arrest and then issued a news release asking anyone who had a gym locker burglarized to contact them.

The story also said: "When the suspect — a 32-year-old Carlsbad woman — took car keys from victims, she would apparently not steal the vehicles, but would go outside and rummage through them in search of more valuables, police said. Following some of the thefts, the woman allegedly went on to steal the victims' identities as well."

Crime stories generally rely on the reporting agency for information. When reporters have more questions, they need to reach a detective on the case or the watch commander on duty. But the watch commander might not have any more information than has already been released. The reporter then is forced to go with what they have at the time.

I think the biggest unanswered question from the gym story was which gyms did the suspect target? If the police are looking for more victims, then this information seems necessary.

Assuming the questions could not be answered at the time the story was written, the article should have noted that.

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PHILANTHROPY: LUKE GARRETT

Girl Scout troop builds 'little library'

SAN DIEGO

A Girl Scout troop hopes to give homeless families at a shelter in San Diego's East Village convenient access to books.

On Saturday, Troop 3969 from University City unveiled what it calls the "Little Free Library" in the courtyard of Father Joe's Villages Joan Kroc Center.

The miniature library is essentially a colorful bookcase with three large shelves, each designated for a certain readership group: children, parents and adults. The Girl Scouts collected books for each shelf and will continue to fill them as needed, according to Savannah Evan of Father Joe's Villages.

The library includes a bench that families can use to sit and read together, troop leader and Father Joe's Village staffer Jennifer Julich

said. The girls built and painted the little library over four months with support from parents.

The project began after the Girl Scouts finished updating a park at the shelter on Imperial Avenue near 15th Street and decided homeless children should have a library on the property, Julich said.

"What excites me most is how much work the girls have put into this and for them to see what their hard work has done," she added, noting that some of the girls in the troop are avid readers, and the project was important to them and their families.

"A book takes its reader to a whole new place and different reality," Julich said.

Father Joe's Villages Joan Kroc Center is at 1501 Imperial Ave.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

AN 1887 TOUR OF THE VILLA MONTEZUMA

In 1887 the Villa Montezuma in Sherman Heights was built as a home for Jesse Shepherd, musician, mystic and artist.

The Villa is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Free guided tours of the museum interior are offered four times yearly. The next tour takes place Oct. 19 at 1925 K St., San Diego. Priority is given to guests preregistered at SDRecConnect.com

From The San Diego Union, Thursday, Sept. 29, 1887.

"VILLA MONTEZUMA"

Description of the Beautiful Mansion of Jesse Shepard.

**A MAGNIFICENT AND ARTISTIC HOME,
Devoted to Music, Art and Literature — Elegant and
Unique Architecture — Classical Furnishing.**

Situated on a gently sloping hillside on the corner of Twentieth and K streets, in this city, and commanding a magnificent view of San Diego and its incomparably lovely surroundings, stands a private residence that the citizens of San Diego may look upon with pardonable pride.

It is the Villa Montezuma, the home of the world-famed pianist and vocalist, Jesse Shepard, whose wonderful performances have thrilled the music-loving of two continents. There is something so very peculiar, something so very striking, about even the exterior of the building that the passerby cannot but stop and admire its extreme, unostentatious eccentricity.

The search for an elaborate front entrance and portico is a fruitless one. Only a simple side door is found, but it pleases greater than something more showy would. The odd windows in peculiar shapes and sizes, some of which are of stained glass; the inscription in quaint old English: "A.D. MDVVVLLXXXVII;" the harmonious blending of the somber colors of the house, together with its massive proportions and elegant exterior, at once command attention and the observer longs to see what one who planned the exterior of a mansion so unique would do for its interior embellishment.

Enter the structure and even the air seems laden with the richness and elegance



that is on every hand.

The soft Smyrna rug in the hall yields to the tread like a mossy sward, while a circular art glass window fills the hall with a pleasant subdued light.

Beneath the window a large brass lamp, full five feet high, catches the eye. Softly it reflects the mellow light, while here and there a gleam sparkles from its jeweled shade. At the further end a massive ebony stand supports a pictured vase, that in turn held a large bouquet of flowers.

THE PINK ROOM.

Passing to the left through heavy portieres of old gold and pale blue material, the Pink Room or Reception Room, is reached. Here pale pink predominates in everything. The ceiling of Lincrusta Walton is a dull silver gray while the walls of the same material are dainty figures of pink and old gold bronze.

A rich Axminster rug in delicate shades of light blue, old gold and pink, covers the oiled and waxed floor. In each of the two furthest corners of the room is an ebony stand in the shape of a column and bearing a candelabra of very odd design and a pink wax

candle. The furniture in the room blends beautifully with the other fittings, as does the large French art glass window occupying the greater portion of one wall.

In this are delineated flowers and vines in perfect colors, while the grapes and berries were most tempting, so natural did they appear. In the lower border of the window are diamond-shaped representations of abalone shells, giving their beautiful shades and tints almost to perfection. Very large jewels dot the window here and there, while to one side of the center a snow white dove perches on a limb as if waiting for its mate.

THE DINING ROOM.

Across the hall directly opposite the portieres of the Pink Room, are double sliding doors leading to the Dining Room.

The apartment is well lighted by four large windows, two of which are of clear plate glass and the other two in art glass, representing two maidens, Summer and Autumn. Like the Pink Room, the ceiling and walls of the Dining Room are finished in Lincrusta Walton, but are tinted in silver and bronze, respectively.

A great tapestry rug covers the floor and an elegant candelabra depends from the ceiling.

Over the grate, which is finished with porcelain tiles and polished brass guards, is a walnut mantel and redwood combined of simple yet striking design. Its shelves are loaded with massive silver service and delicate China and Japanese tableware.

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