

## MEDIATE THIS !

## THE EXCLUSIVE GYM, A NEW MEMBER AND A RIGID GYM-GOER

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

## Dear Mediator,

I recently got a membership at an exclusive gym after being on the waiting list for quite some time.

After just two weeks of membership, I got into a verbal altercation with another member who has repeatedly accused me of not following the rules of the gym, although I know I am. I prepaid for six months, but now feel like I am being forced out. Help!

*Isolated in Mira Mesa*

## Dear Isolated,

Clubs often contain an eclectic mix of personalities and can create extremely complex interpersonal dynamics that can make any type of conflict resolution appear convoluted rather than straightforward.

The fact that you have joined an exclusive gym may play an important role in the behavior of the not-so-welcoming member you find yourself in conflict with.

Henry B. Hansmann, an author and Yale professor of law, published a research paper some 33 years ago detailing his theories of status organizations and what he thought drew people to join them.

Hansmann theorized that

many people join a club or organization not merely because of the benefits of membership, but also to be surrounded by individuals that they felt characterized the spirit and culture of the organization.

To quote Hansmann: "A scholar, for example, will commonly choose employment with a particular university not just, or even primarily, on the basis of work conditions such as salary and teaching load, but also on the basis of the professional accomplishments of the other members of the faculty.

Similarly, a lawyer will typically seek to sell his services to a law firm in which the other lawyers are as competent as possible."

It is quite possible that the member who has accused you of these transgressions may feel that you do not meet his criteria of a good gym member.

He may not have joined the gym merely for the challenging classes or luxurious locker rooms, but also to be around peers he views as beneficial to him.

This would explain the baseless accusations toward you, when you know you are following the rules.

In our seminal communication training, "The Artful Conversation," we lay out six realities of



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**This week's question comes from a Mira Mesa resident who is having problems as a member of a newly joined gym.**

communication, one of them being "meanings are in people, not in words." There are times when people will communicate something by saying things that may not make sense on the surface; it's only when we dig a little deeper that we figure out what they're truly telling us.

A good gym manager will listen to your issue and be open to helping you.

The fact that you actively try to follow the rules and fit in will work in your favor.

Perhaps this is not the first time that this member has had issues with a new person at the gym, and he could be displaying a pattern of inhospitable behavior that management is already well aware of.

In addition to approaching the manager, you could speak directly

to the other member, letting him know that you are trying your best to adapt to the culture of your new gym, and that you would greatly appreciate it if he helped you learn the rules and proper etiquette. This way, the other member feels that his concerns are validated, sore feelings are healed, and you may gain a new workout partner.

In Japanese culture there exists a concept called Wa, which is usually translated in English as "harmony."

It emphasizes peaceful unity and conformity within a social group, where members prefer the continuous harmony of a community over their own interests.

Many times when there is a new face in a social group, "Wa" may be temporarily disrupted. As with many types of conflict, there may only be a need for the passage of time before the harmony returns.

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@nccronline.com](mailto:mediatethis@nccronline.com) or as an online submission by visiting [www.nccronline.com/MediateThis](http://www.nccronline.com/MediateThis). All submissions will be kept anonymous.

## NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

## OUTDOORS: ERNIE COWAN

## Worries about grebes get response

Concerns by conservation and wildlife groups about the destruction of grebe nests at Lake Hodges because of fluctuating water levels has caught the attention of water managers and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The issue was raised last week in a letter to the city of San Diego, owner of the water storage reservoir just south of Escondido.

Recent changes in water levels at the reservoir have resulted in as many as 300 grebe eggs being destroyed because adult birds could not reach the nests after water levels suddenly dropped.

Brian Caldwell lives adjacent to Lake Hodges and operates Lake Hodges Photo Tours. He was one of the first to sound the alarm about the nests.

Other conservation groups, such as the California Chaparral Institute, Endangered Habitats League, San Diego Audubon Society, Buena Vista Audubon and Environmental Center of San Diego signed the letter to the city last week.

"A significant number of nests failed this spring due to water being drawn from the lake at the end of March and then again at the end of April. Approximately 300 eggs were abandoned during these events," Caldwell said. "To make matters worse, most of these eggs were within a few days of hatching, close to three weeks into their incubation period of 24 days."

Spring and summer are peak nesting season for Western and Clark's grebes, and Lake Hodges has become a major nursery for the large water birds.

After contacting the city, others sent letters to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Responding to the letters, Gail Sevrens, environmental program manager for California DFW, said the department has reached out to the County Water Authority.

"We have expressed concerns that the level of the lake not fluctuate so as to cause take or destruction of bird nests or eggs, pursuant to Fish and Game Code 3503. We have asked that the Water Authority verify that this will not occur," she said in a letter to the CWA.

Sevrens has also asked for a June 26 meeting with water managers to discuss methods that would prevent future problems.

Caldwell said he is pleased that everyone now seems to be talking about the issue but still has concerns with the response from



ERNIE COWAN

**Courting grebes in the process called rushing.**

the city, including comments that neither species of grebe "are listed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as sensitive species."

"The grebes are federally listed in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the California Fish and Wildlife Code and may not be needlessly destroyed," Caldwell said.

He went on to add, "we have absolutely no issue with water being pumped from the lake. The issue is simply when it is pumped."

Part of the problem is the complicated relationship between the city, the County Water Authority and SDG&E, which all have some regulatory authority and interest in how water is managed at the lake.

City spokesman Scott Robinson said the city is required to maintain the water level at an elevation of 295 feet to maintain safety of the dam structure and nearby communities.

Sandra L. Kerl, acting general manager of the County Water Authority, said its is working closely with SDG&E to ensure pump storage operations do not harm the grebe nesting.

Caldwell acknowledged that the lake provides several important things, including emergency water storage, domestic water supply and power generation.

"The city and county have cited many reasons for the reservoir being pumped during the nesting season, and none of them hold water, (pardon the pun)," Caldwell said.

He hopes that raising awareness of the issue will get everyone working together to prevent destruction of the nesting grebes.

Email [ernie@packtrain.com](mailto:ernie@packtrain.com) or visit [erniesoutdoors.blogspot.com](http://erniesoutdoors.blogspot.com).

## THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

## Reader's persistence has paid off

Reader Chas Wick from Carlsbad would not give up.

An avid consumer of the syndicated Earth Watch feature that runs on B2 Mondays, he was frustrated that the planet's lowest recorded temperature would only occasionally appear. Wick would call and ask why it was missing. A few weeks later he would call again.

Page designers said the map showing extreme environmental happenings around the world would be untouched. It's what the syndicate sent, they said.

The readers' rep finally reached out to Andrews McMeel Syndicate, which provides "Earth Watch: Diary of the Planet."

A representative there said the feature includes the lowest temperature every week.

Page designer Anthony Tarantino dove deep to figure out what was going on.

He discovered that the syndicate sends three pieces of information: all text on the environmental phenomena; a large map with text on the phenomena; and just a map with symbols referencing the phenomena.

The large map with the text did not match the U-T's type font and style, so it could not be used as one piece. The text with that map would include the lowest temperature.

What U-T designers would do is use the separate map and grab pieces of text that came with the large map to build the Earth Watch feature. That text would refer to the symbols on the separate map.

If that separate map did not include the lowest temperature as one of the symbols, then designer would not include information on the temperature. And Wick would call.



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

## SAN DIEGO HOSTS CIVIL WAR VETERANS

In June of 1924, San Diego played host to the 57th annual encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, department of California and Nevada.

Although not the only time San Diego hosted a reunion of Civil War veterans, the encampment held from June 9-13, 1924, on the 60th anniversary of the war, was one of the most celebrated.

The Grand Army of the Republic was a fraternal order of Civil War veterans, originally formed in Decatur, Ill., in 1866. In 1881 a post of the GAR was formed in San Diego and named after Union Gen. Samuel P. Heintzelman. In 1894, a second San Diego chapter, Datus E. Coon Post, named after Union Gen. Datus E. Coon, was formed.

There also were GAR posts in Escondido (No. 142) and National City (No. 146). Local posts were part of the GAR's department of California and Nevada.

According to genealogical researcher Barbara Palmer, 1,952 Civil War veterans lived in San Diego. Most were believed to be veterans of the Union army.

San Diego's last surviving Civil War veteran, Horace Bly Day, moved to San Diego from New York City in 1905. Day died in San Diego on June 1, 1943, at the age of 93.

Fittingly, the U.S. Grant Hotel served as headquarters for the 1924 GAR encampment. The hotel was built by Ulysses S. Grant Jr., the son of the Civil War general who became the 18th president of the United States.

*From the Evening Tribune, Monday, June 9, 1924:*

## SAN DIEGO PLAYS HOST TO GRAND ARMY CIVIL WAR VETERANS GATHERING IN REUNION

Bearing warm hearts and glad smiles in place of the bullets and muskets they once carried, an army will invade San Diego today. Already the vanguard is here, and the officers have laid out their camps and made everything ready for their forces.

## Visitors Number 2000

This army is composed of the delegates and visitors to the 57th annual encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, department of California and Nevada, and their allied orders, the Woman's Relief



Corps, the Ladies of the G.A.R., and Sons of Veterans auxiliary.

All told, the army is expected to number approximately 2,000. The encampment begins this afternoon.

San Diego has opened her arms to the invaders. Her streets have been hung with flags, her store adorned with bunting, and everywhere flies the Red, White and Blue, the colors for which the visitors bravely marched through shot and shell, suffered privation and disease, and languished in prison 60 years ago, that the integrity of the Great American nation might be preserved.

The loyal citizens of San Diego, realizing that the veterans of the Civil War are fast

passing and that this city may never again have the honor of entertaining them, are prepared to do their utmost for the aged guests. Receptions, sight-seeing trips, banquets and other forms of merrymaking have been arranged, and every courtesy that Southland hospitality can think of is to be shown to the all too small remnant of a once mighty army.

Tenderly guarding the soldiers who once strode valiantly into battle, but whose steps have been slowed by relentless time, comes a host of younger men and women. They have made it their duty and privilege to see that these saviors of the Union are well looked after in their declining years, and, also, that the rising generation shall learn to revere and honor the nation and the flag for which these silver-haired veterans fought.

## G.A.R. Auxiliaries

The Woman's Relief Corps, the oldest and largest of these auxiliaries, is open to every loyal woman who desires to help preserve the traditions of American patriotism. Originally organized to help needy veterans and their families, it has extended its work to Spanish war veterans and to ex-service men of the World war, and at the same time is carrying on a work of education among the boys and girls of the nation.

The Ladies of the G.A.R. is an organization with similar aims, but with a membership limited to blood relatives of Union Civil War veterans.

HISTORICAL PHOTOS AND ARTICLES FROM THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE ARCHIVES ARE COMPILED BY MERRIE MONTEAGUDO. SEARCH THE U-T HISTORIC ARCHIVES AT [NEWSLIBRARY.COM/SITES/SDUB](http://NEWSLIBRARY.COM/SITES/SDUB).