

MEDIATE THIS !

PAVING THE WAY TO NEIGHBORHOOD UNITY IN EL CAJON

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Dear Mediator:

We live in a narrow unincorporated area on an older street with no organized homeowners' association. Street maintenance must be attended to by all the residents of our neighborhood. Years ago, long-standing neighbors harmoniously organized resources to pave the street as needed. But after major turnover, we don't even know most of our neighbors. Our worn-out street now requires expensive repaving. We need to engage neighbors we don't even know to contribute to the high cost of repair. Any suggestions on how we approach this daunting task?

Torn-Up Street in El Cajon

Dear Torn-Up:

One of the secret joys of conflict resolution is the discovery of "blessings in disguise" that start out as liabilities and then, with the application of skill and patience, morph into assets.

Modern communities have lost much of the interpersonal cohesion that makes neighborhood life vibrant. Your street problem presents an opportunity to restore that solidarity. As one of the residents with the most seniority, you have the standing to take the lead.

Now all you need is a playbook.

The winter holidays are a time when people who don't interact the rest of the year reach out to one another. So consider sending a special "Season's Greetings!" letter to all your neighbors by snail mail or hand delivery.

Offer to host a potluck party in the New Year so families can become better acquainted and exchange contact information. Or suggest a January yard sale so everyone can make room in their closets and garages for new holiday swag.

When all of you gather, newer neighbors will likely want to know more about the history of their street. That's the time to broach the subject of how your unincorporated area doesn't have access to municipal services like street paving that most neighborhoods have.

There's no way to sugarcoat the news that households may have to pony up to fix the streets you all use. And some neighbors may outright refuse to chip in, even when you point out that unincorporated residents pay less in taxes than people in other areas.

But you can broaden the menu of street maintenance options by exercising your rights as voters and consulting your elected repre-



GETTY IMAGES

This week's question deals with a resident's need to persuade the neighborhood to pay collectively for street paving.

sentatives.

Residents of unincorporated communities across the nation have been stepping up efforts to seek government assistance, and they are getting a lot more attention.

Based on demographic data, these areas are often categorized as "low income" or "disadvantaged." In a slew of recent disasters, when unincorporated residents were too remote to receive timely assistance, images of dev-

astation raised awareness of their urgent needs.

One of the big lessons we learn in conflict resolution is that too many disputes arise from the rigid belief that adversaries must divvy up a meager pool of resources. Mediators routinely work with clients to "expand the pie" by looking outside conventional channels for additional benefits.

If you can organize a group of four or more neighbors, you will have the critical mass you need to

ask for a meeting with elected officials who can direct you to government and nonprofit service agencies that could offer assistance.

It's helpful to remember that in the eyes of a politician, a single unhappy constituent is an item on an office log, but a united group of unhappy constituents is a voting bloc.

You also can expand the pie with a neighborhood "Fix Our Street!" fundraising venture (bake sale, car wash) and/or by approaching professionals who might give your group a discount or in-kind donations.

The resulting camaraderie could restore the harmony that once was your neighborhood's strength. And if you all succeed in this project, your shared achievement will give your street a value all its own.

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. If you have questions, email me at lora.cicalo@sduniontribune.com

NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

OUTDOORS: ERNIE COWAN

Geminids to light up the night sky

The chill of the December night was seeping through my thick fleece as we waited for the celestial fireworks to begin. And what a show it would be.

With a small group of friends, we had wandered away from the lights of civilization to a silent wash in the wild heart of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Our goal was to see what the heavens offered as the winter meteor shower known as the Geminids ignited the night sky.

For now, it was time to add another layer against the cold.

Meteor showers are more common than most people realize, with nearly a dozen scattered throughout the year. Some are very minor events, while others can be more spectacular.

The annual Perseid meteor shower occurs in August and seems to draw the most attention. Warm temperatures, a brilliant Milky Way in the summer sky, and a meteor rate of up to 60 an hour make this one of the better shows when there is no competition from moonlight and you can escape city lights.

The Geminids are lesser known but, as I soon discovered, one of the most spectacular things I have ever seen in the night sky. They will return again this year on the night of Dec. 13 and morning of Dec. 14.

Most people have seen the random meteor streaking through a night sky, and I have rarely missed the beauty of the August Perseids. The Geminids topped them all.

We went to the desert because Anza-Borrego is known for dark sky conditions. In fact, the park has been designated as a Dark Sky Park by the International Dark Sky Association (www.darksky.org). During the August Perseids, hundreds will gather in remote canyons of the park to enjoy the show.

We had our wide desert wash all to ourselves. With reclining chairs, warm blankets and a thermos of hot coffee, our group was settled in for the night.

Meteors are created when bits of space debris are burned up entering Earth's atmosphere. A meteor shower happens when the Earth passes through a concentrated debris cloud, left behind by comets or asteroids.

The Geminids come from the debris of an asteroid named 3200 Phaeton.

These tiny pieces of debris, sometimes no bigger than a grain of sand, enter our atmosphere at extremely high speed and the friction causes them to ignite.



ERNIE COWAN

A bright Geminid meteor streaks by the constellation Orion.

Meteor showers get their name by their location. The Geminids seem to radiate from the constellation Gemini.

What made last year's Geminid show so spectacular was the rate of meteors. Not only did they happen at a rate of 120 an hour or more, there were moments when five, six or more, would streak through the night sky within seconds of one another. The wow factor was incredible.

The enemy of night sky viewing is light, and conditions this year will be similar to last year's show. The partial moon will be setting around 10:30 p.m. Dec. 13, providing a truly dark sky for peak viewing after midnight.

While you will see meteors before midnight, the peak will occur in the wee hours of Dec. 14 because the rotation of the Earth turns us into the oncoming debris cloud.

Some of the meteors will be bright, multicolored fireballs. Some leave a glowing dust trail. A few meteors will be very dim, and not even visible if you are not in a dark sky location.

As mentioned earlier, it will be colder than you think. Just Take extra layers and blankets and have a pad under you to insulate from cold.

Here's one more warning. Desert roads can be tricky, especially at night. Without a suitable vehicle, don't stray off pavement.

I can predict that seeing a spectacular meteor shower will change you. There is something about connecting with the cosmos that puts life in perspective.

The Geminid meteor shower of 2018 should be one of the best celestial events of the year.

Contact Ernie at Packtrain.com

THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

Migrant story's long front-page run

One of the biggest stories of the year for the Union-Tribune has been the arrival of the Central American immigrants to Tijuana. Not only is it a huge local story, but it is also big nationally and internationally.

Day after day for the past month the story has received prominent display on the front page. The first locally written A1 story on the migrant caravan, by U-T staffers Kate Morrissey and Sandra Dibble, appeared Nov. 4. Another by Morrissey ran on the front page Nov. 6. Then the coverage kicked in and hasn't let up. From Nov. 9 to Dec. 1, at least one U-T story on the migrant situation appeared on the front page every day except for Nov. 12. On Nov. 27, three articles appeared on the front.

The story has been the lead A1 photo 14 times. It was the lead front-page photo six days straight from Nov. 15 to Nov. 20 and six days in a row from Nov. 26 to Dec. 1.

Immigration and enterprise editor Mark Platte is leading the coverage. He knows his way around a big story. He has worked at such newspapers as the Los Angeles Times, Miami Herald and Honolulu Advertiser. He managed coverage of Orange County's bankruptcy in 1994 and the collision of a Navy submarine with a Japanese fishing vessel in Honolulu in 2001 that killed nine.

The main writers on the migrant story have been Dibble, the U-T's veteran border reporter; Morrissey, the immigration reporter; South Bay reporter Gustavo Solis; and freelance writer Wendy Fry. But other U-T staffers have jumped in to provide coverage as well.

The busiest photographer has been Nelvin C. Cepeda, with Hayne Palmour IV also heading down to Tijuana frequently.

"There's no shortage of what to cover," Platte said.

He described the story as a moving target, with a multitude of angles — immigration, asylum, humanitarianism, health, Baja California state government, Tijuana city government, law enforcement, the U.S. military, the U.S. federal government, the White House.

Platte said his goal is at least two stories a day. "I look for a theme every day. It could be the shelters, police response, health, tourism."

Developments and information are continuous. He communicates with reporters through multiple methods: WhatsApp, texting, phone calls, email and instant messaging system Slack.

In addition to the trying to stay up on the news of day and explore other angles for more in-depth reporting, Platte and the reporters

are dealing with fatigue.

He has been cycling reporters in and out, while working 12-hour days himself during the work week and adding hours on weekends.

Fry was brought to the team to provide relief and has taken on much of the day-to-day coverage of breaking developments with her ability to write fast and seemingly limitless stamina.

"Probably the greatest challenges are writing on how overwhelmingly complex the problem is, and staying in the middle with how polarized views are on this topic," Fry said.

"I was interviewing a little girl, and she told me she hadn't eaten in two days. A mom is going to want to feed her, just like my reflex was to reach out to comfort that little crying girl during the clash at the border." (Fry is a mother to two teenage girls.)

"It's extremely difficult not to want to try to do something, but I try to look at like this: there are plenty of people who can volunteer to help if they want, but there aren't a whole lot of people who can do what we journalists do — looking for the whole story with all its complex aspects, and writing about that as honestly and neutrally as possible. So ... I'm trying to let our readers know exactly what is going on here, as factually and realistically as I possibly can."

Fry, Dibble and Solis speak Spanish fluently. Morrissey has been enrolled in an intensive weekly Spanish class, and has been applying her new skills.

Other U-T writers who have covered the story include National City and San Ysidro reporter David Hernandez and public safety reporter Alex Riggins, both Spanish speakers. Federal courts reporter Kristina Davis, Watchdog reporter Jeff McDonald and business reporters Lori Weisberg and Rob Nikolewski have hit the story from multiple angles, as well.

On Sunday, Nov. 25, when some migrants rushed the border and U.S. authorities were forced to use tear gas, public safety reporter Lyndsay Winkley and that day's general assignment reporter, Mike Freeman, provided rewrite duties at the U-T's downtown San Diego office as the reporting came in on the mayhem.

Platte said plans are to engage even more reporters.

He said he has heard from readers who have criticized the amount of coverage, but he said his team's goal is to do the most extensive coverage possible for the duration of the story.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES | LOOKING BACK OVER 150 YEARS

BEASLEY AND KIMBALL LAUNCH THE EVENING TRIBUNE

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, Dec. 2, 1895

In 1895, Thomas Dykes Beasley and Frederick Ernest Augustus Kimball launched the Evening Tribune as a daily newspaper.

The men, who went by their initials — T.D. Beasley and F.E.A. Kimball — had previously owned the Seaport News, and Kimball owned and edited the the Coronado Mercury.

Beasley and Kimball dubbed the Evening Tribune, "The People's Paper" and charged 25 cents a month for a subscription, undercutting the Union's subscription price by a third.

From day one, the Tribune promised to be "vigorous, timely and fearless," a lively and readable competitor to the more established, and somewhat stodgy, Union.

In 1901, the Tribune was sold to John D. Spreckels, who also owned the Union. Despite a joint printing operation, the Union and Tribune continued to battle at newsstands until 1992, when the two merged to form The San Diego Union-Tribune.

The text below comes from page two of the four-page first issue, where the Beasley and Kimball give their vision for the newspaper.

SALUTATORY.

With this issue we begin the publication of an evening journal, in accordance with a long cherished desire to wield a more powerful force for the advancement and rebuilding of San Diego. Profiting by costly experience in the past and the lessons derived therefrom, the publishers feel that in this is enterprise there is no such word as failure. This experience being supplemented by a well equipped

printing plant and a thorough understanding of the city's needs, assures the establishment of what San Diego has so long needed, an independent newspaper, fearlessly advocating the best interests of this city and its people.

Thousands of persons in the East are looking towards Southern California as their future home, many of whom would come to this county, yet hesitate by reason of misstate-



ments published in local papers, largely for the attainment of selfish ends. It will be the aim of THE TRIBUNE to truthfully depict the advantages of this section, without needlessly enlarging upon purely local and temporary disagreements. In the past, we have had abundant proofs (some of which may be adduced later) of the injury done by the circulation of false reports concerning our city and county; and if in the future San Diego desires to speedily attain the position she is destined in time to occupy, there must be more united action in presenting her claims to the world. No one need hesitate to send THE TRIBUNE to Eastern friends for the fear of "hurting the town."

THE TRIBUNE will be clean, bright and progressive, and for that reason will be the newspaper for the home. Believing in the fundamental principles of the Republican party, THE TRIBUNE will advocate those princi-

ples, exercising the right of a free press to criticize a failure to live up to their spirit and intent, as interpreted by us.

THE TRIBUNE congratulates itself on having secured a contract for the ASSOCIATED PRESS dispatches, and can assure its readers that its telegraphic service will be superior to that of any afternoon newspaper ever published in San Diego. Special efforts will be made to render the presentation of local news complete and attractive.

KIMBALL & BEASLEY.

Here are the first few paragraphs of news from the front page of Volume 1, No. 1 of the Tribune:

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Young ladies should heed the fact that 1896 is a leap year and also that there will not be another leap year until 1904, eight long years.

The Wilson tariff as a tariff for revenue has been a lamentable failure. Its only effect has been to create an annual deficiency of \$50,000,000.

Two full moons will occur this month. The only instance before this of two full moons in December was 1896 years ago at the coming of the Savior.

The business of the Los Angeles post office has doubled within three years, a remarkable showing considering the general financial depression of those years.

IT is said that fifteen years ago Ingersoll remarked that he would believe there was a hades when Kentucky went Republican. It is now in order for the noted agnostic to report.