

A PATH FORWARD

LESSONS LEARNED FROM 'SPACE WALKING' AMID THE MIDWAY

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Last week, I asked you to consider joining the ranks of San Diego philanthropists by volunteering a few hours of your time each month in support of a local cause that matters to you. Perhaps you filed that suggestion away, thinking, "Sounds great, if I can get through December."

Congratulations — you're halfway there. Just the other day, I heard someone describe December as the "month of more": more eating, more spending, more obligations. It strikes me as an apt description. How can we break this cycle and focus instead on what is most essential and meaningful? How do we move from superficiality to genuine connection? How, in this season of distraction, do we become more self-aware and mindful?

I may have found the answer in an imaginary bubble. Recently, I participated in A Path Forward community dialogue, hosted by the National Conflict Resolution Center. A Path Forward was launched earlier this year to give community members a



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The Midway was chosen as the location of the fourth in a series of countywide talks to attract members of the military community to join in the dialogues.

forum for engaging in frank and healing conversation in the aftermath of two hate crimes that marred San Diego.

This event, the fourth in a series of dialogues across the county, took place on board the USS Midway. Named for a World War II battle, the Midway is the longest-serving aircraft carrier in the 20th century. It was chosen, in part, to

draw members of the military into the conversation. The setting created a striking juxtaposition, however. People came that night to take part in dialogue — knowing its pivotal role in achieving a more civil and peaceful society — yet we were surrounded by instruments of war.

As it turns out, an aircraft carrier is the perfect place to do peace work. It

provides a visual reminder of the awesome power that we employ when a peaceful solution can't be found. It encourages us to work harder toward the goal of peace. But the lesson here is that what matters most, in all situations, is the mindset you bring. We explored this through "Space Walk," an exercise that comes out of classical theater training. It helps actors warm up, awak-

en their imaginations, and experiment with movement, while at the same time become aware of their place in relation to others.

Rather than walking in space, we were instructed to imagine ourselves moving around the room in a bubble — a new experience for us all, and in unfamiliar surroundings. First, we were alone. Then our bubbles grew to include another person, with handshakes exchanged. Then they grew again to include others. The discomfort that comes with the feeling of being alone in a crowded space gave way to a sense of connection. Body language changed as the exercise continued. Smiles broke out as participants realized that their bubble-mates were there to provide support.

But I'll be honest: While space walking may come naturally to actors, it's a difficult exercise when you're among strangers. Beyond the isolation we experienced in the bubble, it seemed even more challenging for some to reach out and connect with others, perhaps of a different ethnicity, race, culture or age.

According to Malcolm Gladwell in his best-selling book, "Blink," we must take active steps to interact with others who differ from us — and do so on a regular basis, however difficult. That way, you don't feel uncomfortable with everyday encounters, like meeting, talking or hiring someone who's not your mirror image. A step in this direction, is, no doubt, a step forward.

So, when you find yourself in unfamiliar surroundings this holiday season, consider the lessons from the bubble: In achieving greater self-awareness, we can realize greater connectedness. Keep this in mind and enjoy a December of more — more meaning, more appreciation, more satisfying relationships.

Steven P. Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC), a San Diego-based organization that is working to create innovative solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. NCRC is nationally recognized for its conflict management and communication strategies. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit www.ncrconline.com.

NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

SAN DIEGO: LAURYN SCHROEDER

San Diego Pride to donate \$340K

San Diego Pride announced last week that it plans to donate more than \$340,000 to local, national and international organizations serving LGBTQ communities.

Each year, San Diego Pride, a nonprofit, donates proceeds from the annual Pride week and the San Diego Pride Parade. More than \$3 million has been donated since 1994.

Sixty-one organizations will receive donations this year. Most are based in San Diego, including the Center for Community Solutions, the County of San Diego LGBTQ&A Employee Resource Group, and the Live and Let Live Alano Club.

Other funding will be spread throughout the world to Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Florida, Minnesota, Mexico, Pakistan, Bulgaria and Uganda.

"We know that LGBTQ-serving organizations are chronically underfunded across the globe," said Sarafina Scapicchio, San Diego Pride's director of philanthropy. "This is why San Diego Pride intentionally reinvests proceeds from our annual celebration to show the world that LGBTQ people can come to-

gether to support our own community's health, well-being, and safety."

Scapicchio said the grants fund a variety of services, ranging from assistance for LGBTQ seniors in San Diego to helping homeless trans women in Malaysia.

San Diego Pride Executive Director Fernando López said the organization's events and year-round programming would not be possible without the 70 nonprofit partners, 117 sponsors, 575 entertainers, nearly 2,000 volunteers and hundreds of thousands of festival and parade attendees.

The theme of this year's Pride parade commemorated the Stonewall Riots in 1969 in New York City.

Last year's parade and festival was one of the summer's biggest events, drawing a crowd of some 250,000 to Hillcrest over three days. Tickets are on sale now for the 2020 Pride Festival, held July 18 and July 19 in Balboa Park. They can be purchased at sdpride.org.

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EDUCATION: GUSTAVO SOLIS

Consul, nonprofit set up scholarships

The Mexican government and a local nonprofit announced last week a college scholarship program for San Diego's Latino immigrants and their children.

In partnership with the Metropolitan Advisory Committee, or MAAC, the Consul General of Mexico in San Diego will award \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors who have already been admitted to college for the fall 2020 semester.

The goal of the scholarship is to eliminate inequities by helping people from underserved communities afford an education, said MAAC CEO Arnulfo Manriquez.

"Education opens doors," he said. "I have seen first-hand the impact that it has."

Manriquez and the consul general of Mexico in San Diego, Carlos Gonzalez Gutierrez, decided to name the scholarship fund after a hummingbird to represent the immigrant community's fighting spirit.

"It symbolizes hope, perseverance and personal strength — the same principles that our immigrant families possess as they seek greater economic mobility in a new

land," Manriquez said.

Organizers hope to raise at least \$70,000 and award 70 scholarships for the fall 2020 semester.

Gonzalez Gutierrez plans to raise that money through a series of fundraising events and specifically challenged the region's affluent immigrant community to contribute.

"Part of this effort is to mobilize the community," Gonzalez Gutierrez said. "Particularly mobilize those who are the most fortunate for the benefit of those who are still in the margins. If we don't help ourselves, who will?"

Organizers expect the scholarship application to be open by mid-February.

The scholarship is not limited to Mexican nationals or children of Mexican immigrants. Any immigrant or child of an immigrant from a Latin American country is eligible to apply.

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THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

Guidelines for Watchdog reporting

After Rep. Duncan Hunter pleaded guilty Dec. 3 to one count of conspiracy to convert campaign funds to personal use, Assistant U.S. Attorney Phillip Halpern told reporters outside the federal courthouse in San Diego that a Union-Tribune story on Hunter's spending spurred federal authorities to begin investigating the congressman.

The story was written by Watchdog reporter Morgan Cook on April 5, 2016. Over the next three years, Cook would write more than 100 stories documenting the details of Hunter's financial and ethical problems. The congressman responded with claims of "fake news," media bias and deep-state conspiracy. In the end, Cook, not Hunter, was vindicated.

"Today, in many ways, is a triumph for the press," Halpern observed. The Hunter case "shows the importance of having a free press that not only the people can rely on but the Department of Justice can turn to for guidance."

Watchdog reporting takes special care. Reputations hang in the balance — for the people the U-T writes about, and for the U-T itself.

Here are some of the guidelines the Watchdog team follows to ensure that its work remains accurate and fair:

Everything we do will be subject to a fairness test, and we will not hesitate to hold or kill a story that fails to meet this test. These are our standards for Union-Tribune coverage that suggests wrongdoing by a person or institution, with or without the Watchdog label:

- We don't shade the truth. We let the facts lead us. We show our work.
- We will frame stories fairly and openly, in particular in the critical sections that make an impression on readers — that is, in the lead and at the end.
- Subjects must be given ample time to respond, generally, a minimum of 24 hours.
- There should be no surprises in the story for subjects. That is, they should have an opportunity before publication to know the full thrust of the report and respond to any substantive details or accusations.
- We will make a sincere and persistent effort to understand where they are coming from, with basic reporting tools like in-person meetings.
- If they decline to meet or comment or do not respond, we will communicate to readers in reasonable detail the efforts we made to reach them.
- When they do talk, we will listen with an open mind to the response from the subjects and portray their point of view in a straight-



NELVIN C. CEPEDA U-T

Rep. Duncan Hunter walks toward his court hearing Dec. 3.

forward way.

• When they do not talk, we will reach out to allies or sympathetic parties and scour the public record to understand the point of view of the subjects.

• We will not include quotes in the story with the intent of making a subject look bad. Fairness dictates that all parties are equally entitled to a favorable light.

• If our subjects' point of view does not square with other data points in a story, we will make a sincere effort to reconcile the conflicting information.

• Clips from the archive do not qualify as fair comment; today's story requires today's response.

"Watchdog journalism is public service journalism on a daily basis. It seeks to hold powerful people and institutions publicly accountable," U-T Watchdog editor Denise Amos said. "To do that, we must be accountable. We operate from a position of public trust, so we have to uphold heightened standards for accuracy and fairness, and we have to dig deeper to tell stories that matter to our community."

"We strive to hone our data gathering and analysis skills ... and take pains to explain to readers the impact or significance of the news we uncover," Amos said.

"That's why Watchdog reporters tend to be some of our most experienced reporters who are sticklers for detail and persistent questioners. And it's why each Watchdog story gets extra editing scrutiny. At least two assigning editors as well as top editors read each story."

Another layer of editing then occurs with copy editors.

Amos can be reached at denise.amos@sduniontribune.com.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

TUNABOAT CAPTAIN FINDS GALAPAGOS 'GARDEN OF EDEN' TRAGEDY

In December 1934 the tunaboat Santo Amaro returned home to San Diego bearing details of the discovery of two mummified bodies on Marchena Isle in the Galapagos. Behind the gruesome find is the still unsolved mystery of the missing Baroness Eloise Bosquet De Wagner, self-styled Empress of the Galapagos, and the deaths of at least three men who sought to find sanctuary from the world in the remote equatorial archipelago.

From The San Diego Union, Tuesday, December 11, 1934:

Tunaboat Brings Details of Gruesome Find On Marchena Isle, But Mystery Yet Unsolved

Death Stalks Over Adjacent Shore Where Key Might Be Found, and Self-styled Empress Has Disappeared

If someone aboard the local tunaboat Santo Amaro hadn't been curious, the bizarre finale of the Galapagos islands' modern Eden might not have been learned for years.

The Santo Amaro was back yesterday, loaded with fish and bringing an account of the startling events which followed the discovery of two mummified corpses on Marchena island's barren shore on the afternoon of Nov. 17. Woven into the story are the deaths of the two men, as yet only tentatively identified, the collapse of the "Garden of Eden" of Dr. Frederick Ritter and his companion, Frau Dore Koervin, and the disappearance of Baroness Bosquet de Wagner, self-appointed "empress" of the island domain.

It was on a Saturday afternoon that the

Santo Amaro anchored off a beach at volcanic Marchena, and someone noticed a white object ashore, apparently an up-turned skiff. They rowed over to the land, beached their own boat and started to walk toward the skiff. They all but stumbled over a body, dead many months, on their way to the spot. Capt. William Borthen, registered master-navigator of the vessel, and Capt. Manuel Rodriguez, fishing captain, would allow no one to touch the body, fearing at first that the dead person might have died of some infectious tropical disease. The body was of slight build, and its uncut shock of blonde hair, together with the small stature, gave rise to the belief that it was a woman. The body lay on one side, the head pillowed on one hand as if in sleep.

They went on to the skiff, and saw several letters scattered about. Then the second



body, under the skiff, was discovered. Apparently this one had died first, and the survivor had placed the skiff over the remains as a protection.

Further Mysteries

The baroness had mysteriously disappeared from the islands, as has Robert Phillipson. There were rumors that both had left "on an American yacht."

No oars were found in the skiff, nor did a search by the Santo Amaro's crew reveal any nearby. There is another island of the group some 80 miles away, and current charts of the vicinity are said to indicate that anyone wrecked on the nearest shore of this island would, in all probability, drift onto Marchena; there is a strong set toward Marchena, and a boat could drift there in few days. Once landing on Marchena, the plight of the castaways would be hopeless. The island rises to an extinct volcano in the center; there is no vegetation save a species of sagebrush, and the island is wholly devoid of water. The two men undoubtedly perished of thirst. The body believed to be that of Lorenz, lying away from the skiff, was dressed in dungarees and shirt. The other man wore dungarees and a white

jacket. Neither had shoes. Nearby were some baby's clothing, the presence of which has yet to be explained.

Has Good Catch

The ghastly discovery by the Santo Amaro's people apparently had no ill effect on their luck, for the clipper had a catch well in excess of 100 tons of prime fish when she went up to the Van Camp plant to unload.

The Santo Amaro is one of the larger of the local tunaboats. In addition to Captains Rodriguez and Borthen, she carries the following personnel: O.E. Hitchcock, engineer; John Luz, John Rebelo, August Silva, Manuel Drummond, Tony Drummond, Joe Rodriguez, Manuel Gonzales, John Diego, Frank Correa; James Von Ells, wireless operator, and Bob Mitchell, cook.

While some of the letter found by the two mummified bodies were translated, their contents was not revealed. The letters were to be turned over to customs authorities here. At the islands, Captain Hancock is continuing the investigation.

Many Letters Found

There were many letters, the most recent bearing a July date. Apparently they had been gathered up for mailing. Some were in English, some in German, Swedish, and Spanish. One was addressed to Capt. G. Allen Hancock, who has taken many scientific expeditions to the islands in past years, and was well acquainted with Dr. Ritter and his companion, Dore, who lived on Charles island, some distance away.

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