

MEDIATE THIS !

TAKING THE HIGH ROAD TO PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Dear Mediator,
I am a freelance software engineer who was a principal member of a team that produced a groundbreaking project. I just received an email from an engineer friend congratulating me on a national award for the project. When I looked up the award (which I hadn't heard about), I saw my name was omitted from the citation. I think this was a deliberate credit grab. Professional honors in my field have real value. How do I right this wrong?

Ticked Off in Rancho Bernardo

Dear Ticked Off:
You are correct that awards for professional achievement have tangible worth. They validate your talent in a way that can attract clients and impress prospective employers.

But you are not correct in assuming this was a calculated snub – not yet anyway.

You may have good reasons to distrust the project team leaders. But you need to ascertain the facts. And you should proceed tactically to give yourself plenty of room to maneuver.

Your best game plan is borrowed from the world of chess. It comes courtesy of Mary Parker

Follett, an early 20th century pioneer of management theory and an icon in the conflict resolution field.

Follett, who advised Theodore Roosevelt on managing his White House, was celebrated for her insights into what she called “constructive conflict.”

In a 1925 lecture she gave at the U.S. Bureau of Personnel Administration, Follett compared conflict management to “a game of chess” that is won by means of foresight and restraint.

“The tyro (novice) has to find his solution by making his actual moves, by the crude method of changing his actual chessmen,” Follett wrote. “A good chess player does not need to do this; he sees the possibilities without playing them out.”

Before you make your opening move, visualize your strategy for achieving success in either of two possible scenarios.

In the first, an honest mistake was made somewhere in the process that denied you the credit you deserve. That error could have been made by the project team leaders or by a clumsy award administrator.

In the second, which is the scenario you envision, the team leaders simply didn't want to share recognition.



GETTY IMAGES

Chess can shed light on strategies to manage conflict, such as the situation that arose with today's subject.

Whatever the facts may have been, start by extending the benefit of the doubt. This is one of the most powerful tools in conflict resolution.

When we suspend judgment, we lay down a marker for upholding dignity in all stages of a negotiation.

Contact the leaders, and express delight about the shared honor. Revisit the sense of pride all of you felt in the team's accom-

plishment. Then mention that your name was omitted from the citation, which must have been an oversight, and you naturally want to correct the official record.

After that, sit back and wait for the team leaders to make the next move.

In all likelihood, they will express apologies for this mistake (even if it was a deliberate ploy), and they will vow to make amends. This would deliver a just

outcome, and you would achieve it with a display of gracious professionalism.

But if they insist your contributions weren't significant, keep to the high road and end the conversation cordially.

You can always contact the award organization to document your contributions to the project and request a review.

Here's the hard part. If this was a professional slight, don't make it grounds for a personal vendetta.

Conflicts deplete us by roiling our emotions in a way that blocks us from attainment. This is especially true in the world of business.

The ability to remain focused and composed in the face of injustice is an enviable professional asset.

It will demonstrate your worth more convincingly than any framed certificate.

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 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

Science behind explosion of poppies

While the focus locally has been on the developing super bloom in San Diego's desert, another spring miracle is happening right now in the foothills of the region.

Generous amounts of rainfall have triggered a spectacular wildflower display, dominated in many areas by blazing orange fields of the state's official flower, the California poppy.

We enjoy this spring miracle, but sometimes forget to ask, “why?”

The news of this explosive bloom is spreading fast via social media, and crowds are flocking to the better bloom displays. But there is still the question of why are we seeing more poppies this year?

There have been recent wet winters, but not always the beautiful display of poppies that hikers are enjoying in Rattlesnake Canyon east of Poway, around Lake Hodges in Escondido, Highland Valley east of Rancho Bernardo, Mission Trails Regional Park, along state Route 76 east of Interstate 15, on the southern slopes of Palomar Mountain above Pauma Valley, and the hillsides north of Lake Elsinore in Riverside County.

All of these areas are painted with brilliant hues from this abundant crop of poppies. In some places the bright orange carpet is a mosaic, accented with clusters of purple lupines, California bluebells or blossoming chia sage.

Tom Chester is a local botanist who spends winters documenting plants in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and summers studying plants at higher elevations like San Jacinto. He is keenly in tune with the what's going on in the local plant world, and a good source of information about the poppy show.

When asked about the “why” of the poppy bloom, his answer was surprising.

I was aware that there are wildflowers known as fire followers. These blooms often appear after wildfires. Poppies are fire followers, and you will frequently see areas charred by wildfire covered with the opportunistic poppies when spring arrives.

According to Chester, there is also a group of flowers known as drought followers that appear during a wet cycle following a previous drought. Poppies also fall into this classification.

While most of us remember the record rainfall during the winter of 2016-17, we forget that last winter was nearly a record drought.

“Last winter we were flirting with it being the driest season in history,” Chester said. “Now we have flowers popping everywhere because of last year's drought followed by lots of



ERNIE COWAN

California poppies along Highland Valley Road near Rancho Bernardo.

rain this year. The bloom in many areas is better than I have ever seen it.”

A drought year, like the region experienced last winter, can also kill off or reduce competing invasive plants and grasses that can crowd out native species. That means more room for native species to thrive when ample rains come.

With many areas throughout the state, including San Diego County, recording significantly above average to near record amounts of rain, nature lovers are seeing the results. Plants that have not put on much of a spring flower display the past few years are bringing glorious color displays to San Diego's normally parched hillsides and meadows.

There is complicated science behind all of this. It's not just about rain.

The equation for success also includes fire and drought, rainfall, when the rains come, the spacing of rainfall, temperatures, altitude and winds. When the right combination happens, nature will fulfill the promise of spring.

There are complex reasons that in some years you will see the normally drab chaparral forests covering San Diego's hillsides covered with the purple blooms of California wild lilac as early as late January, or hardly at all. This year that same bloom is just starting to emerge.

Nature's magic combination lock seems to have been opened this spring. Soon the valley floor around Lake Henshaw will be carpeted with tiny goldfields and the shaded floor of Palomar Mountain dotted with baby blue eyes as spring temperatures climb to higher elevations.

Spring 2019 will be a wildflower year to remember. Does “why” really matter?

Email ernie@packtrain.com.

THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

U-T's new Spanish-language edition

The Union-Tribune introduced its new Spanish-language edition this month.

The publication differs from past Spanish-language products because it is branded as The San Diego Union-Tribune, as compared to others over the past 20 years, such as Enlace, Vida Latina and the latest, Hoy.

It's a regular-sized broadsheet. The first edition, published March 2, was 12 pages. It's published weekly on Saturdays.

U-T en Español features stories from U-T and Los Angeles Times staffers, from freelancers and from news services.

Lilia O'Hara, editorial director of U-T en Español, said she chooses the stories based on their relevancy to the Latino community. She and assistant editor Tania Navarro and two freelancers translate the stories that were initially written in English. For example, U-T business writer Rob Nikolewski's recent front-page story on SDG&E's new pricing schedule appeared in the debut edition. The publication also features news out of Tijuana.

Sections include world, sports, entertainment and technology.

The free publication is distributed to 70,000 addresses in the South Bay and North County. In addition, 30,000 appear in racks in the South Bay.

“The decision to align more closely with the English-language Union-Tribune reflects our conviction that San Diego is one community, U-T Editor and Publisher Jeff Light said in a note to readers in the debut of U-T en Español. “San Diegans speak many languages, but all are served by the same kind of journalism: the pursuit of truth, a commitment to accountability and a focus on community.”

“Each week in these pages you will find local, national and international news, as well as important information about border life and issues that affect our region.”

Spanish-language news also appears on U-Tenespanol.com.

Ensuring accuracy

Readers regularly will email or call when they spot an error. Last week, for instance, reader Vincent Aiello from Carlsbad emailed to say that he spotted a mistake in a story on the moving of the “Top Gun” house in Oceanside. The story ran March 2 on B1. The story said the movie came out in 1989. Nope, Aiello said. It was 1986. Another reader noted the error on Facebook.

The story online was fixed, and a correction ran in print on A2.



U-T STAFF

The U-T en Español, which is published weekly, debuted last Saturday.



MARTHA MCGINTY

A training exercise that looked like a rescue at SeaWorld last May.

Although this next example did not flag an error, I was impressed and grateful for questioning the accuracy of the story.

The story was a follow-up on the rescue that occurred on SeaWorld's Skyride. The article ran on A1 Feb. 20. It described the rescue as the first in the ride's 52-year history.

“Both SeaWorld San Diego and the California Department of Industrial Relations confirmed there had been no previous evacuations of the ride since it opened in 1967,” read the story by U-T staffer Lori Weisberg.

Martha McGinty of University City had her doubts about that, and she had pictures. McGinty emailed that she had been kayaking on Mission Bay on May 8 last year. She saw a rescue and photographed it with her cellphone.

Weisberg contacted SeaWorld and learned that what McGinty saw was a rescue drill.

“I take accuracy in news seriously,” McGinty said in a phone conversation.

Thank you, Martha, for the check.

adrian.vore@sduniontribune.com

FROM THE ARCHIVES

JUDGE ORDERS SAN DIEGO SCHOOL INTEGRATION IN 1977

In 1977, a Superior Court judge ruled in *Carlin v. Board of Education* that 23 of San Diego's public schools were racially segregated and gave the board three months to develop a plan leading to full school integration.

Judge Louis M. Welsh issued the order as part of decision in the school desegregation case filed in 1967 by former city teacher Larry D. Carlin.

Unlike other big cities, San Diego was permitted to integrate its schools through voluntary busing and magnet schools. The San Diego Unified School District remained under court supervision until 1998.

From *The San Diego Union*, Thursday, March 10, 1977:

JUDGE ORDERS SCHOOL INTEGRATION PLAN BY JUNE 13 IN CARLIN CASE

Smile Tells Of Carlin's Satisfaction

By Carol Kendrick, Staff Writer, *The San Diego Union*

Larry Carlin sat in the small wooden-paneled courtroom, his three daughters at his side, reading a book on jogging.

Amid the crush of attorneys, school officials and reporters for copies of the judge's decision, the man whose name has become synonymous with the desegregation suit against the city schools remained calm.

The faintest hint of a smile appeared on his face as he scanned a copy of the ruling handed to him by an attorney. And the smile grew as he made his way through the crowd.

Hands extended to him: in congratulations from those who saw the judge's criti-

cism of the San Diego Unified School District as a victory, in commiseration from those who saw the court order for a development of an integration plan as not strong enough.

Acknowledges Swarm

Struggling through the attention of reporters, microphones, camera lights and television suits, the 39-year-old former teacher gracefully acknowledged the attention that came his way merely because this name was first alphabetically among the complaints.

The Carlin case originated in a suit filed in 1967 on behalf of 12 San Diego schoolchildren.

Among those children was Carlin's



daughter, Kari, then in kindergarten and now a ninth grader at Lewis Junior High School.

The plaintiffs were listed alphabetically and over the years, the shorter identification, “Carlin et al.,” drew the family into the spotlight.

Still in the spotlight yesterday, Carlin leaned leisurely against the courtroom rail, fielding repeated queries.

“I am pleased that the judge (Superior Court Judge Louis Welsh) did find as we claimed that there are segregated schools in San Diego,” he said. “And the judge did say that the school district has not demonstrated a commitment to desegregation.”

Major Question Remains

“The question now is whether the district will vigorously desegregate the schools.”

“It's not over.”

Carlin was a teacher at Memorial Junior

High School when he joined a group of parents in the suit against the schools.

“I had been active in civil rights,” he explained, “and served on the Citizens Committee for Equal Educational Opportunities.”

“We concluded that the schools should do something about desegregation. When they refused to make a commitment, we filed suit.”

Carlin's wife, Kay, is employed by the district as an art teacher at Morse High School, one of two high schools termed “segregated” in the judge's ruling.

Carlin left the school system to become a marriage and family counselor, and is teaching and counseling this semester at Grossmont College.

Over the last decade, Carlin's daughters have taken a matter-of-fact attitude toward a controversy that grew as they did.

Kari, 14, Tari, 13, and Kell, 11 displayed excitement in the courtroom yesterday.

“It's difficult to say what the effect has been on them,” Carlin said, nodding toward his daughters, but noting the even a decade of litigation has not seriously disrupted the family.

Seeks Best Solution

Carlin, less disappointed than some of his co-plaintiffs that mandatory busing was not ordered, added, “It seems important to have some sort of mandatory program. But what we want is desegregated schools and quality schools for all children, however that is best achieved.”

HISTORICAL PHOTOS AND ARTICLES FROM THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE ARCHIVES ARE COMPILED BY MERRIE.MONTEAGUDO@SDUNIONTRIBUNE.COM. SEARCH THE U-T HISTORIC ARCHIVES AT NEWSLIBRARY.COM/SITES/SDUB.