

MEDIATE THIS !

THE ALLURE OF THE COSTLY COLLEGE ON THE EAST COAST

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Community mediators at the National Conflict Resolution Center routinely work with families that need help with parent-teen conflicts. Each fall, as seniors apply to college, families struggle to decide which institutions represent the best choice. We explore this category today by using an example of an A-plus local student who is determined to attend an Ivy League school and her parents who are adamantly opposed to their daughter moving 3,000 miles away to pursue a degree that would cost far less here in California.

One of the great philosophical questions about parenting is: At what age are children the most formidable? Terrible twos? Tweens? Teens?

The correct answer is that every stage of childhood enjoys its own special hegemony. But there's a case to be made that adolescents on the cusp of adulthood are uniquely daunting because their emancipation is within reach.

This complicates college selection disputes because both sides believe they have veto power. Parents assume they have ultimate authority over their still-dependent child. Students envision gaining self-rule by means of

a "dependency override" status.

When the two generations finally sit down to talk about higher education, they typically have trouble communicating because they are speaking different languages.

Parents talk quantitatively: It's about the money, the expense of out-of-state tuition and housing, the back-and-forth travel. Students talk qualitatively: It's about institutional prestige, educational quality, the strengths of a specific academic program.

Mediators strive to help opposing sides reach consensus. But these college selection deadlocks are skewed by a power imbalance. Parents actually can veto a student's preference by withholding financial support and refusing to sign financial aid applications.

This would constitute a pyrrhic victory. It's one thing to tell a 5-year-old he cannot play in the street. It's another to tell an 18-year-old she must attend the college you have chosen for her.

Such coercion can generate deep-rooted resentment, the kind that strains the ties between aging parents and adult children. A wiser approach would be to respect this young woman by giving her a voice in the decision-making process.

So a two-pronged armistice is



GETTY IMAGES

This week's column looks at a parent's and daughter's dispute about attending an Ivy League college or staying in California.

the best way forward. First, the family should delay the choice as long as possible. Second, they should keep all options open and continue exploring alternatives.

The intricate dance of college acceptance and tuition/aid negotiations gives applicants time to make a final commitment. If they resist the impulse to rush to the finish line, they can make a rational call based on calm deliberation.

To counter the emotional sway of brochures that tout survey

rankings and famous alumni, parents can ask seniors to read a 2014 Time Magazine feature titled "It Doesn't Matter Where You Go to College." The article summarized research that future earnings and career satisfaction are not determined by the name on your school sweatshirt but by "what you will do, at college and in life, to keep improving your skills, to develop your character, to remain persistent."

On the pivotal issue of finance, time spent inquiring into schol-

arships and low-interest loans is a smart investment. And a student who will work part-time to defray her living expenses is well on her way to personal autonomy.

The deciding factor may be what the family can realistically afford. Crunching the numbers and listing comparative expenses can clarify this. Would the savings of tens of thousands of dollars erase a looming debt? Or would that money likely go toward an expensive new car that isn't necessary?

Once the decision is made jointly and the deposit is sent in, the family can start preparing for a much tougher challenge that is just months away: that searing moment on the first day of college when heartsick parents cannot bear to let go and elated freshman students cannot wait to break free.

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?** Please 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, please email me at lora.cicalo@sduiontribune.com

NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

TELEVISION: JOHN WILKENS

'Antiques' episodes to air next year

"Antiques Roadshow," the popular PBS TV program, has announced the air dates for three hour-long episodes filmed earlier this year at the Hotel del Coronado.

They are scheduled for Feb. 18, Feb. 25, and April 1. All three are Mondays. The show airs locally on KPBS at 8 p.m.

About 3,000 people attended the day-long taping on May 29 after winning tickets through a lottery. More than 13,000 had applied.

They brought the usual assortment of family heirlooms and dumpster finds — paintings, clocks, sports memorabilia, rugs, books and on and on — and waited in lines to have them appraised by one of 65 experts from around the country.

About 70 of the items were chosen for appraisals that were done in front of the TV cameras. Those are the ones that will be included in the upcoming episodes, which will be part of the show's 23rd season.

The program typically draws about 8 million viewers every week.

This is the third time "Antiques Roadshow" has been in San Diego. The last time, in 2010, a painting thought by its owner to be worth \$4,500 was appraised at up to \$300,000. A Turkish rug, found in the trash, was valued

at \$125,000 to \$150,000.

People chosen for the on-air verdicts don't know beforehand whether what they've brought is a treasure, or trash. The producers want to capture their reactions as they unfold. Most episodes include a mix of good and not-so-good news.

In announcing the air dates, PBS offered no details about what will be shown from the Hotel Del, which was chosen as the location because of its rich history. Executive Producer Marsha Bemko said during the taping she was hoping for something connected to L. Frank Baum, the "Wizard of Oz" author who wrote some of his stories while living in Coronado.

One of the taped appraisals that the Union-Tribune was allowed to watch involved a woman named Nicki ("Roadshow" media rules allow only first names to be used) who came from the Central Valley with a book of "Los Caprichos" prints by Goya.

Purchased at an estate sale for about \$20, the prints were examined by Todd Weyman, from Swann Auction Galleries in New York, who told Nicki they were worth somewhere between \$5,000 and \$6,000.

john.wilkens@sduiontribune.com

OUTDOORS: ERNIE COWAN

Take care to avoid prickly situations

Imagine the youthful delight at the prickly situation one of our pals had gotten himself into.

The name is being withheld to protect the embarrassed.

It was decades ago, but a visual I have enjoyed many times since as I've watched others endure the same misfortune.

This was one of my early adventures into the desert as a young Boy Scout. One of our members had backed into a cholla cactus and balls of the pesky plant were firmly attached to his behind.

The gang of Scouts gathered around as the victim dropped his trousers while the scoutmaster began the painful task of removing the hooked spines. It was a memorable event with a very high snicker factor.

It was also a life lesson on surviving the harsh environment of San Diego's deserts.

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is a place where just about everything has claws, spines, thorns or fangs. It's a beautiful and magical place, but one where awareness and caution rise to an advanced level.

Cooler fall weather is the time when thousands pack up and head east to enjoy fun in the desert. So, let me offer a short tutorial on surviving one of the desert's most frequent unpleasant encounters.

There are several species of cholla cactus. All have sharp spines, but there is one particular species that is extra unpleasant.

Known as Teddy Bear Cactus by those who see it from a distance, it's also called Jumping Cholla by hikers who have discovered how easily it seems to attach to shoes, clothing or exposed body parts. Just to be clear, there is nothing cuddly about Teddy Bear Cactus.

Jumping cholla is found throughout the Southwestern deserts, but in some places it grows in thick patches that are almost impassable.

What makes this cactus so annoying is how easily a traveler can find it attached and how difficult it is to remove.

The spines of this cholla are transparent at the sharp end, which makes it seem like it jumped at you, when actually you just got too close. Additionally, the lobes of the cactus easily separate from the main plant.

Often you will see clusters of these cactus lobes scattered on the ground and that also poses a problem for the hiker not paying attention.

If you are not careful, you will pick up a



ERNIE COWAN

A rattlesnake with a ball of cactus stuck to its side.

cactus lobe in your shoe, and as you walk, find it transferred to your ankle or calf.

The very sharp and stiff spines are barbed at the end, which make them especially hard to remove, not to mention painful. People often try to shake the cactus from their hands, but this can just send the prickly ball flying to other parts of your body, such as your face.

So, what are the rules for surviving in cactus country? Yes, you are in the sand, but this is not the beach.

First, and foremost, is to never, ever wear flip flops, open toed shoes or even thin tennis shoes while traveling in cactus country. Cholla spines can push through that material like warm butter.

Your personal space radar should be expanded. Know where the cactus is. Look behind you if backing up and while walking pay attention to the cactus balls that may litter the ground.

If you do have a close encounter with cactus, stop immediately. If you have rugged shoes, you can generally scrape it off on a rock. If it's in your clothing or your skin, do not try to shake it off or even use gloves. The spines will penetrate leather gloves.

Some have suggested barbecue tongs, but most of us don't carry them while hiking. I have found a large comb to be an ideal tool for removing most of the cactus, especially the large ball that initially gloms onto you. I always have a couple of combs in my pocket or camera bag.

I also carry an all-purpose knife that has a good pair of pliers and that can be very useful.

Contact Ernie at Packtrain.com or follow erniesoutdoors.blogspot.com

Daily difference

Charitable giving opportunities during the holiday season:

Holiday food drive: All San Diego County Albertsons and Vons stores are collecting nonperishable food items for the San Diego Food Bank. Donate a prepackaged \$5 Hunger Bag located at the store checkout Monday through Dec. 25. sandiegofoodbank.org/holiday

Toy drive: San Diego Children's Coalition and Christmas Center Committee are hosting the fifth annual Christmas on the Prado! to benefit Toys for Tots and children and families in San Diego County. The event will be held from 1 to 8 p.m. Saturday in Balboa Park at Spreckels Organ Pavilion, and from 1 to 4 p.m. Dec. 2 at the International Cottages. Bring your new, unwrapped toy and enjoy a Christmas tree-lighting ceremony (Saturday only), holiday music and entertainment. Information: christmasontheprado.com

Toys and school supplies: Cut by Grunts, a veterans-led charity, is conducting a drive to collect new toys and school supplies for children of El Shaddai Church in Vista Encantada, Tijuana. People can drop off new toys and school supplies at the Associated Barber College, 1333 Fifth Ave., in downtown San Diego, starting at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Sleeping bag distribution: The San Diego Veterans for Peace are handing out new sleeping bag sets to the most needy homeless downtown and need financial donations. The sleeping bag sets (sleeping bag and nylon stuff sack) are \$33 each, and 100 percent of the donations go toward purchasing them. To make a donation of any amount, visit SDVFP.org or mail a check to "SDVFP", 13805 Royal Melbourne Square, San Diego, CA 92128.

Email your charitable giving opportunity to carolina.gusman@sduiontribune.com

FROM THE ARCHIVES | LOOKING BACK OVER 150 YEARS

RUBY SHOTS OSWALD

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, Nov. 25, 1963

In 1963, two days after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Jack Ruby gunned down accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

The murder in the basement of a Dallas police station was broadcast nationally to a live television audience.

Ruby was convicted and sentenced to death the following year. He won an appeal of his conviction, but died of cancer in prison before he could be retried.

Here are the first few paragraphs of the story:

KENNEDY ASSASSIN SLAIN AT DALLAS JAIL

Night Club Owner Arrested After Shooting Oswald

By Peter Kaye and Lew Scare, San Diego Union Staff Writers

DALLAS — Lee Harvey Oswald, accused assassin of President Kennedy, was killed yesterday by a cursing owner of a striptease night club.

Oswald, 24, was killed by a single bullet fired just below his heart from four inches away.

The shooting occurred in the basement of the Dallas jail as he was being transferred to the heavy security Dallas County Jail.

His assailant was Jack Ruby, 42, who leaped past Oswald's police escort, thrust a .37 caliber pistol at Oswald and shouted: "You son of a b---!"

Then he fired at point-blank range. The report of the pistol was unmistakable, but it was muffled somewhat by Oswald's body.

Oswald died a little more than an hour later in an emergency room only 10 feet away from the room in which President Kennedy died in Parkland Hospital.

WILL ASK EXECUTION

Dist. Atty. Henry Wade of Dallas County said he would charge Ruby with murder and ask the death penalty for Ruby.

"This is a very aggravated case of assassinating a handcuffed man under arrest," Wade told a news conference. "It demands the death penalty."



Wade said he had no knowledge of a report that Oswald was seen in Ruby's night club a few days ago. William Demar, an entertainer in the club, said he saw Ruby and Oswald sitting together at a table.

"I don't know if Oswald and Ruby were acquainted," Wade said. Nor would the district attorney comment on the question of whether Ruby might have killed Oswald to silence him.

FOUR SURGEONS

A team of four surgeons worked to save the life of the accused assassin, who never regained consciousness. One of the surgeons, Dr. Malcolm Perry, had worked futilely to

save the life of the President just 48 hours earlier.

Oswald died of massive injury to vital organs and loss of blood.

The bullet passed through his spleen, pancreas, kidney and liver and punctured his aorta. Dr. Tom Shires, Parkland's chief surgeon, said the bullet remained in Oswald's body. He said he could feel it just under the skin.

"I did it because I have a deep sense of responsibility to Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy," Ruby reportedly told a Dallas policeman within minutes of his capture.

"I did it to spare Mrs. Kennedy the agony of a prolonged public trial."

Oswald was being hustled down the basement transfer corridor at the jail when Ruby wreaked his sudden vengeance. He had a tiny smile on his lips.

Francois Pelou, a reporter for the France Press, who watched the drama from close range, said:

"I'm sure he saw the man. It's my feeling he knew the gun was going to fire because he jerked his hands toward his stomach in a sort of reflex action even before I heard the shot."

But Oswald didn't utter a word. He was rushed by ambulance to the hospital in 10 minutes.

He writhed on a stretcher. His left leg was drawn up and his eyes were closed.

Even though Oswald was dying in disgrace, doctors fought to save his life. The doctors did for him just what they had done for the President.

ONLINE: View this and other anniversary front pages online at sandiegouniontribune.com/150-years.