

MEDIATE THIS !

THE BULLYING EXECUTIVE AND THE EXITING EMPLOYEE

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Dear Mediator:

I will soon leave an organization where I've spent most of my career. Over the past two years, my colleagues and I have watched a senior VP browbeat and demean frontline staff, several of whom have quit. He is a "kiss up, kick down" type, so the CEO thinks he's great. I have felt remorseful about doing nothing, and now, before I go, I feel compelled to speak out. My family says to mind my business and don't make an enemy. Should I depart quietly?

Haunted in San Carlos

Dear Haunted:

The social wildfire sparked by the #MeToo movement has demolished the rationale that persistent harassment, whether overtly sexual or just verbal, is business as usual in any workplace. If ever there were a time to call out such conduct, this is it.

So the question isn't whether you should stand up for victimized co-workers — your moral compass is pointing you in a clear direction — but how you can do that effectively.

#MeToo has refocused attention on "the bystander effect," a phenomenon first studied in the 1960s following news reports that

a stabbing death on a New York City street may have been watched by neighbors who stayed silent.

Researchers identified several reasons why bystanders don't intervene. As your family notes, witnesses worry about overstepping boundaries or risking retaliation. We may be unsure if we are interpreting events correctly. And we may secretly wish that someone with more clout would step forward.

These concerns are real when we confront a person known to be aggressive. A wiser approach based on mediation strategies can empower bystanders to intercede by communicating in a constructive way.

In conflict resolution, we achieve more by asking questions than by hurling accusations. As a departing employee, you may be invited to participate in an exit interview; if not, you can request one yourself. That will be your opportunity to seek a remedy by opening up a line of inquiry.

You will want to put two issues on the table. First, as a longtime loyal employee, you value this organization, and you are invested in its continued success. Second, you believe you have insights that may be useful in strengthening the workplace



GETTY IMAGES

This week's question deals with a departing colleague's view of the company vice president's problematic administrative style.

culture.

Prepare for the interview by crafting a written summary of the behavior pattern with specifics like dates and circumstances. Refrain from blaming the VP personally, and stick to observed impacts on morale and turnover.

Begin the interview (with an HR officer, your supervisor, or preferably both) by expressing gratitude for the many benefits and opportunities you gained

during your lengthy tenure.

Before you hand over the summary, state for the record that you know the VP is an organizational asset.

However, given what you have witnessed over time and now documented, you believe the leadership team should take direct and appropriate action to address a serious workplace problem and prevent such occurrences in the future.

It doesn't sound like anyone will be shocked by your analysis. We now know that harassment goes viral when bystanders turn a blind eye to obvious signs of distress, like clusters of staff departures. Too many horror stories start with "everyone knows" abuse cycles and end with legal conflagrations.

By delivering your evidence in a calm and responsible manner, you could enable higher-ups to initiate formal remedial action, or you could make them aware, especially in today's environment, that this personnel mess is genuine and won't fix itself.

As for your family, tell them you are acting on your belief in the teaching of Martin Luther King Jr., now more relevant than ever: "We shall have to repent in this generation not so much for the evil deeds of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people."

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 mediatehis@ncrconline.com or as an online submission by visiting www.ncrconline.com/MediateThis. All submissions will be kept anonymous.

NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

PUBLIC SAFETY: LYNDSEY WINKLEY

Race for county sheriff is a hot one

The race to determine who will be the next sheriff is arguably one of the most contentious in the county.

Commander Dave Myers, a 33-year department veteran is running against his boss, Sheriff Bill Gore, who has held the spot for nearly a decade.

Early in the race, Myers contended that Gore retaliated against him for vying for the position by stripping him of his leadership duties and relocating his office to a room that used to be a closet.

"I can take care of myself, but what that said to the 4,000 members of the San Diego Sheriff's Department is that if you speak up, we will come after you," Myers said.

As the two traded barbs in interviews, it surfaced that Gore reportedly launched an internal affairs investigation into Myers after the commander drove to a South Bay political event in his department car.

Myers said he was working out of the San Diego Superior Court branch in Chula Vista at the time. "I showed up at the luncheon and I had my assigned county vehicle, my

assigned vehicle that ... I drive 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Myers said in an interview with the U-T editorial board.

Myers said that when he arrived, he spotted Gore's vehicle and parked alongside it. He said that while at the event, he announced he was running for sheriff. He said Gore then opened an investigation, alleging Myers had been campaigning on duty.

The commander said he took vacation time so he could be off duty during the event. "Did I do anything wrong? I probably should have been smarter about not driving this vehicle," Myers said in the U-T interview.

Gore, citing personnel privacy laws, declined to comment in detail on the incident.

"I can tell you he told you one tenth of the story," Gore said in an interview this month. "There was so much more than driving a county car to a political event."

The candidate who gets more than half of the vote in the June 5 primary will be elected sheriff for four years.

lyndsay.winkley@suniontribune.com

SOUTH COUNTY: DAVID HERNANDEZ

Coalition pushes for rent control

Rent control advocates in National City have collected enough signatures for their proposed measure to be considered for the November ballot, the group announced last week.

About 30 supporters who are part of the campaign met Thursday outside City Hall to turn in about 3,500 signatures from registered voters to the city clerk. The coalition behind the effort — National City Families for Fair Housing — was required to collect 2,200 signatures for the initiative to qualify as a ballot measure.

The measure would establish regulations that would cap annual rent increases at 5 percent and ban arbitrary and unfair evictions. Circumstances that would allow a landlord to remove a tenant include failure to pay rent, lease violations and plans to take the unit off the rental market.

Proponents have said a local rent control law is necessary to avoid spikes in rent that could force lower- or middle-income tenants out of National City, where about 70 percent of the city's 61,000 or so residents

are renters.

National City resident Adriana Huerta said she experienced the strain of a dramatic rent increase two years ago when her landlord imposed a \$400 — or about 40 percent — rent increase on the two-bedroom house where she lives, with only a 30-day notice. Huerta, who has lived in the home for nine years, said her two daughters found a job to help pay for the higher rent.

According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, median rent in National City increased 16 percent between 2015 and 2016 — to about \$1,140. Rent in National City is the lowest in the county, but the city's median household income is also low — about \$42,000.

If the San Diego County Registrar of Voters validates the signatures, the City Council will have to vote to enact the measure, commission a city staff report or place the measure on the November ballot.

david.hernandez@suniontribune.com

ERNIE COWAN Outdoors

Cam offers bird's eye view of wren parents and 7 hatchlings

Our brief, but exciting journey following the breeding, nesting, hatching and fledging by a family of house wrens is about over. Not only has this been an emotional roller coaster, but we have apparently had total success with seven tiny eggs hatching and seven chicks nurtured and on the brink of entering the natural world.

A tiny video camera placed in the 4-by-4-inch nest box allowed us to follow this miracle of nature as adult house wrens began building the nest late in March and the first egg about the size of a mini-jellybean arrived on April 15. For the next six days, we had an additional egg each morning until there were seven.

Rain and cold nights that dipped into the low 40s worried us. High winds blew into the nest box, and we fretted when it seemed like mother wren was gone too long. We discussed shading the box when the recent hot spell pushed temperatures to near 100 degrees for several days.

But nature abides, and through the magic of technology we could watch and share this miracle of birth and species preservation.

Since we installed the wren nest box about four years ago, we have enjoyed watching the nesting process from the outside. Some years we had two broods from spring into early summer.

This spring, we learned so much more through the lens of the tiny game camera mounted to the roof of the nest box. It was installed just in time since an adult house wren began bringing in large twigs within days.

The most interesting activity was still watching from the outside as wrens brought large twigs and found creative ways to get them into the box after trial and error. There were periods of inactivity, but gradually a complete nest appeared. We knew things were close when the final touch of downy feathers and tender blades of grass created the soft bead to receive eggs.

Once the first egg arrived, one of the adult wrens, presumably the female, spent more time in the box but was still gone much of the time. Apparently, the eggs don't require constant brooding.

Each morning was a new surprise with

the arrival of the next egg and then the serious work of waiting and watching began. It was fascinating watching the adult turning the eggs during the brooding process.

At 9 a.m. on the morning of May 4, the first egg hatched. Such excitement at the arrival of this completely bald, helpless and nearly transparent little creature that in no way resembled a bird. We wondered if the eggs would hatch as they were laid, but by 11 a.m. we had five hatchlings and the final two appearing the next day.

Suddenly the activity changed from the attention of a single parent to both parent wrens bringing a constant stream of small insects, grubs and spiders to push into gaping mouths. The best we could tell, food was distributed evenly. At this early stage, it was still quiet in the nest.

The parent birds were good housekeepers, initially removing the egg shells. Soon we noticed a pattern where food was given to a chick and it would then turn over, exposing its bottom and expel a soft waste sack that the parent bird would also remove from the nest.

Feeding activity and noise became more obvious with one parent often bringing in food and dropping it inside while the other fed the birds. As they grew, the chick became more and more demanding. Now, when a parent bird arrives, the nest erupts in a loud chattering of high pitched noise with seven mouths wide open and expecting food.

The naked bodies are now covered with feathers, the beaks of the chicks are nearly full length, eyes are open and there seems to be no limit to what they will eat.

The normal nesting period of house wrens is two weeks to 17 days. By the time you read this, our newest additions to the wren population should be out in the big, new world.

It seems miraculous that seven eggs successfully hatched and survived. Like any grandparent, I'm so proud. Wish I could hand out meal worms to all my bird friends.

Contact Ernie at Packtrain.com or follow <http://erniesoutdoors.blogspot.com/>

FROM THE ARCHIVES | LOOKING BACK OVER 150 YEARS

EMMA GOLDMAN RETURNS

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.

Tuesday, May 20, 1913

One year after being run out of the city by vigilantes at the climax of the free speech riots of 1912, anarchist leader Emma Goldman again attempted to visit San Diego. This time Goldman and her manager were arrested and deported by police who said they wanted to prevent a repetition of the previous violence. Not until June of 1915 did Goldman succeed in giving a lecture in San Diego.

Here are the first few paragraphs of the story:

EMMA GOLDMAN, BEN REITMAN AND WILLIAM GERKE ARE TAKEN OUT OF CITY BY THE POLICE

MOB SURROUNDS JAIL AS SOON AS NEWS OF ARREST IS LEARNED

ANARCHISTS PLEAD FOR POLICE GUARD

Train Leaving San Diego at 1:10 O'clock this Afternoon Carries Trio of Unwelcome Visitors North; Big Crowd Alarms Pair and No Opposition is Made to Plan of Department to Take Them Safely Away in Automobile — Attempt to Throw Citizens Off Track Fails; 1000 Persons Gather at Depot

Emma Goldman, Ben Reitman and William Gerke were taken out of the city to Los Angeles on the 1:10 train under guard from the police station, after Chief Wilson had passed the word that they were to be taken to Sorento and put aboard the 3 o'clock train there where a special stop would be made for them. This word was given out in the hope that it would have the effect of fooling the crowd and throwing it off

the scent till the prisoners could be gotten out of the city. Many left the station, but about a thousand remained and these chased after the police autos to the train, but were distanced in the race, the prisoners being safely locked in the cars before the pursuers reached the depot.

In the chair car of the train just before it pulled out Mrs. Goldman declared to a reporter for The Evening Tribune:



"I will return to San Diego when San Diego has free speech. We will write what we have to say about San Diego in our own publications."

Immediately afterwards before the police could prevent it an unidentified man pushed his way up alongside Reitman in the car and spit in his face. He was not arrested. Reitman said in effect that reverses made them all the more determined to return to San Diego at some future time and lecture.

The deportation was not a forcible one, so far as the three were concerned, as they all begged hard during the whole morning, since their arrest on leaving the Owl train, to be sent away. The deportation was decided upon by Chief of Police Wilson on the advice of District Attorney Utley, according to the chief.

When Emma Goldman and Dr. Ben Reitman left the owl train at the Santa Fe depot early this morning they were met by William Gerke, the woman's advance agent, and all three were promptly arrested. Sergeant W. W. Johnston and Roundsman George Wilson placed Reitman and the woman under arrest, and Patrolman Threlkeld nabbed Gerke. The latter had been evading arrest since last night when Threlkeld attempted his arrest for disturbing the forbidden hand bills, but was prevented by the superior speed of Gerke.

The advance agent had secured rooms for the pair at the New Southern hotel, where it was their intention to register.

After the pair had been in jail for some time and had become somewhat familiar with the surroundings of this particular jail, they showered Jailer George Pringle with trivial and bothersome requests for various books and other reading matter. Later, when the crowd commenced to gather they seemed to take a less philosophical view of their situation, and the fear to which both are supposed to be strangers by their hypnotized followers, took complete possession of them. Their only expressions then were of anxiety to escape from San Diego.