

## MEDIATE THIS !

## THE PILED-UP DISHES AND THE SHIFTLESS CO-WORKER

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

## Dear Mediator:

My 20-something son works as a dishwasher at a local restaurant. He and an older dishwasher clean up after dinner. To cut expenses, the owner laid off a third dishwasher who had been handling the lunch dishes. My son and his co-worker are now overloaded, and the older guy keeps disappearing for long stretches to do "other tasks," like breaking up boxes out back. My son is getting stuck with nearly all the work! Should I speak to the owner?

*Mama Bear in South Park*

## Dear Mama Bear:

The instinct to shield our loved ones from hurtful behavior is a peculiar thing. In situations where danger looms, this primal drive takes us in the right direction. But in cases like yours, it can cause more harm than it prevents.

Intervention is not what your son needs from you right now. The best way to safeguard him is to coach him on strategies for managing the myriad conflicts that flood the job market.

Every generation prepares to enter the workforce through study and training. Colleges, trade schools and apprenticeships help young people attain proficiencies

that are useful in specific occupations.

But a broader set of capabilities has universal value across the employment spectrum. We call them "life skills" for coping with stress, and the appropriate people to teach them are adult relatives and personal mentors.

To position your son for success in this and all his future jobs, present him with a few practical strategies for resolving workplace strife effectively.

**Don't take it personally when someone acts unfairly.** Such behavior is literally thoughtless, a rash response to an underlying problem that has nothing to do with you. The challenge is to refrain from concentrating on the *person*. Instead, look closely at the *problem*, and concentrate on identifying solutions.

**Allies are assets; adversaries are liabilities.** A central premise of conflict resolution is that anyone, even a person who seems antagonistic, can be won over by sincere efforts to show empathy and find common ground.

The adrenaline rush of deciding to make an enemy — and yes, it is a conscious decision — exacts a high price. An employee who chooses instead to become adept at building relationships gains leverage and value.



GETTY IMAGES

**This week's question deals with etiquette and the equitable division of responsibilities in the workplace.**

**If you want to exert influence, do your homework.** Problem-solving begins with the gathering of facts. How much has the workload increased since the third dishwasher left? What are some unintended consequences in terms of caked-on food remnants, breakage and equipment malfunction? What are some ways to improve operations?

Equipped with these strategies, your son should reach out to

the older dishwasher by inviting him to meet for coffee outside work. These two are grappling with the same dilemma, and it makes sense for them to figure out how they can approach their boss together.

Their conversation with him should begin on a positive note. They are proud of the restaurant and invested in its success. While they understand the need to rein in costs, they now have knowledge

(from your son's research) that the restaurant kitchen could benefit from a quality control overhaul.

Pressuring the owner to make a decision on the spot would be a tactical error. The best way to wrap up an exchange like this is to leave it open-ended: "We just wanted to offer some ideas; thanks for considering our input."

These conflict resolution strategies do not guarantee a desired outcome. The older dishwasher may not want to approach the owner. The owner may prefer a dysfunctional kitchen to a costly reorganization.

So your son's circumstances may not change. But *he* will change and grow as a person. His coping skills will sharpen, his confidence will surge, and he will be in a stronger position to land a better job.

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](mailto:mediatethis@ncrconline.com) or as an online submission by visiting [www.ncrconline.com/MediateThis](http://www.ncrconline.com/MediateThis). All submissions will be kept anonymous. If you have questions, email me at [lora.cicalo@sduiontribune.com](mailto:lora.cicalo@sduiontribune.com)

## NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

## OUTDOORS: ERNIE COWAN

## A different way to observe nature

More and more I see the natural world with my heart.

I've spent a lifetime in nature seeing with my eyes, focused on the science, the facts, and the data. I've missed a lot.

Maybe it's age, or just a different point of view, but I'm looking at things differently, and as the new year dawns, I'm working on a new bucket list of places to see with my heart in the great outdoors.

The coyote cares not about its scientific name. The delicate desert wildflower has no interest in the fact that it is a rare regional subspecies. We spend so much time cataloging, categorizing, collecting and counting that we have often forgotten to contemplate.

I recently watched a flock of crows gathering in eucalyptus trees as the winter sun dipped closer to the western horizon. The why of their gathering was much less important to me than watching these lives connect, react and interact.

I spent New Year's Day hiking in a rare desert marsh. I was fascinated by the virtual highway of animal tracks left behind in the soft mud at the edge of the water.

In this micro habitat there was a whole cycle of life unfolding in an area not much bigger than a small city neighborhood.

In just a short distance I noticed tracks of coyotes, fox, raccoon, opossum, bighorn sheep, birds, mice and lizards. All had shared this space. Had there been interaction?

Each of these creatures were there with a similar purpose of finding food and shelter, providing for family, engaging in courtship, mating, raising young and nurturing new generations.

While each species is vastly different there is so much about them that is very much the same.

My typical year begins with a New Year's trip to Salton Sea to see the massive flocks of visiting winter migratory birds. Historically, the focus has been on adding to my life list of observed birds.

This year the heart was the observer and I marveled at the awkward beauty of sandhill cranes, the synchronization of flight of the thousands of snow geese as they lifted from roosting fields, the family bond of cute little burrowing owls as they seem to cuddle together and curiously watch bird photographers watching them.

Overhead there were a pair of magnifi-



ERNIE COWAN

**A young coyote along the banks of Lake Hodges in Escondido.**

cent white-tailed kites floating and then hovering in a threatening winter sky as they looked for prey.

There is violence in nature when the kite plunges to Earth to grab a rat or ground squirrel, but that's how balance is maintained.

Winter often finds me at the seashore taking advantage of the discovery opportunities from the extreme low tides. Instead of more notches on the list of critters observed, my heart will ponder the community of life that exists in each tidepool.

This year I hope to add a trip north to the Arctic Circle to experience Northern Lights. I know my heart will be wide open for this adventure.

Spring will bring desert and mountain wildflowers, the return of migratory birds, longer days and more time outdoors. The heart will see this differently than the eyes.

Miles traveled and trails covered were a focus when I only saw with my eyes. Now I will often sit and see, hardly moving at all. I plan on doing more of that.

Summer will include trips to the Eastern Sierra and the quiet meadows where you can lie in soft grass. I've drifted into a comfortable sleep in a high-country meadow next to a gin-clear Sierra lake, embraced by the gentle warmth of summer sun. My heart understood that I was no different than the aspen leaves below me that had blown from the trees last fall and were slowly returning to the soil.

I'm not big on New Year's resolutions, but if there is a conscious resolve this year it will be to slow down and let my heart see more.

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## THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

## Normalcy returns after cyberattack

The Union-Tribune has mostly recovered from the cyberattack that began late Dec. 27 to hit the computers systems used to produce the newspaper.

Readers' newspaper deliveries were affected last Saturday and Sunday. Subscribers received their papers late or not at all. I did not receive a paper at my home in Escondido last Saturday, Sunday or Monday.

In the U-T newsroom, we knew something was wrong Friday, Dec. 28, when we arrived and could not sign on to the page production system. We were able to find another way to access it and thought as the day went on that techs were able to fix the problem. That night, though, we were having trouble transmitting pages to the printing plant in Los Angeles, but still believed pages were ultimately going through.

Friday night we also complete the Sunday Metro and North local sections and send those pages to the press. We believed the pages were making it to the plant. We didn't know in the newsroom the problems were the result of cyberattack.

I had a bad feeling Saturday morning when my paper wasn't outside. Then I looked at my work email on my phone. Editors were hearing of printing failures and non-delivery. Word was also getting out that it was a cyber-attack that infected papers that use the Tribune Publishing's production platform. The Los Angeles Times, the U-T's sister paper, as well as the Chicago Tribune, Baltimore Sun, Hartford Courant, Capital Gazette in Annapolis Md., south Florida Sun Sentinel and Orlando Sentinel had been hit.

Announcements of the problem were posted on the U-T's website. And readers of last Sunday's print edition read about the extent of the cyberattack in a front page story.

The North County Local section last Sunday did not appear, although the newsroom had produced it. The north section was not attempted for Thursday's or Friday's papers. The North County local section returned Saturday.

Deadlines in the newsroom were moved way up last week to allow has much time as possible for page printing and delivery.

The B-section deadline early last week was 3 p.m. instead of 5:30, and the A section deadline was 5 p.m. instead of 10 p.m. And Sports was 7 p.m. instead of 10 p.m. The early deadlines prevented the weather page and lottery results from being published early in the week.

As the week progressed and headway was made against the computer virus, a few pages and then sections began to clear later. The weather page, for instance appeared in Wednesday's paper. It had not been published Sunday, Monday or Tuesday. Lottery results returned Thursday. But deadlines remained earlier than normal.

A few readers emailed the Readers' Rep early in the week and were supportive of the paper, which frankly in today's political and media environment was pleasant surprise.

"Receiving and reading the U-T each morning, with a cup of coffee and breakfast, is such a comfort and joy — and I felt lost and disturbed without that on Saturday," one reader emailed.

As of Friday night, most systems related to the production of the paper had been restored.

## Three new U-T newsroom staffers

Readers might have noticed a couple of new names in the news report, and a not-so-new name.

Photographer Sam Hodgson and graphic artist Michelle "Mickey" Guerrero joined the staff last month.

Hodgson was a staff photographer for the Voice of San Diego news website before becoming a freelance photojournalist in 2011. For the past four years, he covered news and worked on special projects nationwide for The New York Times. He spent most of 2016 on the presidential campaign trail.

Guerrero brings a fresh perspective to presentation of news and information. Her experience is in illustration and design for the video game and comic industries.

"Information is vital for creating effective communication. Learning though visuals and art is no different," she said. ... "I'm determined to present a mindful and thorough understanding of the subject I am illustrating."

Readers have been seeing Wendy Fry's byline in the migrant caravan coverage. Fry was working as a freelance writer. Her stamina, reporting and ability to write fast became essential in coverage of the developing story. Last month she joined the U-T as a full-time staffer. Actually it's more correct to say re-joined. Fry covered South Bay politics and schools at the U-T from 2009 to 2012. She worked at NBC San Diego from 2013 to 2018.

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## SAN DIEGO COUNTY: MICHAEL ROCHA

## Most popular baby names in county

Move over Emma and Liam, and make room for ... Emma and Liam.

The most popular names for girls and boys born in San Diego County in 2017 topped the lists again in 2018.

Of the 41,555 babies born in San Diego County last year, 21,313 were boys and 20,242 were girls, according to the County Health and Human Services Agency, which records all births in the region.

For girls, Emma proved to be the most popular name again — making it the No. 1 choice in San Diego County for three years in a row.

Last year, 264 newborn girls took on the name Emma, described by babycenter.com as "an English name derived from the Old German for 'whole' or 'universal,' popular since the 19th century."

Liam — the most popular name for boys in the county for the second year in a row — topped the boys' list with 242 newborns taking on the name. Liam, according to the website babycenter.com, is "a shorter form of the Irish name Uiliam, which originated from the Frankish Willahelm, meaning 'helmet of will.'" Liam took the top spot in the county in 2017, moving up a notch by toppling Noah, which took the No. 2 spot that year. Noah again landed in the second-most-popular position in 2018.

Emma captured the No. 1 position in

the county in 2016, overtaking Mia. In 2018, Olivia was second-most popular in the county for girls.

Here's the full list of top 10 most popular names for boys and girls born in San Diego County in 2018.

## Girls

- Emma (264)
- Olivia (235)
- Mia (223)
- Isabella (191)
- Camila (173)
- Sophia (159)
- Sofia (151)
- Victoria (147)
- Mila (138)
- Charlotte (137)

## Boys

- Liam (242)
- Noah (202)
- Sebastian (200)
- Mateo (196)
- Benjamin (185)
- Daniel (178)
- Ethan (174)
- Oliver (162)
- Alexander (162)
- Logan (156)

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## COURTS: PAULINE REPARD

## Two plead not guilty in PB slaying

## SAN DIEGO

Two men in San Diego Superior Court Friday pleaded not guilty to murder charges in what a prosecutor described as an execution-style shooting of a man as he lay in bed in a Pacific Beach apartment last weekend.

The prosecutor said Paul Weinberger, 50, a resident at the Wilbur Avenue home, and Freddy Sosa, 37, were among the masked men who forced their way inside with at least one shotgun and killed MarcAntony Mendivil, 44, about 1:45 a.m. on Dec. 29.

The intruders held up the people in the home, found the victim "and executed him while he was in bed," Deputy District Attorney Flavio Nominati told the judge.

Mendivil died at a hospital about an hour later, San Diego police said.

Police are still looking for at least one more suspect in the crime. Authorities have not discussed a motive for the slaying.

Judge Maureen Hallahan set bail at \$10 million for Weinberger and Sosa, citing the seriousness of the crime and calling both men a potential flight risk.

Their lawyers argued against the high bail.

Attorney Paul Pflugst, representing Weinberger, told the judge his client was among the victims when the armed intruders entered his home and killed Mendivil, who had spent the night there.

"My client stayed after the shooting, had no knowledge this was going to go on and

denies the shooting," Pflugst said. He added that the intruders fled in Weinberger's Lexus SUV "and he hasn't seen it since."

He said Weinberger has spent his career as a job recruiter and often had people visiting or staying at his home.

Sosa's lawyer, Deputy Public Defender Ryan McGuire, said in court that his client has lived in San Diego since 2011 and shares care of his child with his girlfriend.

Nominati, in asking the judge to set bail at \$10 million, said Weinberger has access to substantial funds, has out-of-state contacts and a 2015 misdemeanor arrest outside of California. He said Sosa had a 2013 felony case in Washington.

The prosecutor added that Weinberger said, in a statement, that he wanted to get out of jail, finance Sosa's defense and contact witnesses to influence their testimony. It was not clear when or where Weinberger made that statement.

Weinberger indicated that "all the evidence and witnesses are going to disappear," Nominati told the judge, adding that Sosa said in a statement he would talk to all the witnesses if he made bail.

Nominati asked the judge to issue a protective order to keep Sosa and Weinberger from contacting the four or five witnesses who were at the home the night of the shooting. The judge granted the protective order.

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