

A PATH FORWARD

FOR WORKING WOMEN, THE BEST AND WORST OF TIMES

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Last weekend was bittersweet for me. The baby of the Dinkin family — my daughter — graduated from college.

As I consider the kind of world she's walking into, I acknowledge, as a man, that there is so much I don't understand or can't prepare her for, try as I might. Right now — with the horrific shootings at a New York grocery store and a Texas elementary school — all I can think about is keeping her safe.

The Charles Dickens classic “A Tale of Two Cities” opens with these words: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Those words ring true for working women in America today.

It seems to be the best of times for U.S. women's soccer. On May 19, the United States Soccer Federation announced a landmark collective bargaining agreement with the U.S. Women's National Team (USWNT) and the U.S. Men's National Team (USMNT), the unions representing our national soccer teams.

The deal will provide equal

economic opportunity in terms of tournament bonuses, appearances fees and other forms of compensation, starting with the men's 2022 World Cup in Qatar and the women's 2023 World Cup in Australia.

For the women, it will mean a bump in earnings of as much as 49 percent.

According to Yahoo Finance, the sweeping agreement goes beyond pay parity, equalizing travel benefits, lodging accommodations, venues and field surface selection. The women and men will also share revenue from ticket sales, broadcast rights and sponsorships.

This victory follows another in February, when the USWNT's class-action lawsuit against the U.S. Soccer Federation (USSF) — over unequal pay and treatment — was settled. Players were awarded a lump-sum payment of \$22 million; an additional \$2 million was earmarked for charitable efforts on behalf of women's and girls' soccer.

The USWNT's battle for equal pay began in 2016, when multiple players filed a discrimination case

with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against the USSF. They alleged that female players were paid less than male players despite superior performance on the field, noting that the women's team was paid nearly \$2 million in bonuses after winning the World Cup in 2015, while the men's team — which was eliminated — earned more than \$5 million.

On the “worst of times” side of the ledger, pay inequity persists on another playing field: the workplace. In a recent article, Matt Gonzales, editor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Society for Human Resource Management, drew a straight line from pay inequity to the type of toxic work culture that makes it difficult to recruit and retain talent.

The latest report from Payscale, Gonzales wrote, shows that women today are earning 82 cents for every \$1 men earn; for women of color, the gap is even larger. Fewer than one in four companies reported that they are actively addressing their pay gaps, although half say they plan to conduct a pay equity analysis.

Then there's the wrongheaded decision by a California Superior Court judge to strike down SB 826. It required every publicly held company with its executive headquarters in the state to have two or three female directors by the end of 2021, depending on company size. Judge Maureen Duffy-Lewis said the law violated the equal protection clause of the California constitution.

Before the law was passed in 2018, 28 percent of California companies had no female directors at all; in 2021, that dropped to 1 percent, according to the California Partners Project. Now, more than half of California's public companies have three or more women on their board, up from 11 percent in 2018.

It strikes me that gender diversity in the boardroom is a very good thing in a majority female country. The law only fast-tracked something that had been talked about for decades.

But there are glimpses of progress beyond the women's national soccer team. Even male-dominated institutions like the U.S. military are changing. In a recent

CBS Evening News segment, anchor and managing editor Norah O'Donnell interviewed four West Point cadets who will study at the University of Oxford this fall as Rhodes scholars. A total of 32 students from around the country were awarded this prestigious scholarship.

You probably guessed the punchline: The four cadets are all women, making West Point history. One of them told O'Donnell, “I think women today feel more empowered in the military than they ever have. And that's the hard work of the legacy of women who have come before us.”

As my daughter steps away from her bucolic campus and into the real world, I hope she is inspired to join the fight for women's equality. The best of times will only be realized with a sustained effort across all generations.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncrconline.com

SCENE

Encore! Scholarship Gala

U-T STAFF

San Diego Youth Symphony held its Encore! Scholarship Fundraiser on April 24 at the Hyatt Regency Spa and Marina on Mission Bay.

It was the organization's most successful fundraiser to date. More than 145 guests attended and donated to support close to 170 full and partial student scholarships. No student is turned away from SDYS' programs for lack of financial resources.

The festivities featured multiple performances by SDYS student ensembles, along with the presentation of the Leo Scheer Founders Award to longtime board member, donor, and advocate Eric Cohen in recognition of his commitment to arts education.

For more than 75 years, SDYS has

worked to provide music education to any student. For those families that need assistance, the Encore! Scholarship Fund provides tuition scholarships, sponsored lessons, instrument loans, repairs, and supplies, performance clothing, parent education workshops, free concert tickets, and the fund supports recruiting in underserved communities.

If your organization has held a philanthropic event, you're welcome to email a high-resolution photo along with information on the event to society@sduniontribune.com.

Please clearly identify those in the photo, make them aware their image might appear in print and online, include the photographer's name for credit and be sure to include the who, what, where, when and why information on the event.



From left, Michael and Edna Pines, Tim Peacock, Melissa Senoff, Erica Frank, Eric Cohen, Bonita Paysour, Janet Caine, Ken Ramirez, and Amy Barzdukas and Gytis Barzdukas.

SHERIFF • Gore had held position in San Diego County since appointment in 2009

FROM B1

tired Assistant San Diego City Attorney John Hemmerling.

Rounding out the field are California Highway Patrol Officer Jonathan Peck, retired sheriff's detentions Deputy Juan Carlos Mercado, Redwood City police Capt. John Gunderson, and retired sheriff's Sgt. Charles “Chuck” Battle.

The Union-Tribune sent questionnaires to all seven candidates with queries ranging from why they are running for sheriff to their positions on key issues facing the department.

Martinez, Myers, Hemmerling

Martinez said she has the most experience — 37 years with the department — and points to the size of the agency and the scope of its work, her current job running daily operations as undersheriff, and the month she spent as acting sheriff when Gore left and before an interim sheriff was appointed.

She also has the backing of Gore, who she said was among those who asked her to run. She embraces his support and bristles at a suggestion of status quo.

“I hope you have already recognized that I am a different person than Sheriff Gore was,” she told the Union-Tribune editorial board earlier this month.

Martinez said she is the most experienced and qualified candidate. “This is a crucial time for San Diego County law enforcement and experience and leadership matter,” she said.

Martinez counts the Deputy Sheriff's Association — the union that represents rank-and-file deputies — among her supporters. She also has endorsements from San Diego Board of Supervisors Chair Nathan Fletcher and San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria.

Myers, who ran for sheriff against Gore in 2018, worked his way up the ladder over 32 years with the department, retiring as a commander. He said department staffers and community members pressed him to run again.

The reform-minded Myers is a harsh critic of the department's leadership. He told the Union-Tribune editorial board he would put new administrators in place and take a fresh look at the department.

Myers lambasted “filthy and unsafe jail conditions,” and said the agency needs “systemic changes” in policy, staffing and infrastructure. Myers said he intends to shift the internal culture by setting goals and holding

people accountable.

He has the endorsement of the county's Democratic Party, as well as Congress members Mike Levin and Sarah Jacobs and state Assemblymember Dr. Akilah Weber.

Hemmerling said he decided to run last year, when he saw that Gore was leaving and the frontrunners to replace him had both spent decades in the department. “The status quo,” he said, “is not good enough.”

As chief of the City Attorney's prosecutions unit, Hemmerling positioned himself as an outsider who would bring change.

Hemmerling spent roughly nine years as a San Diego police officer, including time on the beat in Mid-City. He has spent the last six years leading the criminal prosecution unit for the City Attorney, which handles misdemeanor cases.

He also points to his service as a Marine both on active duty and in the reserves, and highlights his time running a prison in Iraq — a job that came with high scrutiny, coming after the Abu Ghraib prison scandal.

Hemmerling has the backing of the county and state Republican party, former Mayor Kevin Faulconer, former City Attorney Jan Goldsmith and retired San Diego Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman, with whom he worked as chief legal counsel for the department.

Hemmerling also had the endorsement of the Union-Tribune editorial board — until the board rescinded it earlier this week after a recording surfaced of Hemmerling making remarks at a candidate forum that were considered by many to be disparaging to transgender people. Hemmerling retired from the City Attorney's Office the following day. He said he'd long planned to retire, and he is still running for sheriff.

From Jan. 1 through April 23, Martinez reported more than \$56,000 in campaign donations. Myers had more than \$72,000, including a \$10,000 loan from himself. Hemmerling raised more than \$44,000 in that stretch.

They were the only three candidates to pay the \$16,000 cost to include a half-page statement in the information pamphlet mailed to San Diego County voters.

Battle, Gunderson, Peck, Mercado

Peck's campaign raised more than \$10,000 this year through April 23, and Mercado had raised a little more than \$3,600, including a \$3,000 loan to himself.

Gunderson and Battle

San Diego County sheriff candidates

In alphabetical order

Charles “Chuck” Battle, 72, of Lakeside, said he served in the U.S. Navy and is a Vietnam War veteran. While with the Sheriff's Department, his assignments included work in the jails and on patrol before he retired as a sergeant in 2007. He has also been licensed as a private investigator for 35 years.

John “Gundo” Gunderson, 46, lives in San Diego, and commutes to his job as a police captain in Redwood City, a city of roughly 85,000 people located between San Jose and San Francisco. Over his career, he said, he has worked for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, the San Diego Police Department, the San Diego County District Attorney's Office and the Redwood City Police Department. His assignments include working in jails and on patrol. He said he's been a detective, a member of SWAT, and worked in administration.

John Hemmerling, 56, lives in San Diego. He was the chief prosecutor in the San Diego City Attorney's Criminal and Community Justice Divisions until he retired this week. He spent nine years as a San Diego police officer, and is a retired Marine Corps Reserve colonel who served in the Gulf and Iraqi wars.

Kelly Martinez, 59, of San Diego, is the undersheriff, which is second-in-command to the sheriff, and as such she is responsible for the department's day-to-day operations. When Martinez started with department in 1985, women were not allowed to work in patrol. She is the first female undersheriff and would be the first female sheriff in the department's history.

Juan Carlos “Charlie” Mercado did not respond to the questionnaire the Union-Tribune sent to all seven candidates.

Dave Myers, 60, is a La Mesa resident who started his career with the Sheriff's Department as an Explorer in 1986 and retired as a commander in 2018. Over those 32 years, he served in roles from patrol deputy to homicide detective. As a commander he managed two dozen substations and the Special Investigations Division.

Jonathan Peck, 41, of Ramona is a California Highway Patrol officer who has spent 19 years in law enforcement — five years with agency in Los Angeles County and 14 in San Diego County.

said they were not seeking donations.

Battle said the Sheriff's Department doesn't need reform, and that it historically has been transparent and accountable.

Gunderson said the department does need change, and the sheriff should be apolitical. “I jumped in the race because all I saw were candidates who were professing to represent one side of the political spectrum or the other, and San Diego residents deserve better,” he said.

Peck calls himself a Constitutional sheriff, and said he is “the one who will protect and defend the constitutional and inalienable rights of the residents of San Diego County.” He said the Sheriff's Department's administration failed at that task, in particular over the last two years, and pointed to COVID restrictions he said overstepped constitutional bounds.

Mercado did not respond to the questionnaire the Union-Tribune sent to all

seven candidates.

Jails

The new sheriff will inherit a department under intense scrutiny because many people have died in county jails — 185 deaths between 2006 and 2020, a rate higher than all other large California counties. The state auditor's office investigated, and earlier this year issued a finding that the Sheriff's Department failed to adequately prevent and respond to the deaths of people in custody.

Gore questioned the auditor's methodology and pushed back against the findings.

Martinez, Myers and Hemmerling all embraced the report and said they would make reforms, including creating a far more robust booking process to include medical and mental health evaluations.

Martinez said detentions deputies will wear cameras, and broken security cameras will be fixed. The department is also upgrading

the wireless technology in the jails so they can connect better internally and to health care systems.

The department has also prioritized hiring and retention, she said, and she has promoted new people to lead the jails.

Myers said he sees a lack of leadership and a resistance to change. “Once you have a sheriff at the top that sets attainable goals and holds people accountable ... we are going to see significant changes,” he told the Union-Tribune editorial board.

Myers said he will order “a comprehensive review to get at the systemic problems that are at the root of the jail deaths.”

He also wants to create protocols to help alcohol- or drug-dependent inmates during their withdrawal when they enter custody. The county recently began providing traveling teams of clinicians to help people in acute mental crisis, and opened centers where they can be taken to be stabilized. Myers said he wants those same sorts of tools in the jails.

Hemmerling — he said he commanded four prison compounds in Iraq “without incident” — said his reforms would include frequent safety checks, and closer supervision of inmates with a higher risk of death due to mental illness or drug overdose.

Hemmerling told the Union-Tribune editorial board that the jails are a microcosm of the drug and fentanyl use happening in society at large, and said he is a “huge proponent” of rehab programs in the jails.

Peck said the problem is overworked jail staff, lack of trained medical personnel to address inmate needs, and street drugs getting inside the jails. “The obvious answer is to retain and hire more qualified deputies and staff,” Peck said.

Gunderson said the jails need “a complete culture change,” including how inmates are safeguarded.” He said he would start by meeting with jail staff to find out what resources they are lacking to be able to do their jobs.

Battle said staff could do a comprehensive review of the jail to identify problems and suggest fixes.

Bias in policing

In December, the results of a study commissioned by the Sheriff's Department showed that people of color are stopped, searched and subjected to force by deputies at higher rates than White people, even when taking into consideration

crime rates and poverty. It's one of several studies and data reviews that show the kinds of racial disparities that communities of color have long decried.

Martinez said racial bias and use-of-force concerns are a systemic problem nationally. Victims and suspects each “deserve a highly trained law enforcement response from people who respect everyone we serve,” she said. Martinez encouraged people to report unfair policing, and said she will investigate any claims made.

Hemmerling said he believes in community policing as an effective approach, and pointed to his time as a police patrol officer in Mid-City, where he said he worked to gain trust by getting to know people in the community.

“Officer welfare and public safety cannot fall victim to a sociologist's data sheet,” he said.

Hemmerling said he will prioritize resources in communities most impacted by crime. “Failing to provide adequate law enforcement to underserved communities is just as wrong as over policing.”

Myers said it's “completely unacceptable” that department leaders have “failed to even acknowledge its own data on racial disparities. To me, that's a complete failure of leadership.”

He said he would drill down into data to see if the stops are actually deterring crimes. He would also use the tools to flag use-of-force incidents, and look at when and why force is used, and by whom.

Myers said he would listen to community members, and see that the deputies get ongoing cultural competency training.

Gunderson said acknowledging the data is legitimate is “a good first start,” and it should be followed by working with leaders of affected communities “to find a way to move forward toward our common goal of equal treatment for all.”

Peck said: “Social media, movies and politicians have portrayed law enforcers as threatening, unjust and corrupt instead of members of their community serving and keeping peace.” He blamed politicians for creating conflict by enacting laws he said are unconstitutional.

Battle said the community must understand that deputies don't use force arbitrarily, and that deputies respond properly 99.9 percent of the time to the actions and behavior of people they encounter.