

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

LABOR AND PATIENCE IN SHORT SUPPLY ON THIS LABOR DAY

As a summer fanatic, I always feel a tinge of sadness on Labor Day. After all, the holiday is the unofficial end of the summer season — even if that isn't always obvious from the temperature.

Here's the hot story of summer 2021: the record number of people who fled their jobs.

Right now, there are more than 10 million job openings in the United States. Beginning in April, 4 million people quit their jobs, or 2.8 percent of the workforce. The hospitality industry accounted for 740,000 of the job quitters. In May, 2.7 percent of the workforce bailed out.

Even a 2 percent quit rate amounts to roughly one-quarter of the workforce leaving every year.

It's not a matter of money in most cases. According to a recent survey by Bankrate, more than half of people are looking for greater flexibility in their jobs. That's true even among people who make less than \$30,000 a year.

Workers, it seems, learned a big lesson during the pandemic. It's called "Life Is Too Short."

Along with greater flexibility, workers are seeking more happiness, as well as a sense of purpose. That means calling the shots — deciding when and where they truly want to work.

The quit craze has been dubbed the "Great Resignation." Gallup calls it the "Great Discontent." In their "State of the Global Workplace: 2021 Report," Gallup found a marked increase among Americans in our feelings of daily stress, worry and anger when compared to 2019.

Gallup also measured employee engagement — people who are emotionally attached to their workplaces and motivated to be productive — and found a slight improvement, to 34 percent. Still, that means two-thirds of workers are doing only what is required to get a paycheck. Some of this disengaged group may be completely checked-out — or worse, undermining their employer.

In the 1980s, workplace loyalty began disappearing. Organizations started to restructure, seeking to increase shareholder value. Employees were viewed as expen-

sive and expendable resources. Workforces and benefits were cut. Without reciprocity, loyalty waned.

In the hospitality industry, high turnover is the norm — nearly 75 percent annually, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And that was true before the COVID-19 pandemic. The industry is seasonal by nature, with regular cycles of new hires and layoffs. Students often fill these positions, seeking flexibility. But systemic issues like low wages, lack of opportunity and poor management practices also come into play.

Now for a cruel irony: As these businesses reopen, they're struggling to find workers — even as they bump their pay and offer perks like yoga classes, health benefits and retirement plans. Unable to meet customer demand because they're short-staffed, some businesses have cut their hours or trimmed back service.

It turns out that relationships also matter. Managers or team leaders play a critical role in ensuring team engagement. For

today's workers, being treated with dignity and respect is considered non-negotiable.

As customers, we share that obligation: to treat workers — particularly those who serve us — with dignity and respect. Remember at the start of the pandemic when service employees were applauded for their bravery and considered essential? Now we're seeing reports of hostile behavior and abusive language, most often related to mask wearing. On airplanes, violence is spiking, with unruly passengers assaulting flight attendants over mask mandates and other perceived inconveniences. Customers and workers alike are exasperated.

All of this angst has led to staff shortages. The resultant delays have only stoked the fire — and the ire.

In response, restaurants have begun hanging signs in their windows, explaining the lack of help and asking customers to be patient and kind.

I get it. After more than a year of public-health protocols that upended our daily lives, people

want a return to normalcy. That includes dining out with family and friends and traveling freely.

But even when our experiences differ from what we imagined — which they inevitably will, at least for now — we shouldn't take out our frustration or disappointment on the person serving us. Nor should we expect them to go out of their way to make us happy, especially when they feel like they've been personally attacked for something that's out of their control.

Instead, we should pause, take a deep breath, and remember that more often than not, that person is trying their hardest in difficult circumstances. If you can muster it, share a few words of encouragement. Just a moment of grace will improve the encounter. And you just might make someone's day.

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 ncronline.com.

SMOLENS • Some say leadership not dealing with crisis of people living on streets

FROM B1 homelessness. For decades, the city seemed to careen from one approach to another with little improvement.

In some quarters, Gloria was seen as a breath of fresh air following Faulconer, who critics claimed sought short-term, sometimes superficial fixes. Gloria warned that real solutions would take time and wouldn't be easy.

But he also promised more compassion in dealing with people living on the street, in part by reducing police involvement. The protesters Monday night contend he has particularly fallen short on that score.

Advocates for homeless people said they had been seeking a meeting with the mayor to discuss enforcement activity.

"It seems like there's more frequent police interactions," Mandy Lien, who runs a program that assists homeless people, told The San Diego Union-Tribune after the protest. "We decided if we can't get a meeting with him in person, if we can't get him to actually keep the promises he's made, we're going to go to his house."

Gloria has made several changes to the city's policies aimed at combating homelessness. He is transitioning away from police enforcement, though not entirely. Social workers and mental health experts increasingly are becoming the first responders with people living outdoors.

The mayor and Nathan Fletcher, chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, have taken bureaucratic steps to more



ANA RAMIREZ U-T

San Diego advocates for homeless people say that Mayor Todd Gloria has not fulfilled some of his campaign promises to the community.

effectively address homelessness, with each creating new departments and shifting responsibilities. More money is being spent, including to provide more shelter beds and move people into housing.

Cleanup operations at homeless encampments are now done on a schedule, giving people time to prepare and move their things. Before, there was little notice.

At the end of June, Gloria's administration conducted a monthlong, inten-

sive outreach program downtown that placed hundreds of people in shelters. Yet, more than 1,000 were still living on downtown streets.

"We have a lot of work to do," Gloria said at the conclusion of the outreach effort. "This was not a one-and-done thing."

The Downtown San Diego Partnership, which posts a monthly count of homeless people living outdoors in central city neighborhoods, reported 1,026 at the end of August.

That's 300 more than in January, while some coronavirus pandemic shut-downs were still in place.

The presence of more tent clusters in various areas, such as around 16th Street and National Avenue, is striking. It's not just the visuals that have triggered concern but worries about sanitation. San Diego officials past and present are still haunted by the hepatitis A outbreak in 2017 that killed 20 people and sickened nearly 600.

Health experts said the

spread of the disease was exacerbated by unsanitary conditions around homeless encampments. Some civic leaders and residents want quicker action getting rid of the camps.

The California Department of Transportation last month acted to clear out homeless camps alongside freeways in San Diego County that were allowed to remain in place during the pandemic under guidelines set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Homelessness has long seemed like an intractable problem in San Diego. There's been a flurry of policy moves at the city and county since Gloria was sworn in as mayor in December and Fletcher was named board chair a month later. The homeless situation has been years in the making and no one expects it to be solved quickly.

But there is clamoring on all sides for more progress, though there are sharp differences on how to achieve that.

Michael McConnell, a longtime advocate for homeless people, had been a harsh critic of the previous mayor. In April, he expressed guarded optimism about where things seemed to be headed after the changing of the guard. "I haven't seen leadership on this before like I'm potentially starting to see blossom," he said.

Last week, he said his patience is running out. "We're just seeing a lot of reasons that things aren't going in the right direction," he said. "... I want to force the electeds to deal with this crisis and not just slap Band-Aids on this."

That's the kind of thing he said when Faulconer was mayor.

Tweet of the Week
Goes to Dom Fracassa (@DominicFracassa), an editor at the San Francisco Chronicle, about feral pigs running amok in San Ramon. "The boars are back in town."

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HOUSING Construction to wrap up in late 2023

FROM B1 come renters will be on a 7.2-acre parcel west of Aviara Parkway, the site of an agricultural packaging warehouse that will be demolished.

The 70 apartments built by Bridge Housing will be on

a 2.2-acre, triangular piece of vacant property east of Aviara Parkway. Those units will include the manager's apartment and 69 studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments for lower income and extremely low-income households that qualify under state guidelines.

The \$3.1 million will come from the city's housing trust fund, which has a balance of \$13.6 million set aside for affordable housing and homelessness-related projects, programs and services. Construction of the Bridge apartments is expect to cost

about \$31 million in all, with about half the money to be funded through state and federal tax credits.

Rents will range from \$600 for studios to \$1,700 for three bedrooms based on size and affordability levels, according to a report presented by Housing and Homeless Services Director Mandy Mills. Market-rate rents for the same size units would range from \$1,500 to \$3,000.

Bridge Housing owns and manages affordable apartment buildings throughout California, Oregon and Washington. The

company has two in Carlsbad — the 344-unit Villa Loma Apartments near El Camino Real and Cassia Road and the 92-unit Poinsettia Station Apartments near the Poinsettia Coaster station. Both those projects were approved by the Carlsbad City Council 15 to 20 years ago and have fully repaid their loans from the city's housing trust fund.

"Both projects are well maintained and have been very well received within the community," Mills said.

Carlsbad's mandatory inclusionary housing program, established in 1993, re-

quires residential developers to provide at least 15 percent of their units as affordable to low-income residents.

Since then more than 2,000 housing units, primarily apartments, have been built in the city for various levels of low-income households.

The Summerhill-Bridge partnership will add 81 affordable units, or 25 percent of the Aviara project, to the citywide total.

Developers who don't include the low-income housing in their projects must pay fees that go into the

city's housing trust fund. Builders who include more than the 15 percent minimum may qualify for incentives such as higher density or reduced set-backs for their projects.

Carlsbad has 24 apartment buildings so far for people who qualify for low-income housing. Each complex manages its own application process and has a waiting list.

For more information about affordable housing in Carlsbad, visit the city website at www.carlsbadca.gov.

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BEACH Oceanside supports its landmarks

FROM B1 limit access to the waterfront plaza at the foot of the pier, or that the new hotels nearby could take control of the area for their guests.

"It's clear the facilities need to be upgraded," said Samuel Poumele, a native Oceanside resident with a Samoan heritage.

"The main thing is that the facilities continue to host the events that they always have," Poumele said. "This site has a big significance for the history of Oceanside. The way I see it, we have to stand as a community to protect this one."

The bandshell was built in 1937 and the community center in 1955. The amphitheater has hosted thousands of community events

over the years, including the Samoan Cultural Celebration, the Filipino Cultural Festival, Juneteenth, Cinco de Mayo and other annual get-togethers.

Generations of Oceanside High School graduates have walked across the bandshell stage for their commencement, a tradition longtime locals want to continue.

But the bandshell stage is small, and its electrical system can't handle modern electronics. The community center needs more room for the basketball, volleyball, pickleball, cheerleading and dance programs and summer camps scheduled there.

All of the facilities need improvements to meet current building codes and to allow the handicapped access required by law. "These structures are very old, but they are a treasured passion of our city," said resident Carolyn Krammer. "We all know they need improvements, they need renovation, but not annihilation or destruction."

All the facilities must re-



PHIL DIEHL U-T FILE

A skater practices at the Junior Seu Beach Bandshell amphitheater in August.

main under city control, and public access must be maintained, she said.

"Be vigilant," Krammer told her fellow participants. "Do not trust what you are being told tonight. It's not the final version. We cannot lose this. This is our golden treasure."

Oceanside has the only amphitheater of its kind in San Diego County, said

James Gilliam, an Oceanside resident since 2006 who works as the arts administrator for the city of Encinitas.

"It is a sleeping giant ... the envy of other cities," Gilliam said, adding that the city needs to make technical improvements so it can continue to hold more and larger concerts and special events there.

Initially, the city created a 12-member advisory committee to help guide the feasibility study, with members representing various commissions, committees and beachfront facilities users. However, the committee was disbanded after its meeting Aug. 3 to streamline the study process.

City staffers and their architectural consultants,

from the Johnson Favaro firm of Culver City, will host the remaining community meetings and make presentations to groups such as the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Planning Commission. At the conclusion of the study in eight months to a year, the results and a recommendation will be presented to the City Council for approval.

A date for the next meeting was not announced.

The first phase of beach improvements is nearly complete and includes a new, wider staircase to the beach, 14 new restrooms, a sewer lift station, a storage building for beach maintenance equipment and the renovation of a 1930s-era former bathhouse into a new police substation.

Also planned is the restoration or replacement of the concrete-and-steel bridge built in 1927 from Pacific Street to the wooden pier. Since then, the wooden pier has been replaced several times, most recently in 1987.

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