

MEDIATE THIS !

THE VEGAN VIOLATION AND THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Dear Mediator,

My 10-year-old son had his best friend come over for dinner and video games last week. My son's friend is also 10 and comes from a vegan family. I was cooking steak for dinner, but offered to make my son's friend grilled vegetables so he could have a vegan option.

His friend said that he would rather have steak, and that he often eats meat at school. After he went home, I received an angry call from his mother informing me that I had no right to feed her child meat when I knew they were strict vegans, and that she will not allow her son to come over anymore. I let him make his decision, so how am I in the wrong?

Astonished in University City

Dear Astonished,

We have seen such a revival for healthy eating in recent times. According to Business Insider, for example, sales of soda are down, while flavored and carbonated water sales are through



GETTY IMAGES

This week's reader seeks advice about her decision to serve meat to the child of a vegan family — at his request — while he was visiting her son at their home.

the roof. Americans are choosing more healthy options than ever before. For some, the enthusiasm for a healthy diet comes with strict abstinence from anything that doesn't meet good nutritional standards.

It appears that you inadvertently stepped on a landmine when you served your son's friend that steak, but fear not. There are steps to remedy this violation of

veganism. From a mediator's perspective, there are two sides to this issue.

The mother of your son's friend has a right to be bothered by the fact that her son was served meat at your home, simply because she more than likely has not only health concerns, but ethical concerns with a meat-based diet. On the other hand, you allowed her son the freedom to decide

what he wanted to eat, and he told you something that his parents probably didn't know: He eats meat at school. Given that the child told you of his carnivorous proclivities, perhaps you thought his mother was fine with the occasional exception to the diet.

At the center of this conflict are the two boys. Not only is it important to preserve their relationship,

but perhaps they are also the key to negotiating your way back into the mother's good graces. To begin this effort, reach out to the mother and express your fondness for her son and the special friendship that he has with your child. Emphasize the importance of preserving the relationship and how important it is for the children to have ongoing playdates.

Now that you have refocused the issue on the children, consider apologizing to the mother for giving her son a non-vegan dinner, but explain that he specifically asked for the steak.

You also have the choice of telling her that her son often eats meat at school. She is likely unaware of this, and this information could very well change her tune regarding your conflict, since she will understand why you didn't think giving him meat was out of bounds.

Once everything is out on the table, move forward by assuring her that you will only serve her son vegan-friendly options when he comes over. Take things a

step further and ask her to share or teach you how to make some quick vegan recipes, so that you'll be able to feed him some of his favorite dishes. This will not only give you insight regarding why she chose a vegan diet but will show that you care about what's important to her.

An apology, topped off with an effort to embrace her family's veganism, will set you on a fast track to resolution. This multifaceted approach will show the mother that you have a genuine desire to right this wrong and maintain the children's friendship. Before long, you'll be whipping up vegan creations that might even add a bit of excitement to your family's dinnertime.

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 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

Police agencies respond to new law

The county's two largest law enforcement agencies appear to be responding differently to a new California law meant to increase police transparency.

Assembly Bill 748, signed into law last year, requires departments statewide to release body-worn camera and other video and audio recordings of officer shootings and serious uses of force within 45 days unless doing so would interfere with an investigation. The law went into effect in July.

San Diego police officials said last week that they have started including more detail in news releases about shootings and serious uses of force to ensure the public has the proper context when videos are released. After a San Diego police officer shot a man in El Cerrito last month, for example, the department put out a lengthy statement.

The shooting is the first incident in the city of San Diego to fall under the new law.

"We clearly understand the intent of the legislation," San Diego police Lt. Shawn Takeuchi said. "The public has asked to be presented with this information as soon as

possible, and we intend to do that when possible."

Conversely, the Sheriff's Department does not intend to release body-worn camera footage of deputy shootings until they've been reviewed by the county District Attorney's Office, a stance that's in line with the current county protocol on the release of video from law enforcement shootings.

Although the law states body-worn camera footage should be released within 45 days, there are a number of exceptions in the bill's language. Departments can request a year-long extension if investigators fear disclosing the video would substantially interfere with an investigation. Agencies can also withhold a video if there are concerns they would be unable to adequately protect the privacy of someone in the footage.

It's unclear which exception the Sheriff's Department plans to cite.

Takeuchi also acknowledged the department may cite exceptions.

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NORTH COUNTY: BARBARA HENRY

Encinitas restricts some RVs at beach

ENCINITAS

RVers who plan to picnic in the parking lot at Moonlight Beach next summer may want to rethink those plans.

The Encinitas City Council unanimously voted last week to enact new summertime restrictions along Coast Highway 101 and in the city's beach parking lots.

Under the new rules, RVs that are longer than 25 feet or wider than 9 feet will be banned from parking in the lots at Moonlight, Swami's, Grandview and Beacon's from the Friday before Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend.

They also will be barred from parking on the edge of the coastal highway adjacent to Cardiff State Beach.

And, people won't be allowed to fill up these popular parking spots with lawn chairs, barbecue grills and other party equipment during busy summer months; the parking spots are for vehicles only, the council decided.

"With parking being at such a premium (during the summer), when you've got some-

one taking up three or four spaces, it's really tough, especially when you see families circling around trying to find a parking spot," city Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts Director Jennifer Campbell said as she explained the proposed rules to the City Council.

The new rules won't ban all RVs, just what the city terms "oversized" RVs, which take up more than one standard city parking spot. A "mid-size" RV typically is less than 25 feet long and can fit in a regular parking spot, a city staff report notes and Mayor Catherine Blake-spear stressed.

Councilwoman Jody Hubbard said she was pleased with the new proposal, but wished it went further, suggesting that the council ought to ban people from dropping off trailers in parking spots and then coming back for them later. She said she has seen people do this in the beach parking lots.

Campbell said the city will also install new signage in its beach areas, detailing the new restrictions.

Henry is a freelance writer.

THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

Meet U-T's interns; readers' rep post

Who is the readers' rep?

A subscriber emailed last weekend and mentioned that he thought the readers' rep was a reader the U-T hired for the position.

That is not the case, and I thought it might be good to clarify the position for other readers. The readers' rep job is handled by me. I'm a U-T editor whose main job is to assemble the Local metro section.

The thrust of the readers' rep job is dealing with issues regarding news stories. Although the position focuses on news, many readers will reach out to the readers' rep about delivery or another area because they either are uncertain whom to contact or they are frustrated in not getting the issue resolved. The readers' rep can forward that correspondence to the correct people.

The readers' representative, or ombudsman, was established by the San Diego Union in 1975. When I arrived at the U-T in late 1998, Gina Lubrano was a full-time ombudsman. She held that post from 1992 until she retired in 2006. Lubrano also wrote a weekly ombudsman column.

Carol Goodhue took over full time until 2008, when she retired. After that, the readers' rep job was assigned to various editors who had other areas of responsibility. Those editors would primarily handle requests for corrections.

When I was given the job about five years ago, I decided to resurrect the weekly column. My intent is to explain to readers how the U-T goes about presenting the news and to answer reader questions. Many times readers will bring up a subject that will lead to an idea for the column.

The most common task of the readers' rep is dealing with corrections. It involves working with the reporter and editor on the wording, and then publishing it on A2. The reporter corrects the online story with a note saying the story has been updated.

A couple of misunderstood areas: The readers' rep is not in a position of authority to make U-T policy decisions. Those are up to Editor and Publisher Jeff Light.

The readers' rep does not choose which stories to cover. That is the job of editors who lead reporting teams.

I try to respond promptly to all readers. However, I will not respond to emails or calls that rely on profanity or insults.

To reach the readers' rep, email readers.rep@sduiontribune.com or adrian.vore@sduiontribune.com

FROM THE ARCHIVES

SAN DIEGO'S FIRST FEMALE DETECTIVE JOINED IN 1913

In 1913 E. Belle Robinson joined the San Diego Police Department as the city's first female detective.

From the San Diego Union, Sunday, Sept. 14, 1913:

CITY HAS WOMAN DETECTIVE
Sleuth-Like, She Is Mysterious

In Guise of Health Department Inspector, She Ferrets Out Immorality.

The "Woman of Mystery," they call her at numerous places in which she has lived in San Diego. At a local automobile garage where she stores her car she is known as "The Daring Chauffeuse." Down at the police station they refer to her as "The Fair Detective," while at the portals of Admiral Manney's office in city hall she is known as "The Pocket Edition of Scotland Yard."

Yes, she is a detective all right, and furthermore she is the first woman to be regularly employed by the city of San Diego as a sleuth.

Her name?

It's Mrs. E. E. Robinson. That's her correct name, but goodness knows, she can be Mrs. Johnson or Mrs. Browning or any other Mrs., as occasion demands.

But regardless of names she pokes into corners of the city under guise of being an inspector employed by the board of health. She wears a badge which proclaims that she

holds such an appointment, but in reality she cares not a whit whether rooming houses, hotels or other places are complying with the laws of sanitation.

You see, this board of health badge is what the layman would call her "disguise" and what a Burns or Pinkerton would term her "stall."

She Is Lynx-Eyed

As inspector for the board of health, Mrs. Robinson is the most lynx-eyed of record. She sees much. If she sees a girl trailing down the hall of a rooming house in a kimono, she makes a mental note of the fact. If she observes several girls in one hotel, she records data. If she sees a man and woman go into a hotel who aroused her suspicions, she makes a double entry in her notebook.

For a month and a half she has been doing this under the direct orders of Admiral Manney, head of the police department. And for



this work it is said that she draws a few dollars each day from the city coffers.

So quietly has she worked that the police have made several raids on questionable rooming houses without the proprietors ascertaining how the officers secured their "lead."

Mrs. Robinson is not under orders from Chief Wilson, although she frequently consults this officer. An officer of the department is always detailed to work with her. For a long time Detective Hyatt was her escort, but it is said that Hyatt tired of the work and his request to be relieved was granted. Her new escort is Patrolman Irwin.

Hist: Great Secrecy

Great secrecy has been observed by police officers regarding the operations of the woman detective. Frequently when officers have been questioned about her employment, they said they knew nothing. Even last night Admiral Manney was "touchy" when interviewed concerning his female sleuth.

"How long has Mrs. Robinson been employed by the police department?" the admiral was asked.

And before he thought, he answered, "For about a month and one-half."

Then the head of the department became an unwilling witness and refused to discuss Mrs. Robinson's employment.

"You will not get any information from me," declared Manney.

It is said that Mrs. Robinson was employed at the suggestion of certain reformers, who pointed out to Manney that the police could best keep the city rid of questionable women by having a woman detective.

Formerly Used Auto

Mrs. Robinson came here about two months ago from Los Angeles. At various times in her life she has been an investigator of vice and has done detective work. When she first came here she drove an automobile on her rounds, but recently she realized the machine attracted too much attention to her work and she discarded it. Once she showed Admiral Manney she was a competent driver when the admiral missed his street car and Mrs. Robinson whisked him to his destination through congested traffic with the skill of a taxi driver.

Mrs. Robinson has lived at various places. She does not live in one place long. She is mysterious. Every time she invades police headquarters, officers hold whispered conferences with her. Then the fair detective will disappear from the station as if by magic and will not be seen for hours. Meantime the police raiding squad has been organized and a rooming house alleged to be sheltering questionable women has been raided.

HISTORICAL PHOTOS AND ARTICLES FROM THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE ARCHIVES ARE COMPILED BY MERRIE MONTEAGUDO. SEARCH THE U-T HISTORIC ARCHIVES AT NEWSLIBRARY.COM/SITES/SDUB