

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

BECOMING AN ALLY FOR WOMEN: THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

In July, the National Conflict Resolution Center hosted a conversation about gender equity in the workplace, featuring two leaders from business and government: Jane Howard-Martin, vice president, labor and employment for Toyota Motor North America, and Susan Davis, former 10-term member of Congress from California's 53rd District.

Both women spoke of the role that male allies have played in furthering their careers. Howard-Martin, an attorney, noted that she was often an "only" (woman) in meetings with men. Male allies "looked out for me, validated me and spoke up for me when I wasn't in the room," Howard-Martin said. "They gave me opportunities to demonstrate that I'm capable."

For Davis, a member of the (female) minority throughout her congressional tenure, male allies were required to get things done. But Davis was not shy about calling out colleagues for their "deaf ear" tendencies. (Hint: It's when a woman shares an idea, and it goes unacknowledged — but the same idea gets attention when voiced

later by a man.) Davis believes their intent wasn't harmful. They were just unaware.

I was reminded of our two speakers as I listened to the testimony of four female gymnasts — Simone Biles, McKayla Maroney, Maggie Nichols and Aly Raisman — at a recent hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

These young women could have used a male ally — even one — as they endured systematic sexual and emotional abuse at the hands of the USA Gymnastics team doctor, Larry Nassar. Instead, their stories and pleas — intended to keep other girls safe — were diminished, falsified or ignored.

Their testimony sickened me. Hearing them speak, any parent of a daughter would feel the same way.

Maroney first raised allegations against Nassar in July 2015. After she described the incidents of abuse — which began when Maroney was 13 — the investigating FBI agent asked, "Is that all?" Seventeen months later, his report was issued, filled with false state-

ments. And while the investigation languished, Nassar abused scores of victims. As Maroney said, "Nassar turned out to be more of a pedophile than he was a doctor."

A Justice Department Inspector General report, released in July, concluded that FBI officials "failed to respond to the Nassar allegations with the utmost seriousness and urgency that they deserved and required, made numerous and fundamental errors when they did respond to them, and violated multiple FBI policies."

Nassar was sentenced in January to up to 175 years in prison. But so far, there have been no consequences for USA Gymnastics (their CEO, who was forced to resign, left with a \$1 million severance package) or the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, which enabled the abuse. The FBI agent who mishandled the case, and then lied about it, was fired just before the convening of the Judiciary Committee hearing.

Members of the committee — male and female — uniformly expressed outrage at the abuse

and neglect these young women endured. They praised the athletes' courage in coming forth and made assurances that their testimony will lead to change. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, aptly described these stories as "every parent's nightmare" because we trust coaches (and doctors and trainers) to take care of our kids.

At the National Conflict Resolution Center, we provide training that enables people to become better allies. The ART of Inclusive Communication (ARTIC) 2.0 teaches that allyship is a journey. We launched ARTIC 2.0 last year, helping participants move toward anti-racist behavior. But the same principles apply to the pursuit of gender equity.

At the beginning of the journey, "armchair allies" are aware of injustice, but not inclined to act. "Emerging allies" feel concern — and maybe even guilt — which sparks an interest in learning more. With knowledge, they may become "engaged allies," working to right a perceived wrong.

The Judiciary Committee members have taken important

steps on the road to allyship. They showed compassion for the four athletes and acknowledged the systemic failures that protected the wrong people. But it's unclear whether any "active allies" will emerge, to champion and effect the societal changes that are necessary to ensure the safety of all young girls.

The way we treat girls is a reflection of a patriarchal system that views women as second-class citizens.

It's a system that needs to change. And so, it's important for men to step up as allies, whenever we can, in workplaces and in society. That includes taking to heart the behaviors that made a difference for Howard-Martin and Davis, both accomplished people.

Biles, Maroney, Nichols, and Raisman made it abundantly clear: The time to act is now.

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.

CAMP

FROM **B1** who is district executive director for YMCA Overnight Camps. "People need to know how precious a place like this can be, and I want to do everything in my power to preserve it."

'Healthy, happy outdoor life'

In the camp's early years, boys paid \$10, plus \$1.50 for transportation, for a one-week camp that offered "a healthy happy outdoor life" filled with hiking, campfires and activities that eventually grew to include archery, boxing, rifle target-shooting, swimming, mountain-climbing and horse-back riding. In 1929, the first cabins were built, and in 1937 electricity arrived.

Originally, the camp had a military format with morning reveille. As part of the YMCA — an acronym for the 1844-born Young Men's Christian Association — Camp Marston taught Judeo-Christian principles, along with the four core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Those four values are still painted and etched on the camp walls today. Among the camp's most famous early alumni were baseball legend Ted Williams, actor Charlton Heston and TV host Art Linkletter.

Thanks to several land acquisitions over the years, Camp Marston has grown to 250 acres, which includes a nearby sister camp, Rain-tree Ranch. In 1960, Camp Marston began offering all-girls camps and in 1966, the camp became co-ed. Today, Camp Marston hosts about

15,800 campers a year. It operates 340 days a year offering sixth-grade school camp, summer camp, family camp and youth camps, ranging in price from \$300 to \$800 a week. This past week, more than 220 sixth-graders from Aviara Oaks Middle School in Carlsbad were in residence.

As the years passed, boxing was eliminated, .22 rifles were replaced by BB guns, the horses moved to Rain-tree Ranch, rock-climbing gave way to an artificial climbing tower and dodgeball was replaced with a kinder, gentler game known as gaga ball.

These days, Camp Marston has a swimming pool, volleyball court, soccer field, paintball range and the man-made Lake Jessop, which has nearly run dry this summer due to lack of rainfall.

Over the past 100 years, the camp has only shut down twice. The first time was in the mid-1940s during the polio epidemic. It closed again from March 2020 to June 2021 for the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2003, the Cedar fire burned through much of the camp's surrounding hills, but its structures were saved by two fire engine companies who used the camp as their firefighting staging area.

To re-forest the hills blackened by the fire, the Camp Marston staff planted 40,000 pine seedlings donated by the California Department of Forestry. During the driest months that year, youth campers walked into the hills each day and watered the baby trees with small water-filled milk cartons.



Man-made Lake Jessop at the YMCA's Camp Marston in Julian has been a victim of drought over the years. The overnight youth camp sits on 200 acres.



Boys at Camp Marston in 1923.

Camp traditions

Earlier this summer, Madeyski turned a storage room in the camp's nature center into a museum featuring 100 years of Camp Marston history. On the walls are printed camp programs dating back to the 1920s, embroidered camper badges, historical documents and archival photos. One wall features pictures of

married couples who met their future spouses at Camp Marston, and there are many photos celebrating the camp's most-beloved traditions.

Camp weeks always include day hikes to visit local sights like the mystical Pegasus trail or "Triple Dead Fred," a beloved but now deceased tree. Since 1932, all camp weeks end

with a candlelight ceremony. And every camper is expected to take part in skit night by delivering a few spoken lines at the Old Oaks amphitheater.

Over the years, the camp curriculum has adapted to changing times. These days, school campers learn more about STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and global warming than they did 20 years ago. The camp has also adapted to the reality of children who have been raised on electronic devices. A recent study by the National Wildlife Federation found today's children spend seven hours a day in front of screens and just seven minutes a day playing outdoors.

Camp Marston's code of conduct requires campers to leave their cellphones and other electronic devices at home, or be ready to surrender them at check-in. Occasionally, overprotective parents will sneak phones into their children's luggage or

DISTRICT

FROM **B1** an official arts district," said Blevins, artistic director of the San Diego Urban Warriors, a performing arts group. "It would give the black community an identifiable place of pride and culture."

In addition to the tour on Saturday, proponents of the district idea hosted a Black Family Empowerment Day at Marie Widman Park in Encanto. Community leaders and elders were honored for their years of service and contributions to the community.

Phillips-Pea said it's not uncommon for the stories of people who were pillars of the community to be known only by residents in the neighborhood, but not throughout the city, which is why it's important to create a space that allows for those stories to be preserved and celebrated.

She also pointed to several panels along Imperial Avenue of artwork by the late Eddie L. Edwards, a muralist. The panels were faded and falling apart, Pea pointed out, with paint cracking or peeling off, further evidence of a need for an arts district, she said.

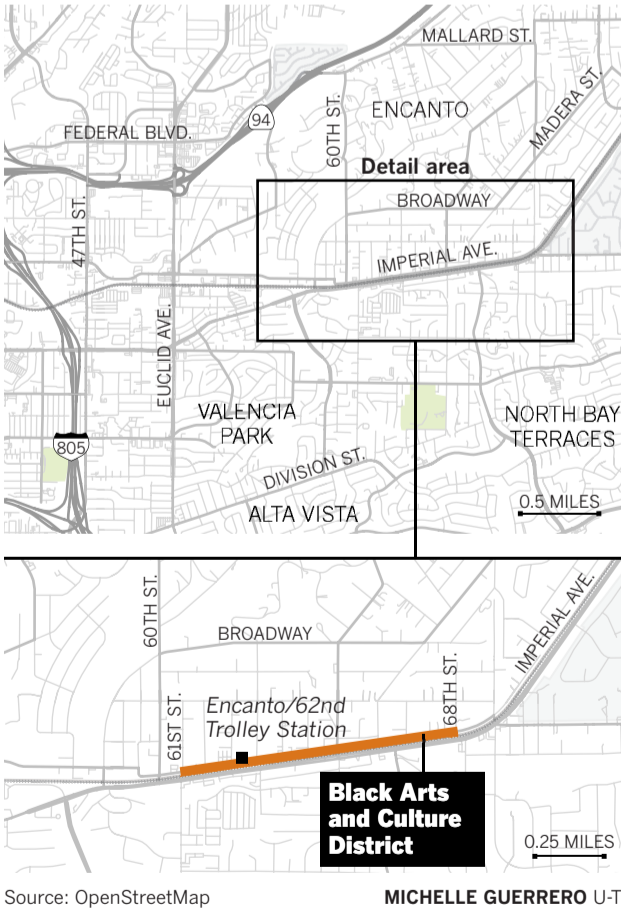
In San Diego there are two state-designated cultural districts — Balboa Park and Barrio Logan. The city helps community organizations apply for the designations through the state, a city spokeswoman said Thursday.

The city also can declare an area a cultural district through a City Council resolution that applies to a community's plan.

The city did something like that last year in Kearny Mesa when it designated a Pan Asian Cultural and Business Innovation District there. That enables

Proposed Black Arts and Culture District

Activists and community members want eight blocks along Imperial Avenue in Encanto to be designated a Black Arts and Culture District.



Source: OpenStreetMap

community leaders to attract businesses, cultural organizations, events and tourism to the area, proponents said.

Councilmember Monica Montgomery Steppe, who represents the Encanto neighborhood, said she supports creating an arts district and her office is committed to working with community partners.

"Intentional investment in the Imperial Avenue Corridor is long overdue, and using this space to preserve the history and contributions of Black San Diegans is key to

revitalizing the area," she said in a statement.

City officials said their departments are in regular communication with community members on this topic and are waiting on them to provide information describing what is unique to that stretch of Imperial Avenue to be included in a proposed resolution.

Proponents also plan to send a formal letter to Mayor Todd Gloria about the district, Phillips-Pea said.

andrea.lopezvillafana@sduuniontribune.com

SMOLENS

FROM **B1** tend to be on or near well-traveled thoroughfares and transit corridors. Among the criticisms of increasing density in single-family neighborhoods is the infrastructure wasn't built to handle it.

That's not to say there wouldn't be concerns about whether there would be adequate parks, libraries and other residential amenities in the transformed commercial areas.

The bill to allow housing on commercial areas without a zoning change ran into familiar opposition. Local governments said the state would be usurping their authority. That was a major criticism of the successful bills.

SB 9, by Senate President Pro Tempore Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, essentially allows duplexes to be built on single-home lots "by right." It also allows for lot splits under certain conditions, meaning two duplexes could be built on the property. SB 10 boosts density up to 10 units on lots in urban infill sites or in certain transit-rich areas.

It's not clear why the commercial-to-housing bills didn't make it, but one apparent unresolved dispute involved a labor issue. The proposals required developers to use a "skilled and trained" workforce to build the housing. That means, as The Associated Press pointed out, a certain percentage of workers must be either enrolled in or have completed state-approved apprenticeship programs, mostly run by unions.

Developers were opposed to that, contending the required wages would drive up the cost of building the homes. The State Build-

ing and Constructions Trade Council of California said that provision would guarantee reasonable, livable wages. Eliminating it would only mean greater developer profits, the council maintained.

That union labor requirement had already proven to be a deal-breaker on other bills, according to the CalMatters news organization. Such a provision was not included in previous unsuccessful housing bills that ran into stiff opposition, including one last year to build affordable housing in church parking lots, and another retail-to-housing measure.

That hurdle was not an issue in the bills to increase neighborhood density, at least at the end, in part because those measures involve small, often individually owned properties rather than big commercial areas ripe for potentially large projects.

Backers said the commercial conversion bills had great promise to facilitate more housing; the AP said changing the zoning is "such a hassle that many developers don't bother trying."

Still, some jurisdictions already are headed in that direction. One of them is the city of San Diego.

San Diego's "complete communities" concept encourage more housing coupled with nearby amenities such as parks. The city has pushed mixed-use projects that include retail/commercial on the ground floor with stories of housing above along transportation corridors.

Recently revised community plans, such as one adopted for Kearny Mesa last year, emphasize mixed-use development.

"The community plans seem to be open to changing (commercial) use to resi-

dential, said Gary London, senior principal at London Moeder Advisors.

"It's not just the state or the city but there's economic motivation to turn commercial property into housing," he added.

He noted that he is working on some family-owned, legacy retail properties along some of central San Diego's broad boulevards that are being turned over to a younger generation more willing to let go of the past — and potentially increase revenues from the property with housing.

For a long time, local governments pursued retail because the sales tax returns were greater than revenue from other areas, including housing. The coronavirus pandemic has had downward impact on retail operations and office buildings. It may still take some time to see how things ultimately shake out.

But long before COVID-19, brick-and-mortar stores had been struggling and closing amid competition from online shopping. And while no one is predicting the traditional office will become obsolete, the need for it may not be as great as before with the expectation that more people will continue working remotely.

It seems certain that efforts to turn those distressed properties into housing will grow, one way or another.

Don't be surprised if state lawmakers take another swing at trying to make that happen faster.

Tweet of the Week
Goes to The Hill (@thehill).

"UPDATE: Arizona draft audit report shows Biden widened lead by 360 votes."

michael.smolens@sduniontribune.com