

## MEDIATE THIS!

## THE HANDICAPPED SPACE AND THE AGILE PILATES DRIVER

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

## Dear Mediator:

I'm a disabled man who has coffee with friends every Tuesday on a street with scarce parking. In recent weeks, a nearby handicapped space has been taken by an SUV with a blue placard. That was fine (first come, first served) until yesterday, when I saw the driver: an agile young woman who ran out of a Pilates studio, jumped into the SUV, and sped off. I want to confront her and ask what her "disability" is. What should I say?

*Simmering in North Park*

## Dear Simmering:

A first step in conflict resolution is to extend the benefit of the doubt. Some drivers legally qualify for handicapped parking because they have chronic health problems that are not visible. So you want to start by suspending judgment and learning more about the law.

State law governing handicapped parking, as outlined on a California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) webpage, specifies two criteria: "impaired mobility" in lower extremities or hands and "documented visual problems." Applicants for "disabled persons" (DP) placards or plates must submit certification signed

by a licensed medical professional.

The woman you describe does not appear to have impaired mobility. It's possible she has vision problems. But the odds are she's a social benefits grifter. Any measure to aid people in need will be exploited by people who are not in need, an issue covered in a previous column about service animals.

Some grifters use DP plates or placards that were issued to someone else, which is only legal when the "someone else" is inside the vehicle. And some lax medical practitioners offer certification to undeserving patients, which constitutes professional misconduct.

If this woman is breaking the law at your expense, it's understandable that you want to confront her. But a hostile encounter that puts her on the defensive isn't likely to influence her.

Scofflaws are adept at rationalizing their misconduct. An able-bodied person with a DP placard may have convinced herself that the unbearable stress of finding an urban parking space would render her incapacitated.

You have other means of addressing this injustice. One of them is the much-maligned and surprisingly-resourceful DMV.

Because misuse of DP placards



GETTY IMAGES

**This week, a question is posed by a reader who has an issue with the user of a handicapped parking permit.**

is rampant, DMV investigators have stepped up enforcement operations. In the fiscal year ending June 30, nearly 2,500 people in California were caught illegally using these placards.

That's a sizable increase from the 1,625 citations the previous year.

Given the growing scope of the problem, the DMV has asked concerned citizens like you for help.

A May 4 DMV public announcement states, "Anyone who suspects a person might be misusing a disabled person placard is urged to report it using an online complaint form or by contacting their local DMV Investigations office. Submissions are confidential."

The online form asks for information on the parked vehicle, the number of any DP placard, and

the location and date of the incident.

This would be the most appropriate way to pursue justice. But if you want to appeal to this woman on a more humane level, which is the goal of conflict resolution, you have another option.

Make a copy of this column. Then write a note to the woman explaining that you submitted the letter, and you're sorry if you've misjudged her, but if you haven't, you want her to know that her imposture directly harms disabled people who truly need accessible parking.

Bring the column and the note with you when you meet your friends for coffee. If the SUV is in the handicapped space, slip the two documents under the driver's windshield wiper. Your heartfelt plea could be more effective than any official summons in changing the way she behaves.

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). Submissions will be kept anonymous. If you have questions, please email me at [lora.cicalo@suniontribune.com](mailto:lora.cicalo@suniontribune.com)

## NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

## PUBLIC SAFETY: TERI FIGUEROA

## SDPD officers recognized for actions during pool shooting, other work

More than a dozen San Diego police officers were tapped with awards last week, including three who received the department's Medal of Valor — one of SDPD's highest honors — for their response to an active shooting at a University City apartment complex.

About 6 p.m. on April 30, 2017, without warning, a man later identified as Peter Selis sat in a poolside chair at the La Jolla Crossroads apartment complex and opened fire on a birthday party.

The 49-year-old shooter, armed with a .45-caliber Sig Sauer handgun, shot seven people, one fatally: 35-year-old Monique Clark, a mother of three daughters.

Sgt. Michael McEwen and officers Jonathan Ferrero and Luke Hammond raced into the complex, directed to Selis' location by officers in a helicopter flying overhead.

Helicopter footage of the incident shows Selis on a chaise lounge, gun in his lap, with at least four victims on the ground. As officers approached, he got up from his seat, crouched in a corner and reloaded the gun.

Authorities said Selis fired at McEwen, who returned fire from a shotgun. Ferrero and Hammond also faced Selis. When Selis ignored their commands to drop his gun, they, too, opened fire.

All three officers were awarded the department's Medal of Valor.

The department also honored Officers David Armbruster, Mark Roode and Brian Sanders with the prestigious Meritorious Service Award. Police said the trio went inside the fenced-in pool area while Selis was still firing his gun.

The department also tapped seven officers with Exceptional Performance Citations: Sgt. Sean Bannan, who was in charge of the scene and Officers Nicholas Casciola, Evan Hughes, Lauren Milburn, Larry Turner — all of whom entered the pool area and helped victims after Selis was down — and Ryan Welch and Matthew Zdunich, who had been in the helicopter watching Selis.

At the ceremony, other officers received a variety of awards. Among them:

- Officers Sean Aaland and Joel Van Proyen, who rendered life-saving aid to a retired officer who had a heart attack as they all played soccer in El Cajon last December.
- Officer Sean Mariota, who saved a



K.C. ALFRED U-T

**The scene in the pool area at La Jolla Crossroads after the shooting.**

woman's life by stanching the bleeding after she stabbed herself in the neck and chest last October.

- Officer Brian Bernard, who rendered life-saving first-aid to an off-duty sheriff's deputy who had been shot multiple times last August.

- Detective Susan Righthouse, a member of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force for 13 years, who conducted over 400 investigations into child exploitation and abuse, and is responsible for helping secure convictions of more than 250 child predators. She also rescued nearly 80 children from sexually abusive homes or situations.

- Officer Larry Adair, a K-9 handler who created the public information officer position in the unit and works with media, schools and community groups to educate people on the use of police dogs.

- Detectives Rudy Castro, Mike Day, Christopher Haughey, John Howard, Jim Mackay and Sgt. Steve Spurlock who helped take in five homicide suspects wanted in four murders.

- Sgt. Steve Shebloski, and Detectives Tracy Barr and Mike Weaver, who spent hours during the holiday season to solve three killings.

- Sgt. Stacey Botsford, and Officers Rex Cole Jr., Christopher Harrison, Bernice Herrera, David McGowan, Michael Padgett, Phanomsack Woodell, Pert Greg Whiteford, Kathe Hemesath and Evan Paynard, members of the department's Homeless Outreach Team, who helped the county respond to the Hepatitis A outbreak crisis.

## THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

## The Lemon Grove Incident's reach

The readers' rep received an email from a reader that brought up issues of reputation and adjusting a news item about one of the most significant events in county history.

The event is known as the Lemon Grove Incident, which has been called the first successful school desegregation court decision in U.S. history.

The incident began in early January 1931. About 75 Mexican schoolchildren were barred from attending the Lemon Grove Grammar School. Instead they were ordered to attend an Americanization school. The Mexican parents revolted. They held their children back from school and successfully sued. San Diego Superior Court Judge Claude Chambers ruled in March that the children must be admitted to regular classes at the Lemon Grove Grammar School.

A sentence in the U-T's recently published 2018 Community Almanac caught the attention of Joyce Earickson of Oceanside.

The sentence appeared in the Lemon Grove profile under the heading "Did You Know," a small feature with interesting facts about a community.

One of the facts read, "In 1931, the principal of the Lemon Grove Grammar School barred 75 Hispanic children from attending and was taken to court."

The principal was Jerome Green, Earickson's grandfather.

Earickson wanted the sentence to be amended online to read: "In 1931, the principal of the Lemon Grove Grammar School, acting under instruction from school trustees, barred 75 Hispanic children from attending, and the school board was taken to court." She noted that the Wikipedia entry about the Lemon Grove Incident includes that wording about the trustees.

Although the Almanac sentence does not identify Jerome Green, his name appears in accounts of the historic incident. Earickson is understandably concerned about his reputation and his place in history. Also she said her and her family's background does not match what could be a negative, and erroneous, perception of Green.

"Jerome Green ... was a Professor ... at Notre Dame," Earickson wrote in an email to the U-T. "His young son (my uncle) had terrible asthma, so he ... moved to Alpine so his son could breathe well. Shortly after arriving ... he was hired as principal at the Lemon Grove Grammar School.

"As a new principal, he did not want to

turn the children away; quietly in the evening, he encouraged the Hispanic families to organize and resist the Board's decision; (nevertheless, he still obeyed the School Board's instructions since they had authority over him.) The School Board learned of his actions and did not renew his contract for the following year," she wrote.

"Grandfather Green was a remarkable man; he was a profoundly spiritual, egalitarian, honest, and intelligent man. He was definitely not a racist," Earickson wrote.

She added that she and her mother (Green's daughter) followed Green's footsteps into education. Earickson said she and her mom taught in communities with high numbers of Hispanic students; Earickson at Fallbrook High, and her mother in Brawley.

An account of the incident in the spring 1986 edition of the San Diego Historical Society Quarterly written by Robert Alvarez Jr. reads: "On January 5, 1931, Jerome T. Green, principal of the Lemon Grove Grammar School, acting under instructions from the school trustees, stood at the door and admitted all pupils except the Mexican students."

An interesting sidenote — Robert Alvarez Jr. is a professor emeritus of education at UC San Diego. His father, a student at the Lemon Grove school in 1931, was the lead plaintiff in the case.

A San Diego Union story from Jan. 9, 1931, uses a school trustee as the source of information on why the students were sent to a different school. An Evening Tribune article from Feb. 13, 1931, said "school officials" tried to segregate the students. The same story says Green was named in the suit along with trustees.

Should the Almanac reference online be amended? It's a slippery slope. The item is technically accurate but could be clarified. However, can a news organization realistically go back into countless online stories to add and subtract words according to requests while also researching years old stories to verify the changes would be correct?

Some editors believe that unless an item is clearly wrong, then leave it alone. Others, like myself, believe it can be considered case by case, but in general don't tweak.

In the case of the small almanac item that mentions the historic incident, I would say it's acceptable to amend. If confirmed, that's what the U-T will do. What do you think? Email the readers.rep@suniontribune.com

## FROM THE ARCHIVES | LOOKING BACK OVER 150 YEARS

# JULY 29, 1932: ARMY DRIVES JOBLESS VETERANS FROM CAPITAL

The San Diego Union-Tribune will mark its 150th anniversary in 2018 by presenting a significant front page from the archives each day throughout the year.

## Friday, July 29, 1932

In 1932, federal troops and police forcibly dispersed the so-called "Bonus Army" of unemployed World War I veterans who had marched on Washington, D.C., demanding immediate cash payouts of bonuses they weren't scheduled to receive until 1945.

Congress and the president balked at bonuses, but did offer some emergency loans to get the destitute vets to leave town.

Several thousand men stayed in makeshift camps until they were evicted, with fire, tear gas and some bloodshed, by troops led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

Here are the first few paragraphs of the story:

## TROOPS DRIVE VETS FROM CAPITAL

## ONE DEAD, SCORES HURT AS BULLETS, BRICKBATS AND TEAR GAS ARE USED

### Bonus Army Retreats From Washington as Camps Set Fire by Soldiers; Hoover Calls Out Military After Civil Authorities Fail in Attempt to Evacuate Men From U.S. Property; B.E.F. to concentrate in Johnstown, Pa.

WASHINGTON, July 28 (U.S.)—The bonus army retreated tonight from the national capital.

The veterans capitulated. They abandoned their chief camp in Anacostia flats,

southeast, Washington, at 10:30 o'clock tonight when federal troops advanced to gas the men out of their huts and shacks and makeshift shelters as three other downtown camps had been gassed and then razed by fire



earlier in the day.

Taking the veterans' leaders words that the evacuation would be complete, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, army chief of staff, halted the major attack against the bonus expeditionary force.

With Secretary of War Hurley he went to the White House to report to President Hoover.

The President ordered use of the United States army to clear the veterans' camps from federally-owned property in Washington in the afternoon after police had been unable to oust the former soldiers.

One death — a veteran, shot through the heart by a policeman — resulted in clashes between the police and the bonus army on Pennsylvania avenue, three short blocks from the capitol.

Scores of others — police, soldiers, veterans, bystanders — were gassed before hostil-

ities ceased tonight. The veterans planned to concentrate in Johnstown, Pa. to which city they were invited by the mayor. They left Washington hurriedly as the federal troops prepared to gas them from their rude shelters and then apply the torch to everything inflammable.

### Skies Red As Soldiers Raze Camps

Unprecedented scenes attended the clearing by the troops of three other bonus camps in downtown Washington by that method of warfare. The sundown skies were red as the troops razed the other camps.

Never had Washington known such a day. The city was in a state of wild excitement.

President Hoover, complying with the request of the civil authorities, ordered the troops to rout the veterans after an all-day battle in which the veterans scored over the police.

The retreat from Washington was a colorful picture as the clouds of gas and the flaming huts had provided a more exceptional one earlier.

The Hell's Kitchen and Connecticut companies of the B.E.F. inspired the burning of the Anacostia camp. They applied the torch as they departed. They beat the federal army to it. All others followed suit.

The men were formed into companies. Their women and children had been sent ahead in trucks.

Those veterans unable to find transportation began the 174-mile pilgrimage to Johnstown on foot. They were in orderly formations.