

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

ADVANCES, YES, BUT EQUALITY STILL ELUSIVE FOR WOMEN

On this Mother's Day, I find myself thinking about two very different stories that may be related.

In the first story, U.N. Women recently reported that women are underrepresented at all levels of political decision-making worldwide. Achieving gender parity — in terms of equal participation and leadership by women — is far off, casting doubt that the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved by 2030.

The report cited these sobering statistics (if you share my belief that gender parity in government is important):

- At the current rate, gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for another 130 years.
- Only one-quarter of legislators in national bodies (like our Congress) are women, with gender equality thought to be 40 years off.
- In local government, women hold 34 percent of elected positions. Only two of 136 reporting countries have reached the 50 percent threshold.

The number of men and wom-

en in the world is roughly equal.

The second story began on an encouraging note. In the past 50 years, the share of women who earn as much or more than their husbands has tripled. But according to a new study from the Pew Research Center, some things haven't changed: Women still do most of the caregiving and housework, even in marriages where the wife is the primary earner.

Household duties are shared equally in just one type of marriage, the study said — when the wife is the sole breadwinner.

Jessica Grose, opinion writer at The New York Times and author of "Screaming on the Inside: The Unsustainability of American Motherhood," linked this "second shift" dynamic to a working paper issued by the National Bureau of Economic Research a decade ago. It said, "Our analysis suggests that gender identity considerations may lead a woman who seems threatening to her husband because she earns more than he does to engage in a larger share of home production activities,

particularly household chores."

According to Grose, the imbalance appears to be a global phenomenon. She learned why it feels so impossible to fix: A University of Kansas researcher told Grose that women are, in effect, doing the equivalent of an extra month of unpaid labor a year, based on time-use data.

Men get an extra month of leisure.

Still looking for the perfect Mother's Day gift?

As Grose suggested, there needs to be more conversations around the division of household labor. To ease the exhaustion women are feeling, men should begin entertaining the notion of working some of these second shifts. Women alone can't solve the problem.

If there's not a direct correlation between women's underrepresentation in political life and overrepresentation in caregiving and housework, there is certainly a thread that ties the two realities.

This time three years ago, I celebrated the leadership of women who were successfully

navigating their countries through the pandemic. Several of them have since resigned or left office, including Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's former prime minister, and Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland's former first minister.

To be fair, neither woman resigned because their household duties had become overwhelming.

Ardern said she quit because she "no longer had enough in the tank" to do the job. In the same vein, Sturgeon explained that "giving absolutely everything of yourself to this job is the only way to do it. But, in truth, that can only be done, by anyone, for so long."

She added, "I am not expecting violins here, but I am a human being as well as a politician. There is much greater intensity, dare I say brutality, to life as a politician."

It speaks to another, unfortunate reason why women are staying away from public life — a fear of abuse and a fear for their safety, and the safety of their families. The UK's Inter-Parliamentary Union found that 82 percent of

women politicians surveyed in 39 countries had experienced some form of psychological violence — mostly perpetrated on social media. Among them, some 44 percent said they had received threats of death, rape, beatings or abduction, including threats to kidnap or kill their children.

As the U.N. Women report noted, women demonstrate political leadership by working across party lines — even in the most politically combative environments. We need their voice and participation, in voting and running for office. Their views on social and economic issues like workplace equality, parental leave and child care, race relations, health care and education must be adequately represented in government.

These are issues that matter to all of us — on Mother's Day and every 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 NCR's programming, visit ncronline.com

MIGRATION • Blue whales are usually in the S.D. area from May to September

FROM B1 blue whales migrate, Alksne said there is still some mystery surrounding their movement once they arrive in the area. For example, it's unclear if the whales that feed in Southern California stay here all summer, or if they continue moving up to Oregon, Washington or even as far north as British Columbia.

Regardless, she points to the fact that the whales just finished giving birth in the winter and spring and are "emaciated."

"I think the best hypothesis is that they're following the food," she said. "If there's krill in Southern California one week, they'll be there... They need to eat."



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Blue whales don't breach out of the water, so sometimes whale watchers may only see part of the animal's back or its tail.

beginning of the study's time frame.

According to the study, the blue whales based their journeys north on the water temperatures from the previous year. In other words, they remembered the krill conditions from the year before and planned their migration based on their memory.

"I think we were surprised at how important previous conditions were in driving blue whale migration timing," Angela Szesciorka, a Ph.D. student at the time and lead author of the study, told Scripps Institution of Oceanography in 2020. "Other studies

have suggested that blue whales have a spatial memory for krill hot spots, but this tells us that their memory of the past year's conditions allowed them to predict good and bad krill years and to time their migration accordingly."

Are blue whales a threatened species?

Blue whales were hunted to near extinction for commercial whaling purposes in the early 20th century. Before whaling, there were about 350,000 blue whales on the planet; today there are an estimated 10,000 to 25,000. A global ban

on commercial whaling of all species went into effect in 1986, though countries like Iceland and Japan still participate in whaling.

Today, the blue whale is listed on the U.S. Endangered Species List and protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, but it still faces deadly challenges, like the risk of being struck by a ship or getting caught in fishing gear.

Scientists are also researching the effects of human-made noises, like from ships and seismic surveys, on whales, including blue whales. The animals use vocalization to navigate, communicate

with each other and find food, and exposure to outside noises can cause shifts in their routines.

How can you see blue whales safely?

There are several companies running whale watching tours out of San Diego. Make sure to do research on a company before booking a tour, since it's important to choose a company that respects the whales and their habitat.

"There's a trade-off with [tours] being invasive to the animals, but it also really makes people value these animals and value their protection," Alksne said.

If you don't want to take a tour, Alksne recommends grabbing a pair of binoculars and heading up to the cliffs above the ocean, like those at Cabrillo National Monument or at Torrey Pines State Reserve.

Alksne also advises to have realistic expectations of what you'll see; blue whales don't breach — when a whale seems to jump out of the water — and most often stay below the surface, so you may only see part of a whale's back or its dorsal fin. If you're on a tour, some whales will venture near the boat, but others may stay far away.

"If all you see is a blue whale that's a kilometer away, that's amazing," she said. "You saw the largest animal to ever live and should be grateful for that."

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When do blue whales migrate?

The blue whales stay near Southern California for approximately four months from May to September, though only a few arrive in May. This schedule isn't set in stone, though, and is dependent on krill levels.

At the end of the summer season, the whales are expected to return to the waters off Central America and Mexico to breed. Researchers are still learning about their migration patterns.

In 2020, UC San Diego researchers, after analyzing 10 years of data on krill density, environmental conditions and underwater acoustics, found that blue whales were arriving in Southern California one month earlier than they had at the

COUNT

FROM B1 shelter about to open in Chula Vista, Community Through Hope asks people if they would consider using a shelter in their city.

Another question asks what concerns they have about using a shelter and what services would be most helpful to them, with suggestions including case management, showers and food.

People also are asked to describe their experience with law enforcement, where they last had housing, when they became homeless and how long they had been homeless in Chula Vista.

On a recent Thursday afternoon in April, two teams from Community Through Hope drove through designated neighborhoods in Chula Vista, which had been divided into quadrants to be tackled on different days over a few weeks. Along with questionnaires, they packed meals, hygiene products and a \$20 gift card to give to anyone willing to talk.

Deion Williams, director of programs for the nonprofit, rode with Martinez to interview homeless people.

The search proved to be hit or miss. After driving several minutes, the two pulled over on Fourth Avenue near Faivre Street, where they knew they would find people living in a large undeveloped area.

Walking past scorched brush from a recent fire, they came upon a large encampment littered with broken office chairs, mattresses, shopping carts, crutches and tarps. They chat with a shirtless man wearing camouflage pants and holding a Bud Light.

Martinez said the man was in need of a DMV voucher, which would allow him to get a free state identification card.

"It's super important," she said. "An ID is the key to being able to access any type of service."

Down the street, they met Edward Applegate, 66, an Army veteran with a long



NELVIN C. CEPEDA U-T

Rosy Vasquez (left) and Katie Leon (right) of Community Through Hope talk with Anna Carr who is living near a freeway on-ramp.

gray beard under a blanket and seemingly surrounded by every possession he owned.

"Are you interested in case management?" Martinez asked. Applegate shrugged.

"I'm not quite sure what you do, so I don't know," he said.

"We're trying to help you get out of this situation, maybe a couple of different steps, help with some goals you have and having someone help you maybe not be out here," Martinez said. "Does that sound appealing?"

Applegate then told a rambling story of his wife and cousin in jail and owning a home that he expects to move back into soon after some paperwork is straightened out.

He also said he was interested in having a mailing address, a shower and transportation, but not interested in a shelter or medical attention.

When asked about his experience with law enforcement, Applegate said the police are great.

"If you ain't being a bother, they leave you alone," he said.

Back on the road, Martinez and Williams pulled over when they saw a man in the middle of a street, pushing a shopping cart overloaded with recyclables. Williams coaxed him over by offering a hygiene kit, then Martinez asked if he'd join

her on the sidewalk to answer a few questions.

They later attempted to track down a reported encampment near a residential neighborhood before breaking for lunch. That afternoon, Dr. Sean Posada joined Vasquez to provide street medicine to people living outdoors.

"The most common things we see out here are chronic wounds, and that's usually due to lack of access to clean water, dry shelter and bandages getting wet," he said. "Because they don't have the access to resources they need, these wounds can take a lot longer to heal and can get reinfected."

Posada said they also commonly see the effects of diabetes, such as a chronic non-healing foot wound or loss of sensation in feet.

"It's really difficult when you don't have access to healthy food and regular monitoring of blood sugar," he said, adding that many of his street patients also have PTSD.

Vasquez and community liaison Katie Leon from Community Through Hope assisted Posada as he tended to people with small wounds in an encampment, and then set out to find people in other locations.

Among the people they found was an older woman, sitting alone in a wheelchair on the driveway of an industrial yard off Bay Boulevard. She had traveled in her wheelchair more than a mile

after the city closed Harbor-side Park in December to clear out homeless encampments.

"I think her health is definitely declining," said Vasquez, who had seen the woman a couple of weeks earlier.

A few minutes later, they pulled over after noticing a tent near a freeway on-ramp. After introducing themselves, a young woman named Anna Carr emerged and said she and her boyfriend were living in the tent.

After speaking with her, Vasquez said the woman had said she was interested in shelter, but didn't want to be separated from her boyfriend.

Looking over the day's questionnaires, Vasquez said the seven people she interviewed said they didn't want shelter. Among their reasons, some said it would be stressful or unsafe, and some feared their dogs would not be allowed.

Leon said one person she talked to said yes to shelter, another said no and a third was undecided. Martinez said many people said yes, but some said they were afraid of being around so many people.

The questionnaire about law enforcement drew broad answers. Vasquez said some people responded that police were good and others said they were rude and disrespectful. Others said police added stress to their lives and took things from their encampments, but still others said they had nothing negative to say about law enforcement.

Vasquez said data from the completed National City count still is being compiled and, like data from the Chula Vista count, will be used by Community Through Hope to assess its programs to better serve the needs of homeless people in South Bay. She also said they would be willing to share their final reports with the Regional Task Force on Homelessness or other organizations interested in their findings.

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LA MESA

FROM B1 cluded.

Much of the area has been repeatedly hit by flooding, and project representatives said new construction and landscaping could make the land both prettier and safer.

While there would not be subsidized units that qualify as "affordable housing," the proposal included everything from studio apartments to two-bedroom spaces that would rent at local market rates, said David Witt, a project consultant. This would not be a "luxury" complex, he added.

The plan also called for new sidewalks and a bike path and could eventually include charging stations for electric vehicles, proponents said.

Seven members of the public spoke in opposition, repeatedly citing a lack of affordable housing as a concern.

A city consultant and a La Mesa staffer said the plans lacked key details and they faulted the developer for not doing more community outreach. While some changes had been made,

other asks were ignored, said Director of Community Development Kerry Kusiak.

"We've not had very much cooperation from the applicant, in terms of many of the things that we think were very reasonable requests," Kusiak told the council.

Project supporters responded that a complex like this was new to the city, meaning there weren't many precedents to follow. The debate also raised longstanding questions about how easy the city is to work with, as an outside review found La Mesa moved slower than its neighbors when issuing permits.

Every city in California is required to provide a certain amount of housing, known as the Regional Housing Needs Allocation, or RHNA. Kusiak said La Mesa could still meet its goal without Alvarado.

The plans were developed by architects at the Dahlin Group, which has offices around the country and in China.

The developer can re-apply at any time with updated plans, according to La Mesa's city attorney.

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TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Sunday, May 14, the 134th day of 2023. There are 231 days left in the year.

Today's highlight

On May 14, 1940, the Netherlands surrendered to invading German forces.

On this date

In 1796, English physician Edward Jenner inoculated 8-year-old James Phipps against smallpox by using cowpox matter.

In 1961, Freedom Riders were attacked by violent mobs in Anniston and Birmingham, Ala.

In 1998, Frank Sinatra died at a Los Angeles hospital at age

82. "Seinfeld" aired its final episode after nine years on NBC.

In 2003, more than 100 immigrants were abandoned in a locked trailer at a Texas truck stop; 19 of them died. (Truck driver Tyrone Williams was later sentenced to nearly 34 years in prison for his role in the deaths.)

Today's birthdays

George Lucas is 79. Actor Meg Foster is 75. Director Robert Zemeckis is 72. Singer David Byrne is 71. Actor Tim Roth is 62. Actor Cate Blanchett is 54. Writer-director Sofia Coppola is 52. Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg is 39. Actor Miranda Cosgrove is 30.

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