Work is not always a safe place to be

By Timothy Dimoff

Disgruntled employees, workplace bullies, active-shooter situations, illegal drug use, ex-spouses and dissatisfied clients – all can be found in a random sampling of the 2 million people affected by workplace violence in the United States, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Of course, of the millions of reported cases, there are many more that go unreported; workplace violence includes any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site.

From demeaning jokes to sexual innuendos to genuine fear of shots fired at work, hiring managers and their bosses need to understand these problems of human nature and know how to react. In my decades of experience with law enforcement and as a security entrepreneur, I've seen the evolution of workplace violence and management often do not know how to respond.

Here are some tips for conflict resolution and prevention:

• Inadequate use of hiring tools: Know who you're hiring. I can't emphasize this enough; this is the age of information, yet potential employees often provide falsified or misleading details. With so many candidates and so much information available today, employers often overlook useful tools in a hurry-up effort to maintain productivity with a premature hire. There are many resources, including drug testing acknowledgment and consent forms; fully understanding laws including the Fair Labor Standards Act, equal employment opportunity guidelines and military leave guidelines; and

simply knowing how to ask revealing questions to applicants.

• Workplace intimidation and cyberbullying: Bullying is not exclusive to the schoolyard; it can follow adults into the workplace, and even home via email, texts and social media. The first and best thing employers can do is prevention, and you do that by creating a positive and fair company culture. Next, implement a zero tolerance policy for bullying; encourage employees to document and report bullying, and take those accusations seriously. Hold occasional staff meetings so that employees are taught to recognize signs of bullying and everyone is reminded of the zero tolerance policy.

• Gun violence: It can happen at what appear to be the most secure places in the world, and it can happen to the most innocent among us. Nidal Hasan, the U.S. Army psychiatrist turned jihadi, shot 13 fellow soldiers to death at Fort Hood, Texas. Twenty first-graders at Sandy Hook Elementary School never had the chance to become second-graders. We hear story after story about shootings in movie theaters, parking lots and neighborhoods. Train managers to recognize and attempt to de-escalate the situation, which can include talking to the potential aggressor in an empathetic, non-judgmental way. Fail that, there are situations for which heroes are necessary.

• Violence against women: Homicide is the leading cause of death for women in the workplace, according to OSHA. Of the 4,547 fatal workplace injuries that occurred in the United States in 2010, 506 were workplace homicides. Once again, this comes down to a zero tolerance policy for bullying and sexual harassment, applicable to all workers, patients, clients, visitors, contractors, and anyone else who may come in contact with company personnel, such as an ex-spouse. A well-designed on-site security protocol can significantly reduce the risk of severe violence.

Timothy Dimoff is founder and president of SACS Consulting & Investigative Services Inc.

STPUD promoting Turf Buy Back Program

South Tahoe Public Utility District is having a workshop May 8 about its Turf Buy Back Program.

The rebate program offers homeowners the opportunity to remove their lawn and replace it with a Tahoe-friendly landscape.

The free workshop is at 6pm at 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

For more information, call 530.543.6268.

Vacation home sales rebound in 2013

By Jann Swanson, Mortgage News Daily

Vacation home purchases recovered strongly in 2013, helping to offset some of the inevitable flagging interest in investment purchases the National Association of Realtors said last week. NAR's 2014 Investment and Vacation Home Buyers Survey shows an increase in vacation-home sales during the year of 29.7 percent. There were 553,000 such sales in 2012, an estimated 717,000 in 2013.

At the same time investment purchases retreated from the elevated levels of 2011 and 2012, falling 8.5 percent to 1.10

million in 2013 from 1.21 million in 2012. There were 1.23 million such sales in 2011. NAR's investment sales figures do not include institutional sales. Sales of owner-occupied homes rose 13.1 percent to 3.70 million last year from 3.27 million in 2012.

NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun said the pullback in investment activity is understandable. "Investment buyers slowed their purchasing in 2013 because prices were rising quickly along with a declining availability of discounted foreclosures over the course of the year," he said.

Read the whole story

Alpine hosting Snow Golf Tournament

The 31st annual Snow Golf Tournament returns to Alpine Meadows on April 12.

Participants start at the top of Alpine Meadows' Summit Six chairlift and weave their way down a nine-hole golf course to the bottom of Alpine Bowl chair. Players are provided scorecards, pencils, clubs and tennis balls – in lieu of golf ball. All competitors are encouraged to dress up in their best "golf" attire, and must be wearing skis or a snowboard to navigate from hole to hole.

Participants can register for the event at the top of Summit chair beginning at 9am on the day of the event. Snow Golf is free with a lift ticket or season pass.

Following the tournament, all scorecards will be entered into

a raffle.

Time to be wary of ticks

El Dorado County health officials are reminding residents to take precautions to protect themselves and their pets from ticks and tick bites.

“If a tick attaches to the skin, it should be grabbed closest to the skin with tweezers or a tissue, and pulled straight out using a firm and steady motion. Wash your hands and the bite site with soap and warm water after the tick is removed, and apply antiseptic to the bite site. See a doctor if you develop a rash, flu-like symptoms or a fever. Tell your doctor if you have been bitten by a tick,” Alicia Paris-Pombo, El Dorado County health officer, said in a statement.

Ticks live in wooded areas, brushy fields, long grasses and leaf-litter areas, and are most active during the warmer months.

Tips to avoid tick bites include the following:

- Avoid walking through wooded or brushy areas with tall grass; walk in the center of trails whenever possible
- Wear long pants and long socks, and apply insect repellent containing DEET when walking through areas where ticks may be present
- Examine gear and pets after walking
- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors to wash off and more easily find ticks that may have crawled on you or your clothing
- Conduct a full-body tick check upon return from known tick infested areas, and check for up to three days

after possible exposure (some ticks may be very small and are hard to see)
- Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for an hour to kill remaining ticks
- Talk to your veterinarian about using tick preventives on your pets.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• South Lake Tahoe Senior Center is having a grand reopening April 7 at 4pm.

• Tahoe Donner cross country is open again.

• Truckee-based Alison Elder is Chase International's Realtor of the Year for 2013.

• Truckee Trails and Bikeways master plan community workshop is April 16 from 5-8pm at council chambers.

• Here is the El Dorado-Tahoe roadwork schedule for the week for Caltrans.

Then and now: Modernization of Highway 50



South Lake Tahoe in 1956. Photo/Stephen Gennerich collection

This mid-1950s view of Highway 50, left, is looking toward Stateline. No marked lanes, no stoplights, easy street parking, and all wires overhead on poles.

Small, but visible, in the exact center of the photo is the faint blue Lawrence's Department Store sign fronting the same building which today houses Chevy's restaurant. The large blue and white "Ski Heavenly Valley" sign/marquee fronting Del's Market at right is the corner site of today's Red Hut Cafe at Ski Run Boulevard.



Looking toward Stateline today. Photo/Bill Kingman

Today, seven miles of Highway 50 through South Lake Tahoe is marked five lanes wide, with no parking on the roadway. There are 18 traffic signals between Stateline and the Y.

Another sign of modern times is one of the Caltrans traffic cameras seen atop the pole which we can view on the Internet from anywhere in the world.

– Bill Kingman

Elegant Evening – a 25-year-old community party

By Kathryn Reed

Changing things up a bit, while keeping tradition and offering something that others don't. That is the winning combination for Elegant Evening.

The main fundraiser for Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra is now in its 25th year.

"Not only do we raise funds, but we want it to be a fun community party as well," Laurie Brazil, president of the Soroptimist group, said of the April 26 event. "One aspect that sets us apart is we have a very large art piece to the silent auction."



Elegant Evening is celebrating its 25th year. Photo/Provided

It is such a well-attended event that even now being at a larger location than when it first started Elegant Evening often sells out. And this is good for the community because every penny raised is spent here.

Most of the money goes toward programs for children in the form of scholarships, self-esteem workshops at South Tahoe Middle School, anti-bullying programs, and the summer reading program that provides K-8 students on the South Shore with a book at the end of the school year that they get to keep.

As much as $40,000 has been raised. It comes from ticket sales, silent auction and “elegant bags”. The latter are like mystery bags full of themed goodies ranging from gardening items to coffee to power tools.

The ticket price went up this year to $55 – an increase of $5. But it had not gone up in the last decade.

“We are the most affordable event for what we offer,” Brazil told *Lake Tahoe News*.

No buffet or finger food for these women – it’s a sit down dinner.

No disc jockey or band playing music that people can’t dance to – it’s the Soul Experience with Trey Stone. And the band

does its part to help out by giving Soroptimist a break on the bill.

This group also rallies to produce one of the largest and most diverse silent auctions.

Thran’s Flowers helps with decorations to add to the elegance.

In the early days Elegant Evening started off as a cruise night where people would dress up as if they were going to different locales around the globe.

It’s still a dressy affair, but then again it’s Tahoe, so you won’t be banned for wearing something more casual.

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Notes:

• This year’s event is April 26 from 5:30-10:30pm at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe.

• Tickets are $55 and may be purchased online.

• Donations for the silent auction will be taken until April 10.

Opinion: There are worse things than butter

By Mark Bittman, New York Times

Julia Child, goddess of fat, is beaming somewhere. Butter is back, and when you’re looking for a few chunks of pork for a stew, you can resume searching for the best pieces — the ones

with the most fat. Eventually, your friends will stop glaring at you as if you're trying to kill them.

That the worm is turning became increasingly evident a couple of weeks ago, when a meta-analysis published in the journal Annals of Internal Medicine found that there's just no evidence to support the notion that saturated fat increases the risk of heart disease. (In fact, there's some evidence that a lack of saturated fat may be damaging.) The researchers looked at 72 different studies and, as usual, said more work – including more clinical studies – is needed. For sure. But the days of skinless chicken breasts and tubs of I Can't Believe It's Not Butter! may finally be drawing to a close.

The tip of this iceberg has been visible for years, and we're finally beginning to see the base. Of course, no study is perfect and few are definitive. But the real villains in our diet – sugar and ultra-processed foods – are becoming increasingly apparent. You can go back to eating butter, if you haven't already.

Read the whole story

Missing South Tahoe woman found safe

Camilyn Kay Price-Miller of South Lake Tahoe has been found alive and safe.

She had been reported missing on April 4 by South Lake Tahoe police officers. She contacted police April 5 when she learned people were looking for her.

It is not known where she had been.

Her husband, Jeffrey Miller, remains in custody on an attempted murder warrant out of Nevada County. He allegedly tried to beat his wife to death in November.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report