



Being a “Target” at Work: Or William Tell and how the Apple Felt

Patricia A. Rowell, PhD, RN

Have you ever wondered if there is an invisible sign on you that says, “Walk over me!”? Some people feel that way because they are targets of bullies. We read and hear a lot about children bullying one another on the playgrounds, in school, and at home. One might mistakenly think that bullying is just for children. Wrong! In the United States, bullying in the workplace is not as widely acknowledged as it seems to be in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia and Canada. These countries have laws and major campaigns to stop such behaviors in the workplace. The United States does not seem to have yet recognized the problem for its probable scope.

Bullying is psychological or physical abuse. “Workplace bullying” is variously defined as “persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behavior; abuse of power; or unfair penal sanctions” (McAvoy & Murtagh, 2003, 776); or as “persistent harassment, both physical and – primarily – psychological in its nature, which demeans, devalues and humiliates individuals” (Management Today, 1999, 14). Another term used is “adult bullying”. Adult bullying is defined as “a form of violent anti-social behaviour that hides behind societal norms and institutional rules.” (International Allies, 1) As one may guess from the definitions, some of the behaviors can be very subtle while others overt. Work-

place bullying is not confined to any one workplace. McAvoy & Murtagh’s article notes the growing evidence of bullying among health care workers in the United Kingdom. Health care workers? Those who care for others? Yes. Bullying can occur in any workplace, whether “blue collar” or “white collar” or “collarless”. It is perpetrated by women in any workplace, whether “blue collar” or “white collar” or “collarless”. It is perpetrated by women on women, men on men, women on men, and men on women.

Bullying is often found in what might be described as “toxic workplaces”. These toxic environments are often a result of downsizing; aggressive, tough “macho” management styles; economic rationalism; and increasing competition, both internally and externally.

(To view the complete article please visit the ASU web page at www.wbng.org/asu)

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Where Are You?

Terry Bowditch

These observations are presented to you as a family unit for your consideration. I want you to try these names on for size, to see if any of them fit you or if you can relate to any of them – Lech Walesa, John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Hoffa, Pope John, Martin Luther King, Jr., General George S. Patton and Jesus Christ. You might ask, “What do these people have in common with you. The answer is that they have all fought for the rights of others. They were all people who have been in a position to look out for the masses, the whole, as opposed to looking out only for themselves.

We the ASU-WBNG collective bargaining unit members are cast in the same role. Initially, I referred to us as a family, because as members of the same unit we are all family. And as family, we have a responsibility to the group and to each other, to do our part to make the group strong, whole, and positively functional. The point that I am attempting to share from my observation is that we are as important as Lech Walesa, the leader of the Polish revolution. He recognized his responsibility to the revolution and his role of involvement as being a part of the group. John F. Kennedy, president of the United States, as president he recognized his responsi-

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bility to the office and to the country, being a citizen like you and me. John F. Kennedy is also famous for several other reasons; one being the statement he made, "Ask Not What Your Country Can Do for You, but Ask What You Can Do for Your Country." I say that he has offered a greater insight into what I am now asking you to consider, "Ask Not What Your Collective Bargaining Unit Can Do for You, But What You Can Do for Your Collective Bargaining Unit."

All the others people listed here have expressed similar themes during their lifetimes and certainly, none is more important than, "Am I My Brother's Keeper." As members of the same family, unit, workplace and Union we have to be ONE. These are my observations for consideration.

Thanking you in advance.

Terry Bowditch is a Copy Center Coordinator for Operations and Support, who also serves a steward advocate for the WBNG-ASU Bargaining Unit.

WBNG-ASU GROWING PAINS

Our unit may be declining in numbers but in the motherhood business we keep on growing:

Congratulations to Cheryl Peterson on the birth of her son Matthew Peterson born February 23, 2005

And the next continues to grow, we have 6 soon to be new moms in the waiting.

Congratulations to all!!

Evaluation of Existing or New Jobs Policy

Is it time to review your job description and job functions? Could you be do work out of class?

The ANA/ASU compensation committee uses 7 criteria points when evaluating jobs submitted for releveling.

They are:
Complexity
Decision Making
Communications
Experience

Education
Contact with Others
Working Conditions

2004 - A Year In Review

Yvonne Daley Humes, Editor

ANA's Grand Opening of New State-of-the-Arts Facility in Downtown Silver Spring

On September 15, 2004, the American Nurses Association (ANA) opened its doors to its new state-of-the-arts facility in downtown Silver Spring. Its new headquarters is located at 8515 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910 on the corner of Georgia and Wayne Avenues, one block from the Silver Spring Metro Station.

On October 8, ANA invited several restaurants to participate in a "Taste of Silver Spring," an open house celebration for ANA staff and their families. This was an exciting time for ANA to sample cuisines from the surrounding restaurants who wanted to introduce ANA to their specialty selections and welcome ANA to the neighborhood. On November 5, ANA held its Grand Opening ribbon-cutting ceremony and reception. ANA's 54 member constituencies were represented. ANA's related entities, associat

zational affiliates were in attendance. Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan, representatives from the Maryland Transit Authority, and ANA stakeholders also attended the event. Linda Stierle, MSN, RN, CNA, BC, chief executive officer, and Barbara Blakeney, MS, RN, president were the keynote speakers at the ceremony.

The renaissance of Silver Spring is a long awaited dream come true. The changes in downtown Silver Spring are simply breathtaking and ANA is excited about being involved in the revitalization process. Several new buildings have been erected in the area with one of the largest being the Discovery Communications building directly across the street from the ANA. The area also boasts several new eateries which serve local and/or ethnic cuisines. It is a culturally rich environment with many specialty stores such as Borders Bookstore, Pier 1 Imports, hotels and several theatres, including the newly erected 20 screen, stadium seating, digital sound Majestic Theatre.

This is a wonderful time for the ASU-WBNG as it faces many challenges and also for ANA as it continues in its pursuit of a premier workplace for its employees and constituencies.

Yvonne D. Humes is a Sr. Administrative Assistant in the department of Nursing Practice & Policy, who also serves Secretary for the Executive Committee of WBNG-ASU.

This future column is reserved for the steward's who advocate the rights of the bargaining unit members, to ensure that the language set forth in the mutually agreed contract is adhered to. Each issue, they will provide the unit with helpful tools to guide you through each article of the contract.

Know Your Rights...

What to Do When the Boss Calls You In

Supervisors and managers have every right to communicate with their employees, but when it comes to questioning which could result in discipline, the employee has rights as well.

Under the 1975 U.S. Supreme Court ruling NLRB vs. Weingarten, an employee who has a reasonable belief that a supervisor's question could result in discipline has the right to request union representation. This right applies only in investigatory interviews, not in regular or routine discussions about work performance or job assignments. Nor does it apply if you are called in to be handed notice that discipline has been imposed. That's not an investigation, that's a done deal!

If you are in a meeting with a supervisor during which you are being asked for information, or pressed to discuss an event or incident which you believe could result in discipline, you must make a clear request for union representation. You cannot be retaliated against or punished for making this request.

After you have made the request, the supervisor must either

- Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and has a chance to consult

- Give the employee the choice of (1) having the interview without representation or (2) ending the interview.

If the employer denies the request for union representation and continues to ask questions, it commits an unfair labor practice, a violation of federal law. Immediately inform a steward after such a meeting.

The supervisor cannot choose your steward for you. The steward, upon arrival, must be informed of the subject matter of the interview (for example, the type of misconduct being investigated). The steward is allowed to speak during the interview, and can request clarification of a question and advise the employee on how to answer. The steward can provide additional information to the supervisor after the questioning ends.

The presence of a steward in an investigatory interview provides representation to the employee, a witness to the discussion, and a protection against intimidating actions to which some supervisors may be prone.

For more information on your Weingarten Rights, please visit the WBNG website at <http://www.wbng.org/education/weingarten.htm>.

From The Grievance Files

This column will provide the bargaining unit members of past, present and future grievance filings.

Grievance Report 2003 - Current

Issue: 2- issues of Back Pay/Relevelling

Resolution: 1-Denied – employee resigned; 1-Grievant resigned in mist of grievance, a settlement offer has been reached

Issue: UAN Staff – UAN break off from ANA

Resolution: Settlement packet negoti-

Issue: Tuition Reimbursement
Resolution: Resolved-employee received 80% of reimbursement

Issue: Back Pay/Work Out of Grade
Resolution: Dismissed – employee resigned

Issue: ADA Accommodation
Resolution: Settled – accommodation granted - with continuance of notice

Issue: Relevelling
Resolution: Dismissed – need to review for possible back pay issue

Issue: Discrimination/Hostile work environment
Resolution: Informal meeting; no follow-up since original informal; status to date – employee still feels some form of harassment by immediate supervisor – steward's working to resolve issues

Issue: Back pay/Work out of grade
Resolution: Employee received monetary compensation for work out of grade

Issue: Job description
Resolution: Informal meeting w/dept. director; no grievance filed

Issue: Temporary shift of work assignment w/pay increase
Resolution: No action taken; Management dropped the issue – due to conflict with seniority amongst staff

Issue: Discipline without just cause
Resolution: Manager did not have proper documentation to support discipline; employee resigned

Issue: Dismissal without cause (4cases)
Resolution: 3 employees who were wrongfully dismissed received monetary compensation; 1 currently in grievance process

Issue: HR refusal to move revised job description forward to compensation committee for proper evaluation
Resolution: Grievance pulled as staff felt it necessary to continue the work as it would reflect negatively on the work accomplished

Issue: Group Job Description
Resolution: open grievance

Issue: Denial of compressed work week
Resolution: None- grievance taken through all process of the grievance procedure; request for authority to

Remembrance:

Since the office relocation, we have had to say farewell to longtime friends and associates. Even though they moved on to follow their lifetime dreams, they leave us with well wishes and a few words of wisdom.

Farewell to my Colleagues and Friends

After more than 11 years at ANA, it is with mixed feelings that I made the decision to retire at the end of December 2004. The mixed feelings are related to:

- my retirement in looking forward to the next phase of my life and career and being able to spend more time with my husband, children, grandchildren and friends.
- The realization that I will not be seeing many of you with whom I have worked with over the years and whose company I truly enjoyed and will miss.

During my time here at ANA, it has been an interesting, challenging and rewarding experience to participate in assisting in the birth of the Association Staff Union at ANA in 1994, in its evolution into becoming part of WBNG Local 35.AUS in 2000 thru to today. Each of us as individual members is important in helping to keep the union strong. Your involvement as an active member-attending the general membership meetings, assuming the role of an officer, steward, member of a joint labor – management committee or union committee – are the “vitamins” which are essential in maintaining the strength and vitality of the union.

To paraphrase from “One Strong Voice” (ANA, 1976), The ASU/WBNG has enabled the staff to speak in **one strong voice** to chart a definite course for thoughtful debate, careful analysis of all questions, consideration of the consequences- the long range consequences- of decisions that effect the staff’s personal and professional lives at the ANA and ultimately the work of ANA as it continues to be the one strong voice for the standards of practice, code of ethics and the core issues affecting nursing education, nursing practice, nursing service, economic and general welfare and environmental occupational health and safety of nurses. (Peplau, p.592; Gabrielson, 608)

The challenge to each of you is: determining how you can balance your “Work Life” and “Personal Life” to enable you to become actively involved in your “Union life”. It can be done! Best Wishes and thank you to each one of you. It has been a privilege working for and with you.

Dr. RoAnne Dahlen-Hartfield

I am writing to let you all know that today, April 1, is my last day here at ANA. I am moving on after 2+ years. While seemingly a short time, I am very proud of the work that I’ve contributed to the organization, its members, and the nursing profession at large. This is only to say that I could not have had any success here without the collaboration and support that all of you offered me during my tenure. I feel truly privileged to have worked with all of you who are clearly committed to the work and issues. But, more I am honored to have known you all and having friends here, not just co-workers.

I wish to thank you all for everything. I hope the best to each of you in all future endeavors.

Sincerely -- Butch de Castro

Farewell wishes are also extended to Chris Donnellan, Heidi Ecker, Shirley Porter, and Cheryl Owens, and Susan Wilburn. We wish you all well in your new endeavors.

From The Grievance Files

(Cont’d. from pg. 3)

Issue: Written discipline (2)

Resolution: Both written disciplines removed from files in 2004

Issue: Performance Issues

Resolution: Grievance filed - to date issue has been resolved with grievance receiving proper FMLA leave and work assignments provided

Issue: Attendance

Resolution: Grievance filed after written disciplines received - matter still in negotiations

Issue: Workplace Health & Safety (3 cases)

Resolution: 2 cases were submitted for workmen’s compensation and the 3rd case is still pending grievance with no outcome due to lack of support of bargaining unit only 26 names signed to petition - grievance will be dropped

Forum...

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