

A Late Night Surprise!

Dennis, the city manager of a financially strapped municipality, is working uncharacteristically late at night. The offices are empty and quiet and as he is leaving, He notices a sliver of light coming from the door of the new budget director, Susan. He decides to stop in and praise her for her excellent report in which she discovered errors that will save the city millions of dollars, projecting for the first time in many years a budget surplus. As he approaches her office he can see through the few inches the door is open that she is in a passionate embrace with Gary, the assistant city manager. Employment policy strictly forbids dating between employees, threatening dismissal to those who do.

Dennis' code of ethics requires him to enforce this policy, yet at the same time he does not want to lose either or both of his valuable employees. It would be difficult if not impossible to bring in someone else with their experience and credentials for the amount of money the city is able to pay.

What should Dennis do? Should he report Susan and Steve, in accordance with policy? Should he overlook the situation believing the city will be best served in the long run? Should he speak to each of them and threaten to tell if they don't end the relationship?

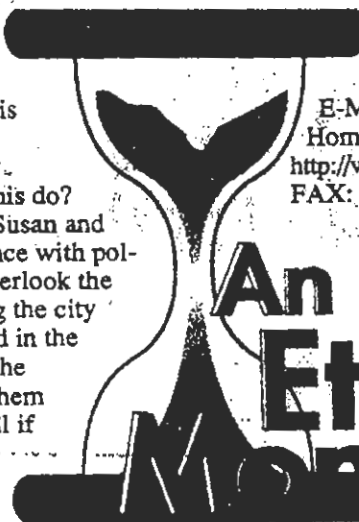
—based on a real case. Submitted by Carole L. Jurkiewicz, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, cjrkwez@unccvm.uncc.edu

February's Ethics Moment reported a case in which a mayor called downtown business owners 'idiots or nitwits' for allowing their employees to take up customer parking. The mayor's remarks so embarrassed other members of the city commission that they passed a new ordinance that would prevent or discourage such verbal tirades. The city's new ordinance does not allow the mayor or any other city official refer to anyone as an idiot or nitwit.

With this month's issue, the Ethics Moment column enters its second year. All readers of the PA Times are invited to send material for publication consideration.

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An
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Going Along to Get Along?

Helen, the new director of the city's bureau of restaurant inspection services, decides to conduct a few site visits as a

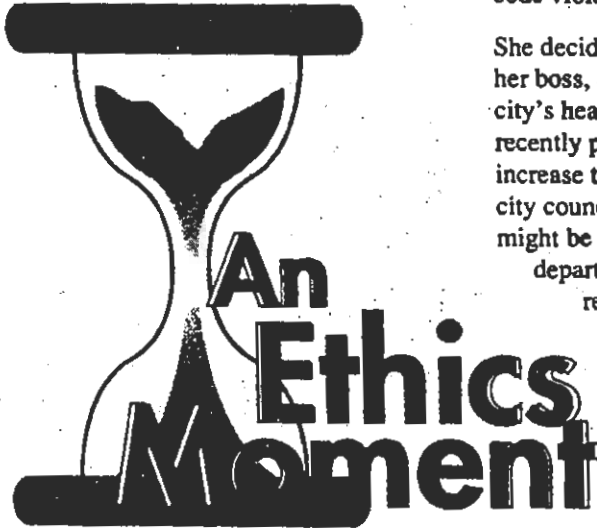
way of learning firsthand about her job. To her surprise, she finds that many of her inspectors are ignoring serious health code violations.

She decides to discuss her findings with her boss, Sally, who is the head of the city's health department. Sally, who has recently proposed a substantial budget increase to a receptive city manager and city council, suggests to Helen that there might be some negative fall out to the department if the problems in the restaurant bureau become public—as they might if an inspector under investigation decides to argue publicly that department brass knew about the situation. Sally urges Helen to handle the situ-

ation with appropriate discretion and regard for the interests of the organizational team.

Should Helen go along to get along with Sally? Should Helen be a good team player and postpone corrective action so as not to upset the financial applecart? Or should Helen launch an investigation and take appropriate disciplinary and site corrective actions to protect the public interest? Has Sally put Helen in an unfair, perhaps compromising position? For instance, if the problem becomes public and Helen postpones corrective action, has Sally set Helen up for a fall?

—submitted by Hank Abrams
(abrams@bostonems.org)



Moral Management: Fact or Fantasy?

Imagine that you are the top elected official of a county constitutional office such as Sheriff or Clerk or Property Appraiser. As part of your campaign to get elected, you promise that you will demand that employees of the organization behave properly and not behave in a manner that jeopardizes the credibility and integrity of the office. A week after you take office you learn that several married employees are engaging in intimate behavior which offends your sense of morality and is causing disruption in the agency.

What do you do? Do you turn your head and hope the situation disappears? Do you call the employees to your office and teach them a lesson in moral behavior? Do you consider revising the agency's written standard of conduct to prohibit married employees from dating or entering into intimate relationships with other employees, single or married?

After much discussion with your top staff, you decide to issue an order prohibiting married personnel from engaging in adulterous affairs. The order reads as follows:

"Agency personnel, whether married or single, shall not develop an association with another member whom they know or should have known is married to another person. Married members also shall not develop an association with agency members who are single. Excluded from this are members who are separated and residing apart from their spouse, or those

who have legally filed for divorce. For the purpose of this policy, "association" means, residing with, dating, or entering into any intimate relationship with."

Is moral management fact or fantasy?
You decide.

Source: Policy statement is actual wording contained in the Pinellas County (Florida) Sheriff's Office, General Order 3-1, section 3.4.

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