

Opinion: KY Jelly a management tool in EDC

By Larry Weitzman

In late January 2013 an email was sent to many county employees by Kim Kerr who listed her title as ACA0 (assistant chief administrative officer) and interim Department of Transportation director.

The body of the email had three points, one about recruitment, a series of bullet points about training opportunities, but it was point No. 2 that was a bit mind blowing and inappropriate. It was a copy of an article that Kerr chose to attach to her email which was titled and contained "Three indispensable tools for local government managers." She went on to tell the reader how this article will allow you to decide how to prioritize the interruptions and better control your day. At a minimum it will limit discussion. As you will read later, it sure will, especially as one of the tools is a tube of KY Jelly, a lubricant that's sole purpose is to ease the pain caused by the insertion of objects into certain body cavities.



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The article was written by a retired Air Force Maj. Gabe Gabrielsen, who after retirement worked as a county administrator and is now a guest speaker at conferences and consultant. It appears on his website from which it was copied. Gabrielsen describes the three indispensable tools as

an egg timer to limit subordinates from taking too much of your time, two bicycle handle bar grips to grab so the subordinates can get a grip when they are excited or flustered, and finally a tube of KY Jelly to ease the pain when things don't go your way or Gabrielsen couldn't help the subordinate. In a phone call with Gabrielsen, he said that sending this article to your employees or subordinates unsolicited might be a bit inappropriate, at least without explanation.

If you are not familiar with KY Jelly, it is a sterile lubricant that is used medically to allow or ease the insertion of devices into certain human body parts. It is commonly advertised on television to be used in a sexual manner. Kerr also thinks it is an indispensable county government management tool. As said in the 1942 movie "Casablanca" by the character Capt. Louis Renault (played by Claude Rains) "I'm shocked, shocked ..."

Many people could and would interpret the tube of KY Jelly some other way, a way that is entirely inappropriate in a working environment. Showing someone a tube of KY Jelly would be an insult or an off color put down to many people. Such as if you don't like the way things are, here is a tube of KY Jelly. I will refrain from giving you my interpretation as it's definitely not even close to appropriate. To others it could be thought of as sexual harassment. You get the idea.

Reading this article on the Internet at your own choice is not the problem, but sending it to your employees as three indispensable tools to manage your time is another issue and then sending it to your employees that you as the boss are going to use the three indispensable "tools" as described in the article against your employees makes it even worse. That becomes almost unbelievable. What makes Kim Kerr so special to conduct county business in such a condescending, crude, off color and insulting manner?

When someone complained about this email with the attached article as being offensive, highly inappropriate and sexually harassing it eventually cost him his career and reputation with the county via the Terri Daly kangaroo court. It may eventually cost the county millions if and when litigation is commenced.

What did CAO Terri Daly appointee, Karl Knobelauch, the director of Human Resources find with respect to the article? He found after an alleged "thorough investigation and analysis," Daly appointee and subordinate Knobelauch (also from Amador County) concluded that the sending of the article to employees and telling them to read it did not rise to a violation of the county's policy prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in the workplace. But Daly and Kerr continued with their planned elimination of the complaining party who was eventually forced to leave. But it's not over as we shall see soon.

Kerr's modus operandi didn't start here or in Ione. According to one of my interviewees, while Kerr was employed by Humboldt County she was suspended for 30 days for harassment. The spots on a leopard do not change. Without a release from Kerr, Humboldt County will not release the records. It is just like John Kerry who promised 10 years ago to sign and file a Form 180 to release his naval records. He has yet to do it.

This incident is just another indication that if there is a culture of fear, harassment and retaliation in the county, it lies with the ACA0 whose CDA department has the lowest satisfaction rating in the county at 22 percent. Using the Van Dermyden interpretation of that number means that 78 percent of the CDA employees are unhappy and probably live in fear, just as the employees of the city of Ione did for four continuous years when Kerr was the city manager. It turned out that hell at one time was located only 30 miles south of Placerville only to find it rising.

Carlson correction

In one of my recent columns I was misled by Daly more than I realized. In my first conversation with Daly, she implied that Bernard Carlson's investigation of Kerr occurred before Kerr was hired and that Daly asked Carlson to do it. I have now learned that Carlson's investigation of Kerr was done on his own as a result of the Amador Grand Jury findings. He mainly interviewed business people and found many interviewed thought that thought Kerr did an OK job and was perhaps unfairly targeted by the grand jury. Of course it is unknown if those interviewed had the detailed information that I uncovered such as the CPA audits, failed bank reconciliations, misdirected deposits and the depletion of the Local Agency Investment Fund. It may be that Daly tried to use Carlson for more cover and intentionally mislead me.

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