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You Gotta Go to School for That?-The Perfect Office Mate

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(among other works) *The Pallbearer*, says of literary great **John Updike**: "...his forty books record his forty productive years with a fidelity unmatched by any competitor, or by any of the other media that have become a writer's scariest competition. It's an amazing achievement." Likewise, contributor **David Eggers**, uncomplicatedly states of the "science fiction aficionado, WWII vet, lover of women, pitier of the poor, cranky luddite, fun-loving doomsayer, sometime postmodernist" **Kurt Vonnegut**: "Vonnegut is good." (In his own unique character, Eggers adds, "Also: He has a mustache." Thanks, Dave.)

There is one tiny thing I would alter in *The salon.com Reader's Guide*: guidewords. Though the text is arranged alphabetically by featured author, guidewords would make this quick refer-

ence even quicker. But don't let *my* opinionated and irreverent statement keep you from acquiring this gem; hurry and add it to your collection. This book is a *must* if you ever act as a reader's advisor. And it even pays homage to Gale's *Contemporary Authors* series—what more could you ask for?

I am hoping that Miller and her cohorts will publish a supplement to this Y2K edition of *The salon.com Reader's Guide*. I would be thrilled to ingest critical commentary on such authors as the afore-mentioned **Dave Eggers**; the College of Charleston's own **Bret Lott**; Oprah's Book Club members **Jane Hamilton** and **Alice Hoffman**; southern stylists **Clyde Edgerton**, **Anne Rivers Siddons**, and **Kaye Gibbons**; **Rob Thomas** of the young adult genre; **Helen Fielding** of *Bridget Jones* fame; Pulitzer Prize winner **Frank McCourt**; the internationally acclaimed **Gabriel García Márquez**... come to think of it, a second edition couldn't come quickly enough!

You Gotta Go to School for That? — The Perfect Office Mate

by **Jared Alexander Seay** (The librarian formerly known as "Jerry")

I have lost a perfectly good office mate. Whatever shall become of me? I am now left with only the thoughts of my past good fortune and how it came to be. For three years I shared an office with **Betsy Jean Williams**. Now, of course, Jean is not her real middle name. But, upon making her acquaintance I determined that "Jean" somehow fitted her quite well. I thus dubbed her the librarian known as **Betsy "Jean."** Understanding my overall quirkiness and my resulting tendency to rename everyone I know, **Betsy**, characteristically took it in good humor and continued on with her delightful ways.

Over the years I came to see Betsy as the quintessential person with which to share an office. She was kind, witty, understanding, sharing, and a darn good librarian. Besides being a top-notch librarian and overall pleasant human being, **Betsy Jean** showed her office mate perfectioness in the ways that few office mates did. Her office mate capabilities were so well delivered that I was moved to create the Rules of a Perfect Office Mate based directly on characteristics that **Betsy Jean** exhibited so remarkably well.

Here then are the **RULES OF BEING A PERFECT OFFICE MATE** as based on the remarkable office mate characteristics of **Betsy Jean Williams**. I trust you

will investigate these characteristics well when shopping for an office mate.

Rule #1: Betsy did not talk too much: Though conversation can be golden, a chatty office mate usually disgorge information that is both on a need to know basis (and I really don't need to know it) as well as interruptive of personal thinking patterns. The good office mate is highly selective of when she should and should not audibly divulge her thoughts.

Rule #2: Betsy never commented disparagingly on my decorating style (or lack thereof): The good office mate, while quick to recognize good office decorating taste when she sees it, is nevertheless slow to comment on the lack of such good taste in her fellow office mates. It matters not how many conference speaker nametags, bizarre cartoons, outdated "to do" lists or sticky pad notes that a mate sticks to the walls. The tactful office mate smiles and makes no comment.

Rule #3: Betsy shared with me interesting web sites and e-mail of questionable virtue. She was also appreciative when I did the same with her. The perfect office mate understands that the office mate relationship is one that demands shared joy. Thus, it is important to forward all truly humorous email (but only the very funny

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LEGAL ISSUES

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Cases of Note —

A&M Records et al. v. Napster & UMG Recordings v. MP3.com

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel) <strauchk@earthlink.net>

Copyright - The Big Napster Broo-Ha-Ha and the MP3.com Debacle

A&M Records, Geffen Records, Interscope Records, Sony Music Entertainment, MCA Records, Atlantic Recording Corp, Island Records, Motown Record Co, Capitol Records v. Napster

United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

2001 U.S. App. LEXIS 1941; 57 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) 1729; Copy. L. rep. (CCH) P28,200

Filed, Feb. 12, 2001

\$BIG BUCKS\$ This brought out the heavyweights. Three pages of counsel including David Boies; Paul, Weiss, Rifkind; ACLU, every kind of Net and Info Tech and Digital Future coalition; artists and broadcasters' guilds; Baseball Songwriters Guild; the National Basketball Association (!); Association of American Physicians & Surgeons (!) and

nearly a page of law school professors showing in to claim real world experience.

This was on appeal from a district court's preliminary injunction ordering Napster to stop "engaging in, or facilitating others in copying, downloading, uploading, transmitting, or distributing plaintiffs' copyrighted musical compositions and sound recordings ... without express permission of the rights owner." *A&M Records, Inc. v. Napster, Inc.*, 114 F.Supp. 2d 896, 927 (N.D. Cal. 2000).

History & Transmission Mechanics

In 1987, MP3 (properly Moving Picture Experts Group MPEG-3) became a standard file format for "ripping" or copying an audio compact disk directly onto a computer's hard drive. Napster got into "peer-to-peer" file sharing by allowing its users to search each other's hard drives and

copy the contents. Napster's MusicShare software, technical support and a chat room were provided free of charge.

I can't resist giving you the legal cite on this.

"To download means to receive information, typically a file, from another computer to yours via your modem ... The opposite term is upload, which means to send a file to another computer." *United States v. Mohrbacher*, 182 F.3d 1041, 1048 (9th Cir. 1999) (quoting Robin Williams, *Jargon, An Informal Dictionary of Computer Terms* 170-71 (1993)).

A user logs onto the Napster server using a user name and password, and formats available files, the actual contents of which remain on the user's computer. Napster runs a "search index" of the collective directory. A user searches under either the name of an artist or the name of a song. *Napster*, 114 F.Supp. 2d at 906.

A downloaded file can either be played on the user's hard drive or copied onto an audio CD, in each case with diminished sound quality.

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ones) to office mates. Also, office mates should be apprised of any interesting web sites so they will not waste their time surfing inappropriately.

Rule #4: Betsy always gave encouragement and was sympathetic: The perfect office mate also understands that, along with joy, misery too enters the office relationship. Thus, complaints about parking tickets, bureaucracy (and bureaucrats), as well as the oppressive workload in general should be aired frequently between office mates to develop the feeling of shared misery. Care should be taken, however, to insure that violations of Rule # 1 do not occur.

Rule #5: Betsy answered any questions I put to her with the relish of a possessed reference librarian (like spelling things), and she always had a copy of the reference desk schedule — especially when I had lost mine: The perfect office mates

complement each other. Thus, one of the mates should be a good speller. At least one of them should be organized to a large degree. And at least one of them should know a minimum of three good restaurants in town.

Rule #6: Betsy smiled and laughed a lot: The perfect office mate exhibits kindness, a keen sense of humor, and the ability to laugh - even at themselves. This trait does not just gain points at cocktail parties, but is especially helpful when trying to juggle 12 projects at once, work the reference desk, and placate the PTB (powers that be).

Rule #7: Betsy referred to the students as "those poor wretches" whom she insisted on assisting far beyond the normal call of duty: The perfect office mate should possess at least one obvious enduring characteristic. Being known for a particular saying or action is good. Being known for several sayings or actions is better. Beware, however, that being known for a plethora of characteristics borders on

diminishing returns. Too many endearing characteristics may cause a person to be known as just odd.

Rule #8: Betsy knew a heck of a lot about business resources and government stuff: The perfect office mate is an expert in at least one area. Being known as the expert in a particular area gives one an aura of power and allows fellow office mates to bask in that aura vicariously without having to put forth a lot of effort.

Alas, **Betsy Jean** answered the call of the Appalachians. After three years of bliss as my office mate, she bought a quaint little house in the mountains 15 minutes from **Appalachian State University**. It wasn't long after that she accepted a position with **ASU** and moved into her dream home.

I cannot even say that she will make someone else a perfect office mate for, alas, she is getting an office of her own. Of course, that is the only thing better than having the perfect office mate — not having an office mate at all.