



CAROLYN HAX

What to do with flirty co-workers

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Dear Carolyn:
What's the best way to handle a flirtatious co-worker when there's no easy answer? It's a complicated work situation, and rumor is the colleague started seeing someone "casually" not too long ago. This person shares a lot with me, but not this, and we deal with each other a lot.

Cube farm

There's no easy answer because I'm not sure what the question is. If you're interested in this person, and you're asking whether the co-worker means anything by the flirtation, then I would say the dating of someone else answers your question.

In general, I would say to be very careful, and summon the willpower to remain strictly professional. In three sentences, you have flirting, secrets, rumors, "it's complicated" and work. That's a loaded situation even if your behavior is unimpeachable.

Hi, Carolyn:
In the past you've said work is an acceptable place to meet dates (as long as they're not in your chain of command), and also that it's still okay to express interest in someone when they're casually dating someone else. Have you changed your mind?

Another cube farm

Nope. Workplaces are where adults spend the bulk of their waking hours, and as long as there's no crossing of personal with professional, workplaces are fair game. "Cube farm" works closely with the person, who is also flirty, and dating someone else; combined, that says, "Don't get involved."

And as far as poaching, people don't possess each other. If the mere mention of your interest in someone would lead that person to end a relationship with someone else, then that relationship wasn't going far.

That said, I don't abide hovering opportunists. These are the people who want someone, insinuate themselves into that person's life as a "friend," and then proceed to wedge themselves in between that person and his or her mate, casual or otherwise. That's insidious — which is why my advice has been that expressing your interest is okay, when there's no formal bond between your coveted and someone else. That way you're not deceiving anyone about your intentions, and you're not home-wrecking.

Whenever I'm not sure where the line is, I imagine a movie character in the situation. Is it possible to find the person sympathetic? What would the circumstances have to be?

Dear Carolyn:
My new husband comes from a big family whom we see often. However, there's one sister of his I know exists (the others refer to her often) but have never met. I know she lives in-state. My husband clearly doesn't want to talk about her, but I feel that, after knowing me for years and being married for months, he should feel comfortable confiding in me about whatever makes her the family outcast. My curiosity is getting the best of me. Would it be wrong to ask another member of my husband's family?

Maryland

Ask him. How about, "I feel very uncomfortable being married to you and not knowing the story of your sister. Clearly it is a painful subject for you, but my not knowing the truth doesn't keep it from being true. It only keeps me from knowing this huge part of you."

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on www.washingtonpost.com/discussions.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com.



NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

REPORT FROM WEEK 851

In which we asked you to "shrink" the title of a book, play or movie and describe the new plot. We got lots of funny titles whose descriptions didn't really enhance them, including "Less Miserables," "Mildly Annoyed Max," "Post-it Notes From the Underground," "Physician Assistant Zhivago," "The Discount of Monte Cristo," "Intestine of Darkness," "The Meh Santini," "Lost Verizon," "Policy Disagreement on the Bounty," "Malcolm PG-13" and "Nicoderm Road."

THE WINNER OF THE INKER

The Fifth Sense: "I smell dead people." (Adam and Russell Beland, Fairfax)

- 2** the winner of the unflattering Eleanor Roosevelt doll: **The Mediocre Gatsby: The biography of Tareq Salehi.** (Ira Allen, Bethesda)
- 3** Slaughterhouse \$4.99: A family gets to choose among beef, chicken and pork with all the trimmings — only at Denny's! (Greg Arnold, Herndon)
- 4** Three Days of the Condom: Love on a shoestring. (Edmund Conti, Raleigh)

MISSED THE MARQUEE: HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Guess Who's Coming To A Guy passes out. Then he wakes up.** (Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich.)
- Casablank: Rick can't really recall meeting Ilsa before, but he plays along because, what the heck, she looks like Ingrid Bergman.** (Larry Yungk, Arlington)
- The Least of the Mohicans: A young Indian in New York scalps his theater tickets.** (Roy Ashley, Washington)
- The Manchurian Media Darling Who Won't Say He's Running and Won't Say He Isn't: A Chinese plot to get Americans to give up on democracy once and for all.** (Tom Kreitzberg, Silver Spring)
- Perturbed Bull: "Did you read off-color poetry to my wife?"** (Bruce Alter, Fairfax Station)
- Halve-atar: See it in 1.5-D!** (Jim Deutsch, Washington)
- 75 Days of Summer: A guy lives in Minnesota.** (Josh Borken, Minneapolis)
- One Hundred Minutes of Solitude: A teenager gets after-school detention.** (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)
- Apollo 12: Three U.S. astronauts blast off for the moon, where they plant a flag, gather rocks and drink Tang, then return to Earth without incident.** (Bob Dalton, Arlington)
- 20,000 Millimeters Under the Sea: The story of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel.** (Jon Graft, Centerville)
- The Satanic Doggerel: The Koran in limerick form. "There once was a Prophet from Mecca . . ."** (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)
- Oh, Calcutta: Teens are disappointed after sneaking into a play about . . . Calcutta.** (Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick)
- Eat, Pay, Love: Eliot Spitzer's soul-stirring memoir of self-discovery on a brief business trip to Washington.** (Gordon Barnes, Alexandria)
- The Hitchhikers CliffsNotes to the Galaxy: 42.** (Kyle Hendrickson)
- Naked Breakfast: Embarrassed dad forgets to close his robe while cooking, finally learns lesson from bacon splatter.** (Randy Lee, Burke)
- The Pelican Briefs: Travelers with oversize underwear arouse suspicion at airport security checkpoints.** (Jeff Loren, Manassas)
- The Man Who Would Be Deputy Assistant Secretary: The stark truth about civil service.** (John Shea, Lansdowne, Pa.)
- Reasonable Expectations: Orphaned Pip realizes that his life in the mid-19th century is going to stink no matter what.** (Jeff Contompassis, Ashburn)
- Gone in 60 Minutes: Man starts the car while his wife finishes getting ready to leave.** (David Friedman, Boston)
- Gone in 30 Seconds: Fast-paced film about a mom who brings home pizza for three teenage boys.** (Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)
- Around the Mall in 80 Minutes: NOBODY has those cute boots!** (Jean Berard, Arnold, Md., a First Offender)
- Mr. Smith Goes to Scaggsville: Near the end of his trip to the nation's capital, a traffic jam on I-95 forces him off the road south of Baltimore.** (Beverly Sharp, Washington)
- Lightly Soiled Harry: "What you have to ask yourself is 'Do I feel lucky?'"** (Russell Beland)
- The Hunchback of South Bend Community College: Walk-on lineman doesn't let his disability deter him in the big game against Iowa Normal School.** (Edmund Conti)
- The Da Vinci Code Ring: Robert Langdon unearths a monstrous conspiracy hidden in a box of Cracker Jack.** (Ben Frey, Frederick, a First Offender)
- Next Week: Small, Let's Get, or The Taper Chase**

Online discussion Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 855: The news could be verse

In a poll, D.C.'s parents say schools are improving. But they're not liking Chancellor Rhee. And since she's the same person who's gotten things moving, in logic, we'll give them a D.

Last week's obituary poems once again reminded us how well the Loser corps can recount an event — or a whole life — in the space of a few lines, and in rhyme to boot. We understand that some Losers even read the newspaper, at least if someone holds some stupid prize in front of them. **This week: Sum up an article (or even an ad!) in any Washington Post print or online edition from Feb. 6 through Feb. 15 in verse.** Our last current-events poetry contest, in June, was for haiku; haiku are welcome this time, too, but they have to be stellar to trump four lines of ingenious doggerel. There's no length limit, but longer poems have to be worth the space. Please include the headline of the story; if the point of the story isn't clear from the headline, also describe it briefly.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — don't say we don't give out big-money prizes — a \$100 trillion bill. Zimbabwean. It's no longer valid, but last year this bill could buy several loaves of bread. Donated by the magnanimous Rick Haynes.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Loser Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their First Ink). One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Feb. 15. Put "Week 855" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published March 6. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's results is by Craig Dykstra; this week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Chris Doyle.

Galactic, spicing up Nawlins' sonic flavors

BY JESSE SERWER

The New Orleans funk outfit Galactic has made a career out of updating its home town's musical traditions for a young audience that doesn't necessarily know Dr. John from Professor Longhair. But the quintet's latest effort, "Ya-Ka-May," which will be released by Anti-Records on Tuesday, might be the most thoroughly current overview of the Crescent City's musical landscape since Katrina. Along with luminaries like Allen Toussaint, the Rebirth Brass Band and Mardi Gras Indian chief Bo Diddley, guests on "Ya-Ka-May" include rising horn prodigies Trombone Shorty and Glen David Andrews and bounce rappers Big Freedia, Katey Red, Sissy Nobby and Cheeky Blakk.

"We wanted to dig to the next level where maybe someone from Washington or San Francisco or New York may not have heard of the artists that we were collaborating with," says guitarist Jeff Raines, one of two Chevy Chase natives (along with bassist Robert Mercurio) who founded Galactic after relocating to New Orleans in 1994. "There was an interest in showing another side of New Orleans that's not what you read about inside magazines."

Galactic has worked with rappers in the past, most notably on 2007's "From the Corner to the Block." But the dalliance with bounce, a purely New Orleans hip-hop variant that emphasizes call-and-response over lyricism, is the album's most intriguing proposition. Although bounce has had a significant influence on Southern rap since the early '90s (New Orleans rap star Juvenile, Memphis's Three 6 Mafia and Atlanta's Lil Jon have borrowed liberally from its playbook), artists who specialize in the style have rarely been afforded a national platform.

"Katrina helped us with that," says Big Freedia. "We were all displaced, and it brought our music to a lot of different areas. And people were like, 'What is that?' I traveled a lot [after] Katrina, trying to make people feel at home away from home. It was just way overdue to get the exposure anyway."

While bounce dovetails with other booty-centric regional sounds like Miami bass and Baltimore club music, it is unique in that the trailblazers knocking down doors for the style are gay and/or transsexual, including three of the four rappers featured on "Ya-Ka-May." (The overwhelming number of bounce artists are, it should be noted, straight.)

The audience willing to accept out-of-the-closet rappers is typically quite limited in most cities, but bounce's self-described "sissies" boast of the popularity they enjoy in the New Orleans neighbor-



TAYLOR CROTHERS

MUSIC MEN: Galactic mixes and matches Crescent City sounds on its new CD. The band performs Monday at the 9:30 club.

hoods where they grew up.

"I can go anywhere from uptown to downtown, from the West Bank to East Bank to [New Orleans suburb] Kenner and I'm gonna get the same respect as a female or a male rapper," says Big Freedia.

Another hallmark of the style is its limited sonic palette. Virtually all bounce tracks utilize the 808-drum machine and one of two samples: The Showboys' "Drag Rap" (or "Trigger Man," as its known in bounce circles) and "Rock the Beat" by Derek B. By definition this makes the live backing tracks provided by Galactic on "Ya-Ka-May" not so much bounce but something entirely new.

"It was an intriguing idea to put some organic drums and traditional instrumentation underneath them," Raines says. "We didn't really know what was going to come out of it."

With its dual vocal attack, heavy fuzz

guitar and marching-band drumrolls, "Katey vs. Nobby" lives up to its promise to chart unknown territory. "Double It," a percussive, cowbell-laden track featuring Big Freedia, evokes go-go, Washington's own contribution to the regional subgenre sweepstakes (Raines and Mercurio cite go-go as an early influence from their Chevy Chase days).

While the other collaborations on "Ya-Ka-May" are perhaps less novel, they are often equally remarkable. "Bacchus" tastefully filters the vocals and piano playing of New Orleans R&B archetype Toussaint through post-hip-hop production techniques. Little-known bluesman Walter "Wolfman" Washington testifies with soul-chilling authority on "Speaks His Mind Again." Despite its breadth, the album never feels like pastiche, though.

With Mardi Gras just around the corner, and the Saints about to play in their

first-ever Super Bowl, the project's timing couldn't be better. "Treme," a new HBO series from "The Wire" creator David Simon and set within the city's music community in the aftermath of Katrina, begins airing in April. (Galactic performs on an early episode of the show in which sax player Ben Ellman has a recurring role.)

"We don't see this as our post-Katrina album," Mercurio says, declining to place "Ya-Ka-May" within a broader context. "It's just an album we wanted to do, and this was the time to do it."

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Galactic, featuring Cyril Neville, will play the 9:30 club on Monday. The snowstorm forced the show to be moved from Saturday to Monday, but 9:30 will honor all tickets purchased for the original show.

DOONESBURY FLASHBACKS BY GARRY TRUDEAU

