

Birdhouses, Dinner Crashers & Drunk Dialers

Written by L.A. Plume

Wednesday, 26 May 2010 10:06



Dear L. A. Plume,

The other night I went to the annual birdhouse auction. Although I'm not the most creative craft person, I was pretty pleased with the birdhouse I decorated and donated to the cause. As I was walking by to see if anyone had bid on it, a woman was picking the tabby off the roof with her fingernail and then proceeded to scratch her name off the auction sheet proclaiming in a loud voice that the birdhouse was falling apart. (The tabby was applied with several coats of epoxy so it wasn't falling apart.) I was rather embarrassed, as all the silent auction bid sheets have the name of the creator listed on them. Should/could I have said anything? It didn't appear to be a matter of money for her as she and her husband bid on some pretty pricey items in the live auction afterwards.

Sandy

Dear Sandy,

First of all, I think it's best to not go to auctions where you have donated something because it's entirely possible your feelings will get hurt if the value someone else places on the item isn't as

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high as your hopes or expectations. No one would want to make that woman take your birdhouse if she really didn't want it but, of course, she should have taken a closer look before she bid. One could hope that her cognitive awareness was on a par with her social ineptitude, and that she wound up buying a bat house and hung it near her open bedroom window.

L. A. Plume

Dear L. A.,

At dinner with friends the other evening, a woman who knew one of our party stopped at our table to say hello. Fine. But she stayed, and stayed, and stayed some more – blocking the poor waitress at every turn. To make matters worse, she actually pulled her lip up to show our friend her recent gum operation! Needless to say, appetites were slightly spoiled by the time our food arrived. How could we have shooed her away??

Annoyed

Dear Annoyed,

This has happened to me on occasion, also; it seems that some people just aren't aware that they are intruding on someone else's time and space. Saying hello to a seated party is one thing but staying on and on is rude. About the only thing you can do is try to resume your own conversation and hope they get the hint, or sweetly say, "It was lovely to see you, I hope you don't mind if we continue with our meal." If your food has not yet been served you may be out of luck with the rather subtle hint strategy. A loud "Oh my goodness – will you look at that?" when she showed her gum surgery might have induced her to at least close her mouth.

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

What can be done about drunk-dialers? I have a dear friend who lives on the other side of the country. He calls me late at night and rambles on and on – sometimes for hours. If I try to hang up – he tells me I'm not listening, I don't care about his troubles, etc. He has been there for me in many times of need and I wouldn't mind if: a) it wasn't three hours later here than in his time zone, and, b) he had something to say that I could respond to. But he is angry at the world, the government, the oil spill, his friends and neighbors, the economy, etc., etc. Help!

Tired

Dear Tired,

I am a big fan of the entertainment value of drunk dialers because they can be sometimes quite funny and you know you'll have to call them back in the morning and tell them that they actually called you and what they had to say. But if they are morose, which happens more often than not, it is draining because all you can do is listen, there is nothing you can do to help them. My advice is just don't answer the phone. Hopefully, if it is a real emergency, they will leave a message and you can call them back. Or you could try the bait and switch method: "Meredith just told me she hasn't heard from you in ages! I know she feels the same way you do about these issues. Why don't you call her; I'm sure she would love to discuss them with you." Then send Meredith flowers.

L. A. Plume