

## Working Life

by Haidee Allerton

### CASUAL FRIDAYS: DRESSED TO KILL

Usually, one would have nothing to fear from men dressed in plaid golfing pants, pink Polo shirts, and oxblood penny loafers. But three fellows in such attire recently strolled into a Staten Island restaurant—on a Friday—and beat up the owner, who was behind in paying his gambling debts.

It seems that wise guys are following suit with the rest of the business world and dressing down to observe Casual Fridays. The victim—who suffered broken legs, smashed ribs, a missing pinkie finger, and other injuries—said that he knew he was in trouble but that he was on the lookout for guys in flashy suits, gold neck chains, and animal-skin shoes.

The Irish Republican Army also has begun experimenting with Casual Fridays—though some members object, such as an explosives specialist who says, “When I’m on a job, I just don’t feel comfortable wearing a warm-up jacket and baseball cap. I need to feel that ski mask on my face.”

Says a Serb paramilitarist, “You can’t put a city to the sword while wearing Birkenstocks and a flannel shirt. As soon as I put on a pair of Dockers, I know that I’m going to blow off the rest of the day screwing around on my Game Boy.”

In a dress-down backlash, the Ku Klux Klan recently rescinded its two-year-old Casual Fridays policy. (Does that mean no more percale?)

We did not make any of this up. We read it in an article by Joe Queenan in the *Washington Post*.

### TRUE TALES FROM THE WORKPLACE

In honor of Jackie Kennedy Onassis—whose possessions were auc-



tioned at Sotheby’s just a few months ago—we offer this true tale:

A few years ago, a young man we know worked as a delivery person for an exclusive Manhattan florist. As luck would have it, one day he was assigned to deliver flowers to none other than Jackie O.

After being admitted by the doorperson, our delivery guy rang the bell of Jackie’s Fifth Avenue apartment, and she opened the door. He delivered the bouquet, Jackie asked him to wait, and she left the room. He stood transfixed in the massive, august foyer peering at the many portraits and photographs of Jack Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and other family members.

When Jackie returned with his tip, he cocked his head, looked her in the eye, grinned widely, and asked, “So, what are you doing Friday night?”

Jackie just laughed.

### SOMEBODY HAS TO DO IT

Have you ever wondered who cleans up crime scenes after investigators have gathered all of the evidence? Often, it is a family member. But now, two entrepreneurs have turned crime clean-up into a business.

Ray and Louise Barnes of Baltimore, Maryland, operate Crime Scene Clean-Up. They charge \$250 an hour,

employ six workers, and are thinking of selling franchises.

Ray says that they cleaned up a house in which a dead man had lain undiscovered for three weeks so well that “the man’s family ate dinner there the next day.”

*Bon appetit!*

### TALK OR WALK

“Culture cops” at BSG—a computer-services company based in Austin, Texas—send BSGers to “jargon jail” when they talk the language of old-world business.

### TOP TEN

It’s back! This Letterman-inspired “Top 10” list shows the five top and five bottom annual earnings for recent college graduates, based on their majors:

#### Men

10. philosophy/religion (\$31,848)
9. social work (\$32,171)
8. visual and performing arts (\$32,972)
7. foreign language/linguistics (\$33,780)
6. education (\$34,470)
5. physics (\$50,128)
4. pharmacy (\$50,480)
3. computer science (\$50,509)
2. mathematics (\$51,584)
- and number 1. engineering (\$53,286).

#### Women

10. philosophy/religion (\$25,788)
9. education (\$27,988)
8. home economics (\$28,275)
7. social work (\$28,594)
6. agriculture (\$28,751)
5. computer science (\$43,757)
4. architecture (\$46,353)
3. pharmacy (\$48,427)
2. engineering (\$49,070)
- and number 1. economics (\$49,170).

Related facts: The graduates aren’t

necessarily working in their fields of study. Overall, women college graduates in mid career made on average \$32,155 a year in 1993, compared to \$43,199 for men.

### EMPLOYEE OF THE CENTURY

Rush H. Limbaugh Sr.—grandfather of talk-show host Rush Limbaugh—died recently at age 104. Until his demise, Limbaugh Sr. headed into work at the law firm that he founded at least two days a week, earning him the distinction of being the oldest practicing lawyer in the United States.

### DOWN TIME

So, how do you spend the time waiting for your selected Web page to come up, your computer to look up an address, or graphics to download? *FFWD* (May 1996) suggests that you think of these occasions as “bonus moments” to be put to good use.

Here are how some readers of *FFWD*'s “Last Wednesday Club” electronic newsletter say they are using their “down time”:

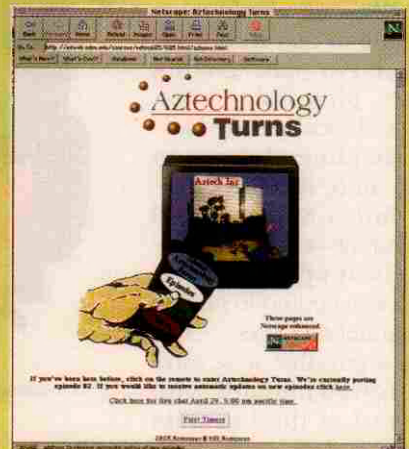
- ▶ “I used to floss my teeth, but now I pretend that I'm watching regular TV.”
- ▶ “I fold laundry.”
- ▶ “I use the commode or listen to opera on my computer's CD-ROM drive.”
- ▶ “I clean my keyboard with Formula 409 and Q-tips.”
- ▶ “I tend to gaze over the top of my computer out the window into my neighbor's kitchen. Unfortunately, I once saw the man of the house in his birthday suit. It was not a pretty sight.”
- ▶ “I color with those 64 different Crayolas. I keep a box at my desk at all times.”
- ▶ “A few push-ups.”
- ▶ “I talk to my little friends, my cats.”
- ▶ “Well, the operative words are ‘nose’ and ‘pick.’”
- ▶ “People do other things? This is quite shocking. I've always used the

### AS THE WORLD WIDE WEB TURNS

AZTECHNOLOGY TURNS is a Web soap-opera site depicting the lives and changing roles of training and development professionals. Really.

Inhabitants of this cyber Peyton Place (actually San Diego State University's department of educational technology) include a training manager, a VP of HR, training specialists, customers, a husband, a teenage daughter, a reflective cat, and an evil twin.

The address is <http://edweb.sd-su.edu/courses/edtec685/685.html/Azhome.html>



time to stare at the screen using my brain at full psycho-kinetic strength to will the download grid to fill with royal blue.”

OK.

### PLACES WE'D LIKE TO WORK

At Microsoft, free sodas, juice, and coffee are always available to employees. The subsidized cafeteria—serving salad, burgers, and sautéed or grilled foods—resembles a ski lodge with natural wood and natural light, and there is a Starbucks kiosk. Oh, and a nice Italian restaurant on the second floor at the Redmond West location.

There is also a courtyard with a little stream running through it (and just a couple of little waterfalls). Recently, employees held rubber duck races during work hours.

Throughout the buildings, there are comfy couches and big whiteboards for jotting down sudden inspirations. Employees also have access to an ATM. They can also, through e-mail and internal electronic bulletin boards, find a travel agent, a personal-benefits statement, and Microsoft demographics. No one—except for interviewees—is seen wearing a tie, jacket, suit, or business-like dress.

In April, Microsoft hosted “Artwalk 12,” a show of artwork under consideration for purchase by Microsoft for display in its offices. After the employee-only event, attendees could e-mail their opinions to the committee that will decide which pieces to add to Microsoft's collection.

Well, it does cloud over a lot in the Seattle area.

### SHALL WE DANCE, REGINALD? LOVE TO, PERCIVAL

Cadets of Britain's Royal Air Force have been ordered to take oral-communication classes to boost their interaction skills. It seems that Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon became tired of the young officers' monosyllabic grunts.

Sir Graydon also “strongly advised” that the cadets take an eight-week dancing course, including the waltz and fox-trot.

Sources include U.S. News & World Report, Fast Company, and People.