

Gator v. Funky Worm: Which Office Party Dance to Choose?

by Con Chapman

It's that time of year again. The combustible mixture of free booze, poinsettia corsages and the slick, soulful sounds of Eddie Venturi and the Fastidians will cause people to get up and dance at holiday office parties who have no business doing so.



Elaine Benes and the "little kicks" dance.

You may recall the holiday party episode from Season 8 of Seinfeld. Elaine Benes' awkward dance—described by George Costanza as a “full body dry heave set to music”—causes her staff to lose all respect for her. If you haven't seen it, rent the video and watch it. Be prepared, as we used to say in the Boy Scouts.

Seemed like a good idea after two margaritas.

For those of you who feel the need to lead, to get down on the floor and get the office party started, here are a few tips gathered over three decades of sitting quietly in the corner getting

sloshed while observing my co-workers' renditions of The Funky Penguin.



Post-It Notes and Irish Step Dancing Do Not Mix. In a dangerous variation of "chicken" that is sweeping the Northeast, partygoers compete for door prizes by attempting to stick 3M Post-It Notes on the upper bodies of high-kicking Irish step dancers. Infertility has been the result in males, and five-figure judgments against companies that condone the practice are the rule rather than the exception.



"Get a load of Sue Ellen from accounts payable!"

If Dance You Must, Don't Touch the Bust! Just because you don't join the younger crowd in suggestive "freak dancing" doesn't mean you're home free. "The foxtrot and the waltz may seem tame today," says ballroom dance instructor Louis De Pina, "but guys used to get a fair amount of action twirling their girls around the floor." Be on the lookout for Vice Presidents of Human Resources bearing six-inch rulers to measure the amount of "daylight" between you and your partner.



Old School Freak Dancing: "It was nice of you two to dance with the Gibbs Twins."

Consent, Consent, Consent. In real estate, goes the old saying, the three most important considerations are location, location and location. In the brief time you have on the dance floor with the well-endowed gal from accounting, make sure you obtain "consent, consent, consent" every step of the way.



Glue stick: Use it, don't abuse it.

"We have noted a recent upsurge in dry-cleaning claims made by women who become unwilling partners of men doing 'The Glue Stick Dance,'" notes Ervin Campbell, a senior underwriter for American Woodmen's Surety, a leading provider of liability insurance to service firms. "The male slathers the woman's hips with a glue stick, then sticks himself on her and tries to ride out Kool & the Gang's 'Celebration.'" You'll damage your partner's dress—and your reputation as a "team player"—forever.



Kool & the Gang

If You Can't Stand Up—Keep Dancing! If—or perhaps, when—you fall to the dance floor, don't just lie there and admit to the world that you might have had a tad too much to drink. Keep movin' and groovin' with one of the two basic prone forms of social dancing, The Funky Worm and The Gator.



Show-offs.

“I recommend The Funky Worm for the professional woman who wants to retain a shred of dignity as she wiggles her way back to the buffet,” says de Pina. “Lie on your back, hold your arms tight against your body, and scooch your way across the floor.”



Funky Worm by the Ohio Players

“To Gator, by contrast, you lie face down and move your arms vigorously,” de Pina notes. “The image you want to project to your colleagues is that of an alligator scurrying after a French poodle who's wandered away from a Florida retirement village.”

