

More Advice from Bella

It's been a month now and I thought I would check in with my friend, Bella Pelorizado to see how her new job was going. She had taken a job at the Lost Timely Donations News as an advice columnist for nonprofits. Since I'm a regular visitor to the press room now, I only needed an eyeball scan and a walk through the airlock to gain admittance. Things were quiet in the press room when I arrived. All one heard was the clackity of keyboards.

"Bella, how's it going?"

She stopped the clackity and looked up. Her hair was tangled in the mouse and there were stained papers and envelopes around the floor. "I'm overwhelmed. Everyone has problems and they think I can solve them."

"That's what happens when you claim to know a lot." I wasn't sympathetic. With Bella friendship is a combat sport.

She ignored me as usual, and pulled a letter from under her desk. "Just listen to this. Dear Bella, My friends and I have a great idea. In fact we have a plan in place that will be exciting for the whole community. We call it the "Frugal Design Showcase." She stopped and glared at me. "Do you know what this group is planning?" She waved the letter in my face. "A model home will be decorated using furnishings from local resale shops operated by nonprofits. The event will take place the weekend of June 20th. Tickets will go on sale prior to that date. Please help us spread the word."

"Of course," I nodded, "that's from Terry."

"Don't you mean Terri?" she sniffed.

"What?"

"You know, Terri with an "i" not a "y."

"You could see the words I spoke and know I used the wrong spelling?"

"I'm in the print media, we see all words."

"You can't tell if I misspell when I speak!"

"You misspelled misspell." She glared at me as her active ringlets made a series of "ssssss" in the air.

“OK, OK, its Terri,” I conceded. “I think she has a great idea. She has organized a number of nonprofit thrift shops and has had a builder volunteer a vacant house to display rooms decorated with items from the shops. Pretty clever.” I was happy to contemplate a new and vigorous idea. Sometimes folks in the Land of Lost Board Members get too gray and dull. We need people with energy and talent to revive us and try new ideas.

“I think its a terrible idea.” Bella was angry. “How could she?”

“How could she what?”

“I used to be the thinker around here. I’m the expert in collaboration. I know a thing or two about solving problems. Originality is my middle name.” She started to pace around her office. Her hair spelled out insults.

“Bella how can you be angry?” I asked. “You were hired here to help nonprofits. I think that means you should be a cheerleader for an event like this. I have heard you challenge other nonprofits to work together and to forget turf issues while staying focused on service.” Bella continued to pace and ignore me. I tried again. “Bella, you have always been a voice that supported ideas and helped organizations deliver quality. Where’s the old Bella?” I waited as her hair spelled “power” and “revenge.”

She stopped pacing and returned to her keyboard. “I know,” she said as she began to type, “I’ll put the idea on my blog and claim it was mine. Then a few days from now, I’ll do a press release and imply that Terri just did what I told her to do.”

“Bella,” I was horrified. “You have a blog? I mean, you can’t be that dishonest! I thought journalists lived by a code of ethics.”

“Who do you think I am, David Brooks?”

“Your bosses here at the paper might get upset,” I offered. “I’m sure they have an expectation of honesty.” That seemed to reach her.

“You’re right.” She was reluctant to admit defeat. She turned and asked. “Do you think if I tell everyone how great Terri is and remind all of my readers to attend the event that Terri will invite me to do a preview tour?” She looked sweet. Her hair was calm. “And if she isn’t nice to me,” she stamped her foot, “then I’ll blog her!”

Her hair rejoiced and spelled, “She’s back!”

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