

Editorial ▶ Everyone Needs a Work Spouse or Two!

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Hi, my name is Marc, and I cheat on my wife. No, no, no, not in a bad way, I promise. I have a work wife. Actually, I have two work wives, and my wife knows about each of them. What, you may ask, is a work wife? Well, it is a co-worker, usually of the opposite sex, with whom one shares a special relationship, having bonds similar to those of

a marriage. You may be wondering how these relationships developed.

My first work wife is Dr. Mary Bartuccio. I first met Mary while in my residency at Nova Southeastern University in 2003. She was one of my supervisors during the year, and we became fast friends as well. Over the years I was at Nova, we became almost inseparable. We attended meetings together, worked on papers together, and worked to further not only our own, but each other's careers. We also have similar-aged children, so we connected on that level.

Some of my firsts in optometry were with Mary. My first American Academy of Optometry lecture was a coordinated effort with Mary. My first poster at a major meeting was written with Mary. Hey, did you know I edited a book that was published last year? Guess who was the second editor? We were texting so much over the last year before it was published that our real spouses were beginning to wonder!

When I left Nova to come to Southern College of Optometry in 2007, after telling my family that I was leaving south Florida, it was hardest to tell Mary. She of course understood why I was leaving, and not only have we kept in touch over the past six years, our relationship has gotten stronger. They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Like a good marriage, we never let each other down and can count on each other through thick and thin. Mary has never let me down. When an opportunity arises and I am asked to suggest someone to take on a new responsibility, Mary's name is always at the top of the list. I know that she will tackle the work head on, perform admirably, and do right by me for proposing her for the role.

My second work wife is by far a newer relationship, but our connection was something out of the movies. No, not *When Harry Met Sally* or even *Casablanca*, but more of a *Three Stooges* episode. ☺

I met Pam Schnell when she came to interview at Southern two years ago. I am the go-to person for tours when

a potential faculty member is interviewing. I essentially show them the clinic and answer questions related to the inner workings of it. Many times, it is a one-sided tour, and my off-colored humor and sarcasm either goes over the candidate's head or slams into them like a Mack truck. For the first time, I was not the one slinging the jabs but the one ducking when they came right back at me; I was in love. I consider myself to have a pretty quick wit, but I had met my match. I am pretty sure the first round of our verbal banter ended in a tie, or that is what I tell myself so I can sleep at night.

At about the same time Pam interviewed, a chapter author for the book dropped out, and I had to scramble to replace him. Having known that Pam was an accomplished author, I turned to her. She did not disappoint me in the slightest and produced an awesome chapter in only a few months. The best thing about it is that I did not have to edit the punctuation, as Pam has become known to me as the Comma Queen!

Pam joined the faculty in 2011, and we have been paired on so many projects that I have lost count. Most notably, we are co-supervisors for the Vision Therapy/Pediatrics Residency program at SCO, and of course, we work together on this very journal you are reading. Without her behind-the-scenes assistance, this journal would not be as successful as it is. Pam reads every single page produced multiple times throughout the production process and does so with a smile—well, most of the time.

At any job, you need someone to bounce ideas off of, and I am lucky to have Pam. We are free to speak our minds without fear of spite or retribution, and we work as a team. We are each other's sounding boards for griping and moping and brainstorming. We work to solve not only our own problems but each other's as well.

Towards the end of 2012, I got word that Mary would be joining the faculty at SCO in May of 2013. While I was beyond excited to be able to work with Mary again on a daily basis after our six year hiatus, my mind started racing. How would Pam and Mary get along? Would they be comfortable sharing me? Would there be cat fights which I could post on YouTube? Well, after just two short months, I am happy to say that all is well. We are all working well together, and much to my dismay, they seem to enjoy taking turns torturing me. They, along with several other faculty members in the Vision Therapy and Pediatric services, have an unwritten pact to keep me walking the straight and narrow path. Every once in a while, just for fun, I have to go left when they expect me to go right. I have to keep them on their toes.