MY COWORKER LARRY was hired in 2002. He was also in accounting, so they put him in the empty cubicle next to mine.

At first I thought he was kind of weird. He had all these crazy toys that he kept at his desk. The senior managers may not come around much, but when they do, they expect the place to look, you know, professional. Larry's desk didn't look professional – it looked like an eBay auction.

Gradually, I warmed up to Larry. He seemed very soft-spoken at first, but once you started talking to him you realized he had this terrifically dry sense of humor. I found myself laughing at his jokes so much that I started hanging around his desk more and more.

I guess his humor was infectious because before I knew it, other people started hanging around Larry too. We couldn't help it. He was our comic relief.

By his one-year anniversary, Larry had become more than a part of my team, he had become one of my best friends. It wasn't long before I was inviting him out for drinks with my husband, Rob, and I. Rob took an immediate liking to him.

Last year, Larry was put in charge of the annual office holiday party. We were all excited to see what kind of hijinks he had in store for us. He was very secretive about his plans. The only thing he'd say was that we were hosting it at the Baron's Club downtown.

The night of the party, we finally saw it all with our own eyes. Larry had turned the Baron's Club Ballroom into an exact replica of our offices, down to the cubicles. There were dining tables inside each cubicle, and at the center of each table there was a conference phone and a miniature cutout of our CEO.

The menus were inside plain manila folders, and orders were placed through "conference calls" to the kitchen. I'm sure the joke was lost on senior management, but the old guys still managed to force a few smiles as they mingled with us commoners.

With the alcohol flowing freely, the night quickly turned into another episode of "The Larry Show." By the time the party was winding down, Rob suggested we take the party elsewhere.

I didn't think but I guess Larry had

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