

THE HARTFORD COURANT

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**PEOPLE WITHOUT THEIR OWN PEOPLE ARE JUST
ORDINARY PEOPLE**

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Source: JIM SHEA

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Kate Hudson is dating A-Rod.

There are reports of canoodling.

The first question, of course, is why? Not why would Kate Hudson date A-Rod? Why would Kate Hudson date a Yankee?

The second thing you sort of want to know is how do high-profile celebrities such as these hook up?

Does one of them pick up the phone and give the other a call?

I doubt it.

I think more probably they have their people handle the arrangements. Think sixth grade: "If Kate knew A-Rod liked her, would Kate like A-Rod?"

Of course, before A-Rod had his people call Kate's people, I'll bet he had his people call Madonna's people and break up with her. He probably told his people to tell her people, "It's not you; it's me."

I would love to have people. And not just because it would be so cool to be able to say to someone: "I'll have my people get back to you."

No, I'd like to have people because it would make my life so much easier.

If I had people, I would never have to argue with my wife. I'd have my people do it. I'd tell them to tell her this, this and this, and then I would tell them: after you're done, slam a door. Oh, and I'd also tell them to duck.

If I had people, I would never have to talk to the mechanic. I would have my people go to the garage and wait in the waiting area and drink old coffee with powdered creamer and not understand how the bill could be three times higher than the estimate.

If I had people I would have them deal with my bosses. Like, say, if an editor called me up and wanted me to change something in a column, I would say to her, "You'll have to talk to my people about that." Then I would tell my people not to change anything. I would be able to do this without getting fired because my people would have things on editors, including photos.

If I had people, I would send food back in restaurants. I never send food back now because it creates a lot of tension, and you never know what they are going to do to the

food in the kitchen to get even. Not only would I have my people send food back; I would also have them taste it when it was returned.

I don't know about people who need people, but people who have people are definitely the luckiest people in the world.

>> Contact **Jim Shea** at jshea@courant.com, and read his political humor column, "Raucous," Sunday in Ct.Week, and his column, "Boom," in CTLiving on Wednesday.

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THE HARTFORD COURANT

129 / 214 - Saturday, May 30, 2009

MY ADVICE TO GRADUATES: IGNORE MY ADVICE**Edition:** STATEWIDE**Section:** CTLIVING**Page:** C1**Type:** Column**Source:** Jim Shea jshea@courant.com

Newspaper columnists are required by law at this time of year to offer lofty advice to new graduates.

In truth, this is more of a perk than an obligation.

Who doesn't like to dole out advice, especially unsolicited advice?

Providing guidance to new high school grads is relatively simple:

Go to college.

Why? Because college is more fun than McDonald's.

Telling recent college graduates how they should live their lives is more complicated.

This is because they have just had the most fun they are ever going to have, unless they get a job as a showgirl or something.

That said, here is my advice, which should be taken with a grain of salt, and a shot of tequila:

>> Return immediately to school: There is nothing for you out here but hard times and humiliation. And that's if you have a job. Plus, you can't believe what they charge for beer once you get a few miles away from campus.

>> Go the witness-protection route: By this I mean vanish without a trace. Establishing a new identity is the only way you are going to avoid the goons from the student-loan foundation. Better you should have the Sopranos after you.

>> Re-establish contact with your parents: Between your grunting stage during high school and your sleep-until-midafternoon schedule over college breaks, you probably would have trouble picking these folks out of a lineup. Not a good relationship to have with the only people in the world who might lend you money.

>> Move back home: Grads who moved back in with their parents used to be considered losers. Unfortunately, some things never change. Sorry about that.

>> Find a job: No one gets their dream job right off, so take what you can get. When seeking employment, be sure to use your education to maximum advantage. For example, you might want to point out during an interview with the assistant to the assistant manager that you can say "Happy Meal" in three languages, including Latin.

>> Finally: You know that bright and shining beacon on the distant hill that is your future? Ignore it. You've probably already peaked.

Now go get 'em.

>> Contact Jim Shea at jshea@courant.com, and read his political humor column,

THE HARTFORD COURANT

71 / 206 - Wednesday, November 4, 2009

WALMART COFFINS COULD TRIGGER STIFF COMPETITION**Edition:** STATEWIDE**Section:** LIVING**Page:** D1**Type:** Column**Source:** Jim Shea jshea@courant.com**Column:** BOOM

Giving new meaning to the term "box store," Walmart has begun selling coffins.

You can buy them online only.

One of the reasons you can't get them in stores is because they don't know what department to put them:

Bedding?

Outdoor living?

Gardening?

Walmart's 15-coffin line offers accommodations (single occupancy) beginning at \$895 and ranging all the way up to \$2,899 for the "Sienna Bronze." Other models include the "Regal Wide Body," the "American Patriot" and the pinstriped "Executive Privilege."

Given the aging baby-boomer market, other retailers are sure to follow Walmart's lead:

*LL Bean: The retailer's top-of-the-line casket, "the Nor'easter," will appeal to its outdoor-minded clientele by offering a unit that can be used now and later. Simply pop out the removable fleece lining, and you have a rooftop luggage carrier. When it's time to go, slap the fleece back in, and you're good to go.

*IKEA: For those who prefer a sleek, modern storage unit made from natural materials, how can you beat the Scandinavian furniture maker: "... isn't it good, Norwegian wood."

*Ocean State Job Lot: Looking for a bargain? Don't mind a floor model, a fixer-upper or maybe a refurbished unit that was returned for some reason: leaked, wrong color, didn't fit? Then you've come to the right place.

*Nieman-Marcus: The upscale retailer's top-of-the-line model, the grossly oversized "McCasket," will come in either silver or gold plating and include such amenities as fine Corinthian leather, heated pillow, Bose sound system and 24-hour concierge service.

*McDonald's: Think the double-wide, plastic "Ronald McDonald Coffin," which can be filled with ice and soda and handed out as part of a promotional giveaway. And, yes, I'd want fries with that.

*Bob's Discount Furniture: (I'm already hearing the commercials) Sure, you can spend \$5,000 for a name-brand casket, or you can purchase Bob's "Boxapedic" for a fraction of

the cost. So come on down.

*Tupperware: Finally, for those who don't want to make a fuss when they go, what would be better than a long, clear, waterproof container that will be airtight for eternity, as long as the funeral director remembers to burp the corner.

>> Read **Jim Shea's** other columns on Saturday in Living and Sunday on Page A2.

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