



Valentine's Day Romance!

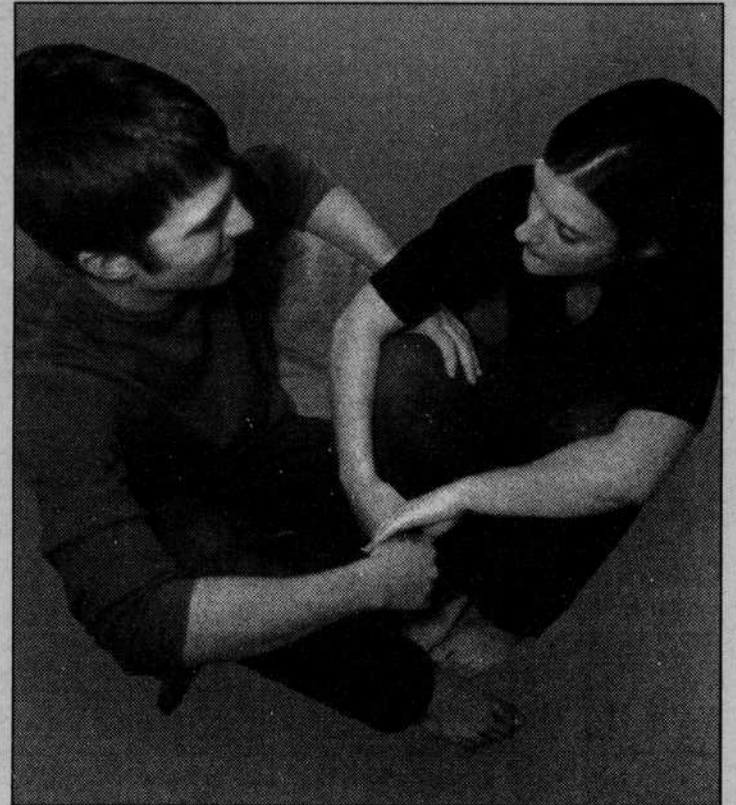
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Romancing the Phone

Meeting someone to date in our high-tech, high-speed world is just a click or two away, but falling in love over the Internet might not be the answer to a person's need to hook up



Catharine Kendall Emerald



Truffles For Your Valentine

17th and Willamette Valley River Center
5th and Pearl Bertelsen and Stewart

By Sara Jarrett
Oregon Daily Emerald

Information gathering isn't the only thing that the Internet has made easier and faster to attain.

With an ever decreasing amount of time and energy needed to acquire knowledge on an exhaustive list of topics, this advanced computer technology made it possible to graduate from college without ever stepping foot inside the campus library.

So too, is it now feasible to have a fruitful and fulfilling dating life without stepping foot outside the front door.

If repositories of ideas are in jeopardy of being thrown to the wayside in favor of the super stealth caches in cyberspace, is the same fate to be had for lovers' traditional meeting places?

Replacing a first glance with a first mouse click is dangerous to society because it breeds a new mass of relationships started without body language, says Rod Metzger, a professor of sociology at Lane Community College.

This void of intimacy, traditionally the major building block of romance, is indicative of the kind of empty relationships that are being forged from across computer screens, he says.

Internet romance is also harmful because it is "somewhat romanticized and idealized," says Diane Rogers, who owns Amethyst Counseling Services in Eugene. She says she has counseled her share of individuals who thought they were entering a

utopian world, only to be left loveless over the lines.

"The Internet is not just a fast lane, but a super fast lane," Metzger points out. "It's sort of like that old cliché you get out of a relationship what you put into it."

Metzger regards relationships as harder work than a few strokes on a keyboard. At least with telephone interactions, voice inflections give a clue as to the dialogue's sincerity, the two professionals agree.

Many participants, however, seem to like this aloofness and admit to being stimulated by the melodrama it creates.

"It's almost an addiction at first because it's something new and different," says Scott Lilleboe, a geography major at Oregon State University.

"I've always hated the first date deal," he says. Lilleboe admits he would rather get the awkwardness of initially getting to know someone out of the way over the computer.

That approach concerns Metzger, however, who says that on-line, you encounter people you have no overt awareness of. You can't identify any facades or masks of those you meet in cyberspace. If that weren't so, Metzger says, we wouldn't be so concerned about letting children roam freely on the computer.

But people lie all the time. What's to stop somebody from lying at a bar, wonders Lilleboe. He acknowledges that he has dated six women whom he initially met

on-line.

While only a handful have lasted longer than a month, his current relationship with Anna Taufik, an OSU graduate, is nearing its half-year anniversary. After a year-and-a-half of searching, he says he has finally found what he was looking for all along.

Even though the Internet provides more room for fantasy and wishful thinking, Rogers points out, Lilleboe maintains that his on-line activities were not about being someone he's not.

"I always planned on meeting someone, so I never said anything false," he said. Nor has he been duped by women who embellished their self-descriptions.

Mike Vial, Lilleboe's roommate and fellow OSU student, witnessed his friend's practices first hand. He has even personally dabbled in the services from time to time.

"Scott must either spend a lot of time on the Internet or he must be really good at it because it seems to really work for him," Vial says. "I couldn't take it seriously enough to make it work for myself. Scott [spent] a lot of time being a nice guy and I think it paid dividends."

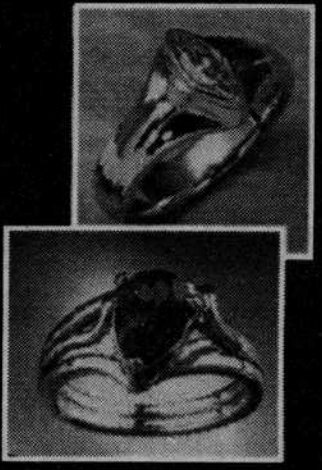

Lilleboe says he was turned on to the new dating concept after seeing the happiness it brought his mom; she recently married a man she met on-line.

Lilleboe first tried on-line cruising one day during the summer of 1998, while bored at work.

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