

Pulse Editor:
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Pulse Relax

On Thursday
A preview of the
Eugene Ballet's
production of
"Romeo and Juliet"

Tuesday, October 8, 2002

Take out the glue gun — it's craft time

I started this column with the best of intentions. I was going to tackle the riveting subject of residence hall life. Picture practical advice for the incoming freshman on color schemes, organization and how to deal with your new roommates penchant for tie-dyed and batiked tapestries.

I did all the groundwork. I checked out the University Housing Web site. I spent a fascinating afternoon of reading for free at Barnes & Noble. I read about Martha Stewart's Good Things and 100 ways I could redecorate my room for less than \$100. I found out about "(opening my) style file" and making a "tempting tuffet" — golden moments to treasure always.



Nika Carlson
D.I.Y. living

Unfortunately, I ran into a few roadblocks on the path toward the "decorating your dorm room" column. First off, no one returned my phone calls. There went the possibility of real-life examples of stylish rooms. Secondly and more importantly, I found it impossible to get excited about anything I was doing. The thought of writing about making flowery hat boxes and ribboned message boards is deathly. Peachy keen, guys. I might as well whip up an after-school snack for Wally and the Beav' while I'm at it. No offense, June Cleaver, but that's really not my style.

Instead, I was left with a huge void where my column should go, a looming deadline and the nagging question of why I had accepted the über-hip title of "Martha Stewart of the College Life."

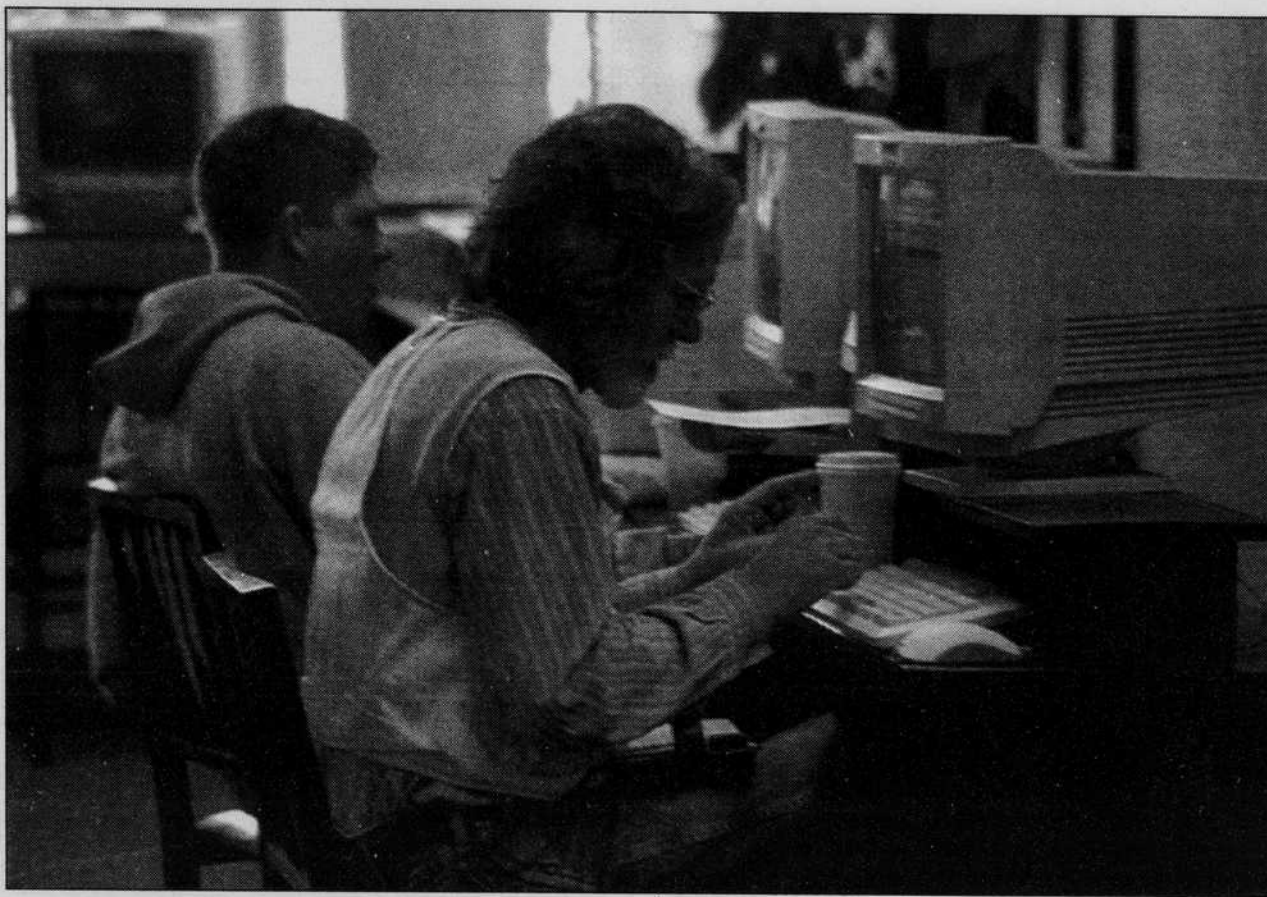
I kill plants. I burn cookies. I have a one-foot-tall plastic dinosaur in my bedroom. I am obviously not a maven of home decor.

But further thought led me here. I have plans for sewing bathroom curtains and making a photo album from scraps. I design stationery and bake bread. I cut up magazines and save paper in the event of a future craft emergency. I crave power tools and got a thrill out of cutting blackberry bushes for five hours to old AC/DC records. I remember episodes of "This Old House" and "The New Yankee Workshop" (wood crafting at its best, thank you very much). I harbor a secretly growing obsession for "Trading Spaces," the show where neighbors switch houses for two days and redecorate a room — the disastrously fabulous things one can do with a shoestring (\$1000!) budget. In short, I'm crafty.

The truth is, there is something incredibly fulfilling about having made something yourself. I find a childish satisfaction in getting my hands dirty and ending up with a tangible, usable product. It gives me a feeling of independence and creativity, however inconsequential my output may be.

Perhaps I'm overdoing it a little, but the sentiment I expressed is at the heart of the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethos. It's about being inventive and industrious

Turn to **Living**, page 4



Patrons at the Sip N-Surf Cybercafe can enjoy freshly-brewed coffee while surfing the web, potentially enjoying both real and virtual Java.
Liz Carskadon
for the Emerald

Local shops, global connections

Cybercafes combine the information resources of a whole planet and the beverage resources of a coffee shop

Ryan Bornheimer
Senior Pulse Reporter

On Mother's Day a few years ago, Dorothy Ehli's grandchildren took her to Sip N-Surf Cybercafe downtown to show her the Internet. Since that day, the retired nurse has been a mainstay at the establishment. Sometimes she stops by to visit her favorite Web site, Allmusic.com. Other times it's for the homemade lasagna.

It's this hybrid of old-school warmth and new-school technology that made cybercafes

a common sight around the world in the mid-'90s. Like any trend, many were quick to jump on the bandwagon, but few had the chops to stay in for the long haul. Once the novelty wore off, it looked as though cybercafes may end up as little more than fodder for a Trivial Pursuit 1990s edition.

In recent years, however, these specialized businesses seem to have found their niche. And Eugene is no exception. As of now, there are many such establishments in the city, including Sip N-Surf, The Buzz Net Cafe, and Comsource Associates, all offering a combination of computers and a cup of joe.

Sip N-Surf, now in its third year of business, is one of the trend's veterans. This mellow little joint on West 10th Avenue seems to

be reaching the maturity that many other cybercafes couldn't. In recent months, the cafe has even set Internet-use records.

Like any business, that may be thanks in no small part to its location. Sip N-Surf's neon sign glows clearly from the bus station downtown, and according to co-owner Marian Harris, travelers make up a large portion of the cafe's patrons.

"We get a lot of tourists. Cybercafes are the primary Internet connection for people around the world. From an economic standpoint, it just makes sense," Harris said.

Harris, a self-described "techno-turnip," handles the food side of the operation, making some dishes herself while Palace Bakery

Turn to **Cafe**, page 4

Kerensa's love letter leaves Michael, Sarah torn

Chapter 2.
Kerensa's goodbye notes.

Last week, Michael and Sarah were at Marsee's coffee shop debating how best to look for Kerensa. This chapter begins earlier, at the time of Kerensa's disappearance, and reveals something of her love.

The Emerald is printing "And the Dew is Our National Treasure" in serial form, with an installment every Tuesday in the Pulse Relax section. The first installment can be found at www.dailyemerald.com.

Four days earlier, before we realized Kerensa had disappeared, Sarah was on her way to a solstice sunrise, and discovered on her windshield a note in Kerensa's lissome hand: "I've found a love. I'm going. I feel clearer, more alive than ever. I know it all has meaning, Sarah. Keep on! Until we're together again, look for me in the sky between the branches, and in the prisms at dawn. Love Always, Kerensa."

Sarah called me to ask if Kerensa had a new lover. I said I'd heard of none. "Then she's in danger," Sarah said. "I feel it."

At that time, I wasn't alarmed. I thought: Kerensa's young, and love is healthy. Besides, she often traveled across the state to hearings and meetings without notice, reappearing several days later. In the end, the letter struck me as

Where's Kerensa?

another of the enigmatic messages she left at the intelligent intersections of her life, and in a couple of days all would become clear.

But the mystery turned dark three days later. I had stayed at the office, and by 9:30 p.m. I could no longer direct my mind to work. I closed my computer and stepped into the mild night. The east was clear, and Mount Hood, brilliant white under a moon two days short of full, seemed to have melted a bowl in the black sky.

I stopped to look because something was odd. The clouds were behind the moon! I looked more closely, and it was true. Then I saw the trick: The clouds were so thin, they became transparent in front of the moon, but appeared solid against the black sky. I remembered a childhood drawing of trees behind the sun. I wondered what Sarah would make of this.

Driving south on I-5, I listened to messages on my cell phone: the Red Cross reminding me to give blood, my broker peddling an Internet stock, and Sarah, the one who laughed, urging in an unfamiliar voice: "Michael. I've got to talk to you. Call. Or, better, go home. I'll wait for you there."

Sarah sat on the front stairs beside the rhododendrons. I beeped when I saw her; she stood, clutching a paper in her folded arms. She was a decade older. I turned off the engine,

stepped from the car and stared at a dear friend I didn't know. In the faint glow that came from the car's inside light, I saw a tear roll down her cheek. "Sarah?"

She handed me the paper. "I found this in her house."

I read aloud. "Michael. Never doubt my love; you've been the family I needed. And my gratitude to your parents for adopting me. Now I'm called. And I'm going. I won't be back. This is goodbye. Please, for peace of mind and for closure, assume I've died. I love you very, very much. Kerensa."

We travel through years perfecting a mask. Then a sharp event tears the luminescent skin, and the raw grape bleeds. Kerensa was vast; her worldview had pulled Sarah from the tree-crowded, New England consciousness of her youth to the big-skied mind of the west. And her sisterly concern for me had nurtured modest plans into career ambitions. With just a few words, she'd cut the tether, and Sarah and I dropped into an abyss.

Peter Wright is a printer living in Portland. He received his bachelor's degrees from UC Berkeley, served in the U.S. Navy, worked as a stock broker and taught at Stanford University.
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