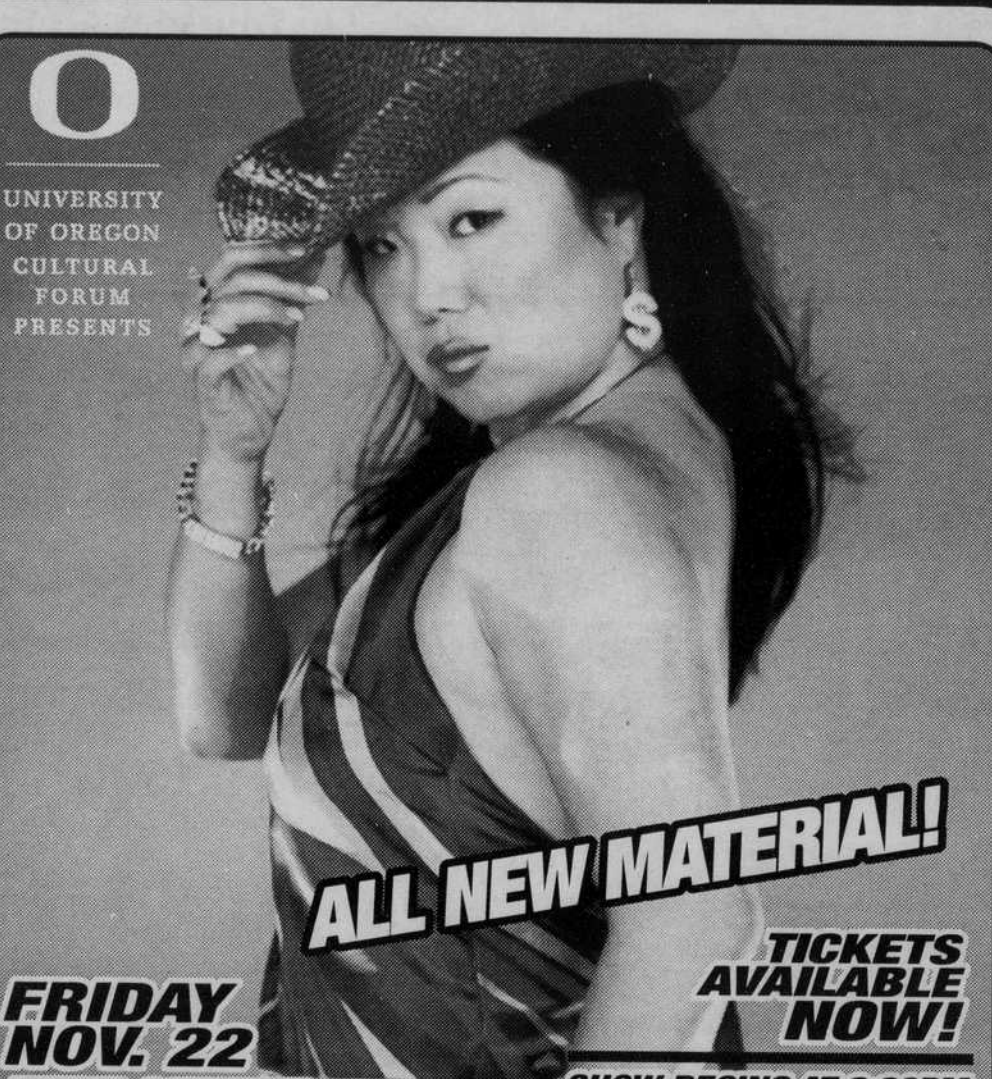




O
UNIVERSITY
OF OREGON
CULTURAL
FORUM
PRESENTS

ALL NEW MATERIAL!

**FRIDAY
NOV. 22**

**HULT CENTER
SILVA CONCERT HALL**

**TICKETS
AVAILABLE
NOW!**

**SHOW BEGINS AT 8:00PM
QUESTION AND ANSWER
WITH MS. CHO FOLLOWS**

MARGARET CHO

FOR TICKETS CALL OR VISIT THE HULT CENTER (502-5000) OR THE EMU TICKET OFFICE (346-4363).

Flying to Hong Kong on a whim, Michael learns of population

Chapter 6. Monty and the plane to Hong Kong.

In Chapter 5, Lloyd, a homeless man, lectured Michael on economics.

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

"No, I can't explain it, Sarah," I say into the phone. "I was pissed this afternoon with all your 'trust the universe' crap, but I thought I'd give it one more chance. I walked into a travel agency because it had a green sign. 'Give me a ticket to anywhere,' I said. The girl asked 'How's Hong Kong?' Immediately I knew there's a god."

"What do you mean?"

"That it was a sign. Remember, I told you about the green cards, the Kings and the car honking?" Sarah sighs, so I explain: "Honk; king. Hong Kong."

Sarah laughs slowly at first, but gradually the laugh engulfs her and she cries. "Michael, you really are naive."

"Screw you! I'm going anyway!"

I awake about four hours into the flight. The boy next to me studies his computer screen. His knees bounce rapidly and his thumb taps on the edge of his tray. Suddenly, he turns toward me. "Do you know what that is?" he asks.

"No."

"Each tap represents another human added to the earth." Tap, tap, tap.

"Three humans each second (tap, tap, tap). One-hundred and eighty more each minute (tap, tap, tap). Almost a quarter million more each day. Eighty million more each year. Within four years, we must pack onto this small planet another 320 million people! More than the population of the U.S. (tap, tap, tap). In a dozen years, the Earth must feed and clothe an additional China. And then another China 12 years later."

His legs stop bouncing and his thumb stops tapping the instant he stops talking. His bedraggled eyebrows rise and his tiny eyes widen as if to ask "whaddaya think?" After

Where's Kerensa?

five long seconds, his body lurches back into animation. "Wars don't help — population actually goes up in times of war. Bloodbaths don't help: 500,000 people murdered in Rwanda are replaced in just two days. We would need 180 Rwandas every year just to stay even."

He freezes again, holding on his face an expression much like a dog who has dropped a ball at his master's feet. Then, he laughs, rat-a-tat, like a machine gun. I'm inclined to dismiss the boy as perhaps a little mad.

On the other side of him sits a young woman; I crane for a better look. She's fabulous: slightly tanned, with light brown hair, modest lips and a slender neck. And she wears a green sweater! Universe, help me to my destiny.

The bouncing puppy leans into me and speaks as though confiding a scandal: "Hong Kong has the greatest density on earth: 14,713 people per square mile. More than twice the density of any other city. Yet, crime rates, disease rates, mental illness rates, alcohol, drugs, prostitution are half of those in New York or L.A. I'm going to study them so I'll know how to survive." Burst of laughter; stillness; weird expression. I have to change seats.

I unbuckle my seatbelt: "Excuse me."

"Oh, sure. Ya, sure. Ya." He fumbles with his laptop and tray.

"Why don't you move by the window? That way, I won't have to climb over your work again." I look into his eyes; they aren't glazed like one who's obsessed, but sensitive and vulnerable.

"Yes, yes, of course." He clutches his laptop to his chest. "Name's Monty."

"Michael." I step over him, then over her pretty legs. She wears no ring.

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. © Peter Wright, 2002. All rights reserved.

F A L L 2 0 0 2

CAREER | FAIR

GRADUATE SCHOOL FAIR

TOMORROW

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 6

EMU BALLROOM | 10AM-3PM

Auto repair?

- Clutches
- Brakes
- Engines
- Transmission

- Steering
- Water pumps
- Tune-ups
- Head gaskets

• no work performed without your approval

• saving you money for over 24 years

• open 6 days

All work guaranteed

**AAA
AUTO REPAIR**

334-0490
232 Wallis St. Unit D (off west 1st)

Groovy Weekly Reader Polls.
Vote online. See results instantly.

www.dailyemerald.com