

## Girl afraid old crush will steal boyfriend

Dear Nat: I have been dating my out-of-state boyfriend for a year. There is a girl in his hometown who he had a crush on throughout high school, and he keeps in regular contact with her. He says they are just friends, but recently, she has developed an attraction to him. I feel threatened and worried she will try to steal him! What can I do?

—**Troubled Girlfriend**

Dear Troubled: Let's see, the girl has a bad case of "I want what I can't have," your beau's caught a "Women can't get enough of me" bug, and you're suffering from a "Get off my man! Hiss!" virus. Every guy deserves female friends, but this scenario sounds suspicious. I don't blame you for wanting to bear your claws.

Since your boyfriend is not a marionette attached to strings and cannot be pulled in any direction you wish, I'm afraid verbal communication is the only option for change to occur. Tell him that the time he spends with this girl makes you feel unstable in your relationship and request he cut ties with her.

And if he doesn't comply? Then you have a choice. Stay in a relationship that gives you headaches, or give it up until a better one comes along. Warning: By choosing to stay, you have no right to complain every time you feel a pang. Personally, if a guy knows his actions are hurting his girl and he makes no effort to change them, I see a big, bright, fire-engine red flag rippling in the wind. So don't be disillusioned — read the signals!

Dear Nat: I have a friend who is a terrible singer. Unfortunately, she enjoys to sing along loudly to CDs in my car. She is aware of her impairment, but continues to sing while I drive because she sees me as her only friend who will tolerate it! In truth, I've been waiting for the car window to break every time she opens her mouth! How can I shut her up without hurting her feelings?

—**A Friend With Aching Ears**

Dear Friend: There are a number of strategies you can use when you get in the car with her. Turn off the music and begin a deep conversation. Choose songs your friend has never heard before and "lose" those CDs once she learns the words. Announce you would prefer if no one sang in your car in order to hear the artists' voices clearly.

Or, instead of timidly hinting at quieting her, you could save her feelings and let it go. A friendship is not worth ending over a minor character flaw, so when you get behind the wheel, hold your breath, maintain your tolerant-friend status and let her sing. Hopefully your friendship takes place outside of the car as well, where you can put her off-tune notes out

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**Natasha Chilingirian**  
Ask Nat

## Designing away winter blues

Painting, plants and maximizing light are just a few decorating ideas to brighten living spaces

**Helen Schumacher**  
Pulse Reporter

Every year around this time, it seems the sun is permanently trapped behind rain clouds. The weather report sounds like a broken record with continual forecasts of showers. The average student's once comfortable and inviting apartment has transformed into a cold, damp cave. However, students can escape Eugene's wet weather and corresponding winter blues by redecorating their house or apartment to make it a brighter, warmer place.

Eugene interior designer Debra Wade said the easiest way to change the feel of a room is with paint. She recommended using warm colors and earth tones, such as reds and mustards.

"Pinky reds, lemon meringues, glazes and pearl essence are all popular colors," Wade said.

Cool colors like blues and greens will only emphasize chilly weather.

If time and money are too scarce to repaint an entire room, Wade recommends just painting an end wall, which provides a focal point. The surface should be one with no door and the fewest windows.

Our House Interiors partner Dorothy Pritchard said the most important guideline is that the inhabitant is comfortable with the look of the room.



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Some common plants found at Indoor Garden to decorate one's house with are the Chinese evergreens (bottom) and a Bird's nest snake plant (top).

"Yellow is a bright color," Pritchard said. "But personally, I'm not comfortable living with it."

If the property manager won't allow a new paint job, Pritchard suggested buying inexpensive slipcovers for couches, bright pillows or artwork.

"With bright colors, a little goes

a long way," Pritchard said. She also encourages perusing garage sales and looking for brightly colored glass pieces, which will help catch and reflect light.

Our House Interiors, located at 298 Banton Ave., can offer additional advice for bringing spring to you.

Eugene's perpetual winter darkness also makes it important to maximize light when decorating, whether natural or artificial. Add another lamp to the room or hang translucent curtains.

Wade said one way to make the most of light is by strategically placing a mirror across from a window to reflect the light.

It is also important that the space reflects the individual living in it.

"Pick things that have meaning and get rid of the clutter and things that don't mean anything," Wade said. "Make the space meaningful."

Flowers and plants are another good way to brighten a room.

Indoor Garden employee Sara Rutledge said a plant is a great addition to any room, because "it gives you something green during the gray days."

She touted Chinese Evergreens, Snake Plants and Pothos as all being hearty and easy to care for.

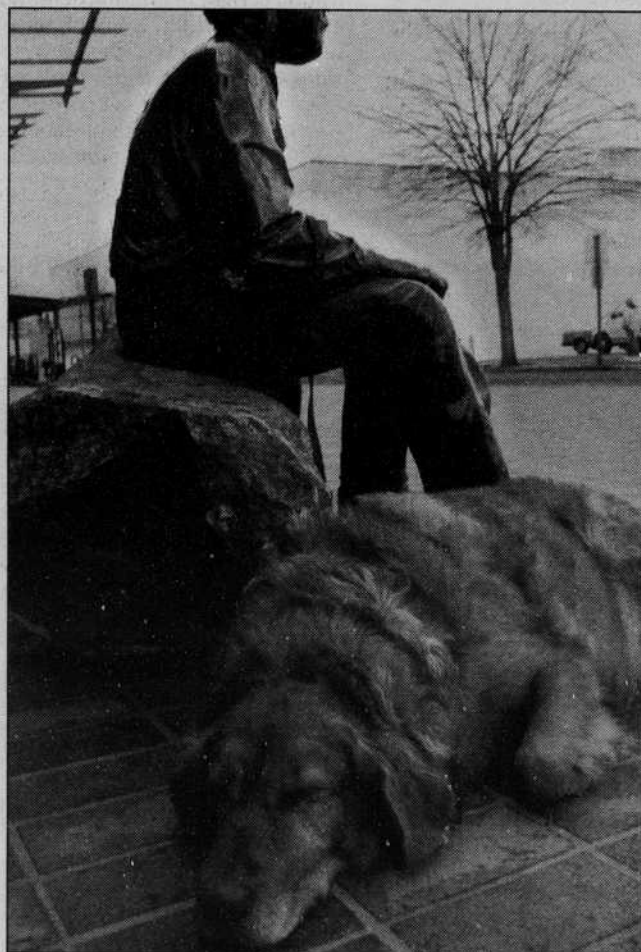
Rutledge also advised, "Keep plants root-bound and don't over-water."

Indoor Garden, located at 1915 W. 11th Ave., offers a large variety of foliage to match different tastes and budgets.

If none of these suggestions sounds very appealing, there is always the option of renting "The Endless Summer II" and taking mental vacation to someplace sunny.

Contact the Pulse reporter at [helenschumacher@dailymerald.com](mailto:helenschumacher@dailymerald.com).

## New library looks 'mildly futuristic'



Adam Amato Emerald

Millie the dog takes a nap outside the new downtown Eugene Public Library, where "you forget you're still in Eugene."

The Eugene Public Library is four stories high and contains everything from computers to signs to a DVD collection

**Aaron Shakra**  
Pulse Reporter

The new Eugene Public Library is visually overwhelming — so much that during my first visit, I hardly noticed a thing.

Entering the place almost makes you forget you're still in Eugene. After living here for more than 10 years, I've never seen a single building make our place of residence feel more like a large city.

During my second day at the library, I made sure to explore and take note of as much of the new library as possible. The following are my observations:

The building is large, but quite elegant. The layout is divided into four floors, and there's a parking garage below it all. Right now, only three floors hold books, with a fourth currently closed off to the public. Library Public Services Manager Rob Everett said the "information services" division will rent out offices on this elusive floor.

The first thing I did was get myself a new library card. The lines for this are really long, but it's a relatively painless process. Be sure to bring proof of Eugene residence — the cost for those who live outside city limits is \$80, per year, per household.

Soon after I received my card, I transitioned seamlessly into the new environment and sought out some books. There are more computers than you can shake

a stick at, and they all have flat screen monitors, lending to the library's high-tech appearance.

The first two authors I looked up were Iris Murdoch and Neil Gaiman. While I found works of the former relatively easy (the fiction section is in alphabetical order), the latter's books were strewn in various places about the library — Gaiman's selections were sparse and not as numerous as the catalog indicated.

Of course, this is to be expected. The place hasn't even had its grand opening yet — that will happen Saturday. There are signs everywhere asking patrons to be patient because certain services haven't been installed yet. A constant beep-beeping noise reverberates through most of the building because people are still returning books checked out from the old library.

Library reference assistant Clark Kent said there are more features in store for the new library: Extra copies of books, new books and a DVD collection that will make its premiere for the grand opening.

The overall design of the building is mildly futuristic and obviously well-planned by architects. This is evident in the smaller details — all the informational signs are bilingual, in English and Spanish — or, larger things, like how the third floor overlooks the second, allowing one to really feel the breadth of the place.

Most impressive were the available modes of navigation. The staircase leading to the various sections is downright majestic, flowing in a sweeping spiral

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