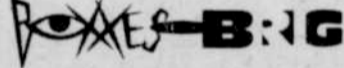
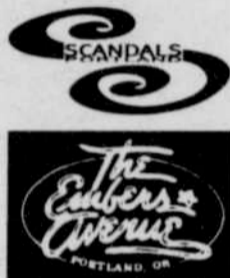


Looking for a partner?

So are we. Embers, Fish Grotto, Boxxes and the Brig, Red Cap Garage, Panorama, Scandals and Silverado are looking for partners to help us raise funds for **Esther's Pantry** and **Our House of Portland**. Our establishments, along with *Just Out* and Coors Light, will be teaming up from now until July 15th to make a donation to organizations serving and caring for people living with AIDS. So come visit us, bring your friends, enjoy yourself and support **Esther's Pantry** and **Our House of Portland**.

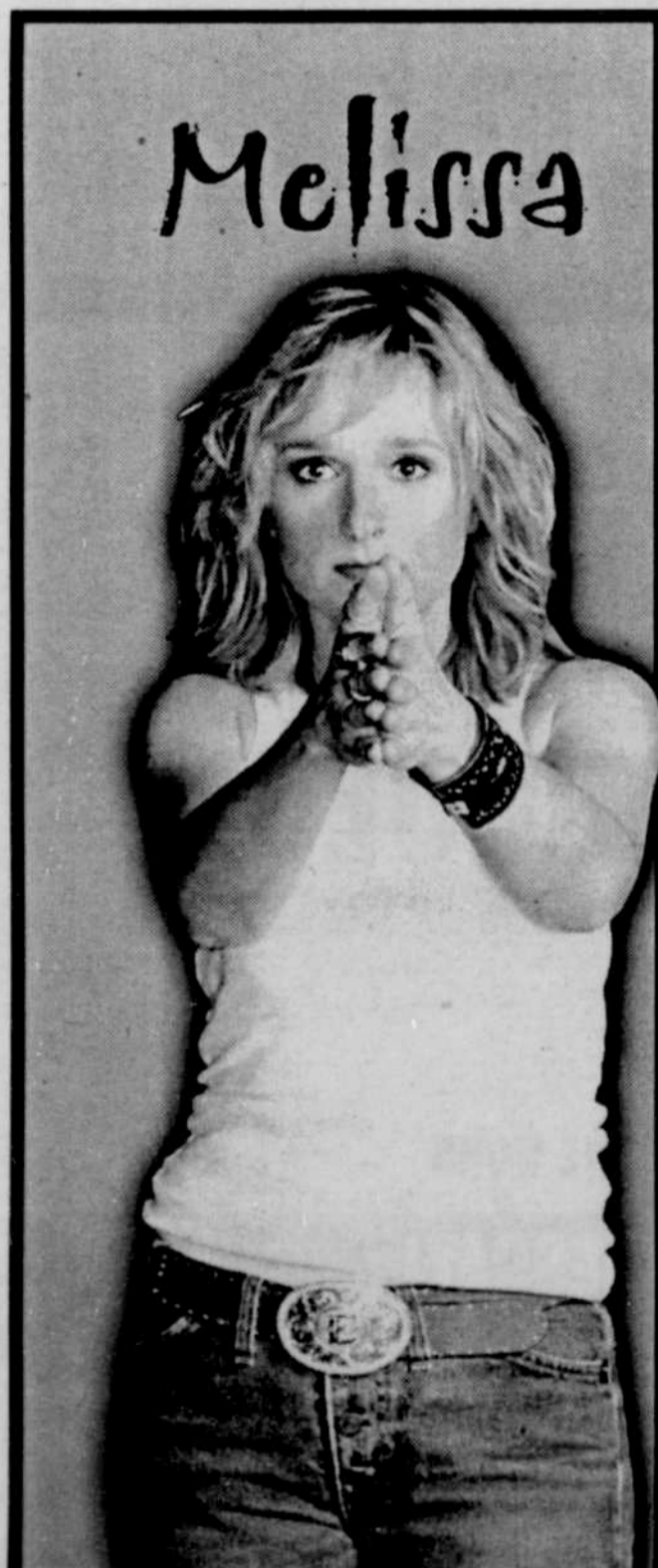


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HUMOR

Love notes

Obsessive compulsion wins that girl



Living OUT
 by Sally Sheklow

Today is our anniversary. Naturally, I have to clarify that this is our Vertical Anniversary. Four years ago today, we stood under the canopy in front of rabbi, friends and the Great Mystery and exchanged rings, vows and tears of relief that planning the wedding was finally over. We got married on our 10 1/2-year Horizontal Anniversary, marking the date we first got in that position together.

Back in those early falling-in-love days, more than 14 years ago now, I spent the night at her house a lot. She'd get up early to go to work, and I had a whole hour before I had to be at my job.

It all started innocently enough, with little love notes left under her pillow. At first they were just simple puns attached to stuff lying around her room. On a sock: "SOCK it to me baby." On her comb: "COMB back to me soon, my darling." On her fedora: "I HAT a wonderful time with you this morning."

Pretty soon I started snooping around her house. The kitchen was rich with material. On a paper bag: "I just love being in the SACK with you." On a canning jar: "I hope this isn't too JARING, but I gotta say I love you!" On her bananas: "Being girlfriends with you is a BUNCH of fun!" On a Lipton's tab: "TEA what I mean? Why do I love you? PEKOE, just PEKOE." On a can of Progresso Split Pea Soup: "SOUPrize! CAN you believe I love you? Take STOCK in that, my hearty bowl of yummy stuff. MMM-MMM-good!"

She loved getting the notes, and we had a blast laughing over them together. My habitual, constant entertaining—the very thing that drove previous girlfriends up the wall—was a big hit with this woman. Yente herself couldn't have made a better match.

Under Sweetie's encouragement, I found my creative energy had no limits. I made a note with cashew nuts taped onto an envelope: "My darling dear, I love you be-CASHEW are so wonderful. I had to remind you that I'm NUTS about you, just in CASHEW forgot." With some cereal and a Kalamata glued to a piece of paper: "CHEERIO my darling. OLIVE you." On a sheet of wrapping tissue (in Yiddish dialect): "Ah vuddint TISSUE hubbout diss. Ah luff you." On a bar of Ivory: "You are SOAP-yutifyful to me!" On the smallest drill bit in her tool box: "I never stop loving you, not even the teeniest little BIT." On a sanitary napkin removable strip: "Give yourself a PAD on the back for getting a girlfriend who loves you so much. Yours, ALWAYS."

This went on for months. The morning we woke to a snow-covered world, we went out into the front yard and made a little snowdog on the porch before she left for work. I brought some snow inside, which she found as a bowl of water on her bed with this note: "You don't stand a snowball's chance of getting rid of me!"

Proving nothing is too gross when you're in love, after flea-combing her dog I saved the little flea carcasses and taped them strategically to this note: "Are you FLEA aware of how

much I love you? I am so wonderFLEA happy being with you. I think our relationship is developing beautiFLEA. Take two powerFLEA dynamic Sagittarian lesbos and put them together...well, don't expect it to be a FLEAting moment. GrateFLEA yours. P.S. I careFLEA planned this whole letter."

After a very oral night, I left this one with a head of garlic taped to it. "Oh, my sweet GARL-LIC my thang!"

I realized I was getting obsessive, and I tried to stop. I told her I wasn't going to write any more notes and not to bother looking for them. But I couldn't help myself.

On one of her deposit slips I wrote: "I told you not to CHECK under your pillow. I love you on ACCOUNT of your excessive INTEREST!" On little labels stuck to a strand of knotted ribbon: "I told you I'm (KNOT) going to write any more puns. I'm (KNOT) in the mood and it's (KNOT) going to happen. Please do (KNOT) even look. You're (KNOT) going to find one. (KNOT) no way (KNOT) no how!"

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going to happen. Please do (KNOT) even look. You're (KNOT) going to find one. (KNOT) no way (KNOT) no how!" Left in her tennis shoe: You little SNEAKER! I told you not to look in here, now SHOO!"

Eventually we moved in together. I got a job that had us out of the house at the same time, and the daily notes stopped. But to this day, twice a year on our anniversaries, we get out her old scrapbook—petrified olive, mummified fleas and all. She is so sweet to have saved my notes.

Maybe today I'll make her an anniversary breakfast and slip a love note under her omelet: "You're a good egg and I love you. No yolk." ☑

SALLY SHEKLOW struggles hard to take life seriously. Send your punny fan mail to sally@wymprov.com.