

EUGENE WOMAN DISCOVERS CIVILIZATION NORTH OF RIVER

Peggy Wolfheart was rescued from Valley River Center yesterday after the lifelong Eugene resident got lost on her way to The Kiva and found herself smack in the middle of Eugene's largest mall.

Wolfheart, who had never before left downtown Eugene, says she quickly became overwhelmed after entering the retail shopping center.

"Who knew that anything existed beyond Skinner Butte?" she says, adding that she had heard of north Eugene but avoided the area because it was too "commercial."

Frightened by the shops full of factory garments and clusters of young people in baggy jeans and Billabong shirts, Wolfheart says she finally broke down after stumbling upon a storefront devoted entirely to mass-marketed, non-organic, non-gluten-free cinnamon buns made with artificial ingredients and coated in high-fructose corn syrup.

"I thought maybe I'd gone to hell," she said, "Or Orange County."

At this point, Wolfheart curled up in a ball on the floor and tried to commune with the spirit of the Willamette River to help guide her the hell out of the mall.

Clearly disoriented, Wolfheart was approached by a concerned citizen.

"She looked like she had just been at Oregon Country Fair, Burning Man and Lillith Fair back-to-back," says Eric Wood, a professional Ducks fan who frequents the shopping center. Wood noted Wolfheart's Keen sandals, dusty hemp top and "unnecessarily" long, dreaded braids and decided that she "wasn't from around these parts."

First, Wood purchased a neon yellow shirt from The Duck Store and instructed Wolfheart to put it on. "My first move was to get her to blend in," he explained.

He then escorted Wolfheart to the nearest exit and guided her to the parking lot, where she could see the river and nearby Delta Ponds.

"The cry of the great blue heron called me home," Wolfheart says, but really she just she followed the scent of marijuana over the Greenway Bridge and back into "Eugene proper."

Wood says he didn't have the heart to inform Wolfheart about the existence of Oakway Center. "That poor woman had had enough for one day," he said. "Imagine trying to tell her about Costco. It might've done her in." — *Martigan Ufgood III*



YOU'VE BEEN SERVED

Local self-loathing cretin finds solace in lack of service

I don't like myself very much.

For me, self-loathing is a matter of principle. It's not so much that I see myself as unlovable; it's more to the point that I consider myself utterly unworthy, and I experience human attention of any sort, much less gestures of affection and compassion, as a kind of assault on my very being. Abuse, derision and outright neglect are my real life's blood. I thrive on being ignored. And when you up and shit on me, it ratifies my low self-esteem, as though all is right in the world.

That said, moving to the Pacific Northwest has been a real boon to my diminished sense of self. It was here, at last, that I discovered a pervasive social climate that matched the undying chill in my soul. People in the Midwest are too friendly and meddling; the Deep South is overly polite and parochial; and the collective aggression of New Yorkers makes me want to die.

But folks in the Northwest? What a lovely bunch of sniffs! People in this city, especially so-called millennials, have an absolute genius for passive aggression, and they are masters of the haughty eyeball roll that questions the validity of my very existence. Please, invalidate me, and then take my money! I couldn't ask for more, and rarely do. If only they knew how deliciously bad they make me feel about myself.

I tried Seattle: too expensive. Tried Portland: too contrived. Tried San Francisco: too yuppie. It wasn't until I landed in Eugene, where lack of effort has been raised to an art form, that I finally felt at home. The first time I bellied up to an empty bar and waited 35 minutes for a pair of hipsters discussing iPhones to acknowledge my existence by asking me if I wanted something, I knew I'd arrived. In the heat of such disregard, my self-loathing blossomed like an orchid. It was exquisite.

In fact, it's in the realm of customer service that I find Eugene's utter lack of even a modicum of concern most satisfying. When I go to a hip, expensive restaurant, there is nothing I like better than being treated as though that restaurant taking my money for doing as little as possible is somehow doing me a favor I don't deserve. And nothing raises the delicious cold-pricklies of my self-contempt like tipping 20 percent after I've received zero service at all, and then having to bus my own table to boot. Yes, please,

spank me some more! I deserve much worse! Perhaps I could wash my own dishes next time?

With the recent revitalization of downtown and the gritty growth of the Whiteaker neighborhood — bringing with it a new wave of pricy haute-cuisine restaurants and hip-grub joints — it seems that the almost erotic neglect that characterizes Eugene's service industry has gotten worse, which, of course, for a guy like me, means better.

Whereas a few years back it seemed that waiters and baristas were merely addled by attitude and apathy, those same servers now seem actively trained according to the Stockholm method, in which a practiced tension between psychological neglect and lavish fakery is intended to reduce victims to a quivering jelly of anticipation and frustration.

I'm not complaining. No, quite the opposite. Ignore me more! Make me wait an eternity! The more I suffer at a restaurant, the greater the pleasure. I envision a day when I walk into a Eugene eatery and everyone working there immediately turns his back on me. Seat yourself? How about fuck yourself instead. I'd like that.

Because, seriously, I don't want help, unless it's help realizing what a masochistic integer of the sadistic empty set I am — merely a paying customer forced to wait, anticipate and question my right to spend time and money in such a wonderful, wonderful place. — *Gordy Frump*