

### Transcultural Futurist Magazine

ISSN 1554-7744

## Vol. 4, no. 3 (Winter 2005-2006)

### The Other Side of the Future!

#### Future Lite

by Lindan Johnson lindanlee @hotmail.com



Welcome to Future Lite! No topic is to small, no trivia too trivial, and no fact too unfounded if it can possibly provide entertainment or enlightenment for our readers.

#### Cyber Love

I personally believe the collapse of Western Civilization, as we know it began with the invention of the salad bar although there are some scholars that argue with me and say that it began earlier with the \$3.95-all-you-can-eat luncheon buffet at the Golden Dragon.

The fact is that human beings are only capable of processing so much information before we're completely overwhelmed and by the time we get to the "chick peas or garbanzo beans" choice quite a few of us toss our leafy greens into the air, race back to the safety of our table and request a nice house salad with house dressing, and breathe a sigh of relief.

On this particular Monday, I ended up sitting with a group who had all avoided the salad bar and I ascertained very quickly that everyone was indeed, single. Not only were they single, but they were all experts in the field of love... er... the quest for not the conquest of—so they were a perfect panel of experts for my current research.

There was an immediate consensus to the fact that you can't possibly date anyone you work with, anyone who is recommended by a friend, relative or ex-spouse, anyone you know in a social setting—church, PTA, or political group, or anyone from anything you really enjoy doing—like bowling.

The main reason for this is that dates NEVER work out and then you have to avoid the place where you know the person from which can get very difficult particularly if it's your job. Or you have to avoid the person that suggested you date the aforementioned person and that can be very difficult particularly if it's your mother.

Everyone agreed that the best way to meet someone was online... in the cyber zone.

So I shared with them my case study...

Sarah, a 31-year-old attorney placed her profile online in hopes of finding her soul mate. She wanted a man who was also be an attorney, loved Wagner, played ice hockey and was more than 6' tall.

Arthur sent her an email and told her how much he identified with her profile and that he matched all of her requests. The emails began to fly back and forth and soon they were instant messaging each other constantly. They loved the same things. They hated the same things. They dreamed the same dreams. The world around them lost all meaning... they were only living from one cyber contact to the next.

They soon took the leap into the second dimension of sound—they were held in rapture by each other's voice and would spend hours on the phone together talking about everything under the sun, moon and stars. Sarah would start sentences that Arthur would finish and sometimes they even said the SAME WORDS at the SAME TIME. It was kismet.

Finally, unable to bear the separation and suspense any longer. After all this had been going on forever—at least three weeks—they both agreed it was time to meet in person. Arthur invited Sarah to meet him at her favorite restaurant. He arrived early to personally set their table with a beautiful floral arrangement from his own garden and ornate sterling silver candleholders with festive color-drip candles. By her salad fork he put an elegantly wrapped Wagner mixed disk that he had created for her that reflected the story of their relationship.

Sarah came into the restaurant and their eyes connected immediately across the crowded room. Arthur was the man of her dreams. The evening was fabulous—the food, the wine, the conversation—perfect! Sarah knew that she would invite Arthur to come home with her this very evening and propose that they catch the next plane to Reno to make it legal in the morning.

The moment came... it was time to leave this magic setting. Arthur stood up and came around to help Sarah with her coat. Sarah stood up and suddenly realized that something was terribly wrong. Instead of looking into her lover's eyes, she was looking at a patch of thinning hair covering the top of his head!

# "OH MY GOD! I SPECIFICALLY STATED IN MY AD THAT I WANTED SOMEONE OVER 6 FEET TALL... YOU MUST BE 5'6"! YOU'RE SHORT!!!!"

"Yes," said Arthur, "and I always wanted to be over 6' tall as well."

My panel of experts wasted no time in thinking about their interpretation. "He **LIED** to her, she should sue him for misrepresentation, alienation of affection and time lost... and can I have her number?" said George an attorney who had nothing going for him except he was 6'2" tall.

"He didn't lie... he told her the **TRUTH**... he always *wanted* to be over 6' tall as well! Who couldn't see what a wonderful, caring thoughtful man Arthur was—those color drip candles are very difficult to fit in sterling silver candleholders! Which sites is he posted on? I'll email him immediately at every one of them," said Sally as she whipped out her laptop.

"Okay, now here's the mistake they both made—they *met in person*. You don't ever actually **MEET** people that you meet online—it ruins everything! Heck, I've got 50 different profiles out there and hundreds of different girlfriends who think I'm the love of their lives. Now just how long do ya think that would last if I went around MEETING THEM IN PERSON??" said Hank, who in point of fact would never ever ever qualify as the man of anyone's dreams.... *ever!* 

"Actually, there's no point for all of this stress and miscommunication. You don't really need real people at all... it's now possible to order the latest in female companionship where you can customize each and every part of her body in the state of the art silicon to be delivered to your door for around \$7,600," said Stu the guy from the stockroom who was speaking from personal experience (note: this is the one comment that is not made up... the company will create "men" as well!)

The discussion continued with passion for quite awhile longer. The digital divide between fantasy and reality was deep. Not only are we dealing with our own perceptions of who we are and what we're looking for...

and our projections onto each person who responds who in turn is dealing with his or her own versions of fantasy and reality... like the "house of mirrors" only in the cyber world the mirrors can go on forever and ever.

As I was walking out of the cafeteria, Juanita, the lady in charge of the salad bar, pulled me over.

"Honey, it ain't the technology, it's the people. Just tell the truth. Tell the truth about who you are and what you are looking for... and the odds are someone out there will tell the truth right back. The Technology is only the medium, we still are responsible for the message."

"Thanks, Juanita..." I said.

"One more thing... you could avoid all this silliness if you'd just go out with Herman in accounting—he is a fine man!"

Technology now gives us the ability to scan millions of personal profiles from all over the world. We can sort our search by age, physical attributes, educational, financial, hobbies and pudding preferences. But is this a good thing? Does it make us more successful in the dating game? Are we finding our soul mates and direct-connecting into the Happily Ever After?

I think I'll drop by accounting and flirt with Herman.

Note: Please feel free to send in your favorite quotes, predictions, anecdotes, topic du jour, scandals, pet peeves, gossip and rumors and you may find yourself captured in Future-Lite! <u>lindanlee@hotmail.com</u>