

THE AVASTAR

Your World. Your Voice.

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FREE COPY

STOP THE BOT!

RUTHLESS LANDBOT BARON STRIKES AGAIN



BY BILBO WINKLER
LANDBOTS owned by Landbaron Merlin (left) have caused more misery this week, with residents losing land worth thousands of L\$.
 SEE PAGE 3



“MY LIFE IS RUINED”

JAXI'S ORDEAL IN LOST INVENTORY SCANDAL
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INSIDE OPINION

"Although I hate to break it to those believers - getting rich in SL ain't that simple. Although money does grow on trees in SL, there is not much of it."

REGIS BRAATHENS p.10



"I built an object recently which, when touched by someone, transfers L\$1 from their account into the account of another avatar.

The script for this has only eleven lines. What we have here is a huge weakness in the system."

MARTIN WILLIS p.6

WRITE FOR THE AVASTAR

HAVE a story? Got an exclusive? Want to work for The AvaStar and earn big Linden bucks? Come visit us at The AvaStar Island 107.210.81, send an email to newsdesk@the-avastar.com, or visit www.the-avastar.com

E-MAIL OF THE WEEK

500 LINDEN DOLLARS

your mail

yourmail@the-avastar.com

WE want to hear YOUR opinion. Is there an issue which angers or moves you? Do you have a point you want to make? If so, then send us an email with your views and comments to: yourmail@the-avastar.com. The best emails will be printed in the newspaper, and you will earn L\$500 for each one that is published.

BUILDING BRIDGES IN SL



MICHAEL Linden opened the bridge connecting the Nova Albion sims on April 16. AvaStar reader Daedalus Young partied with Hermia Linden at the parade.

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SHAMELESS: Landbaron Merlin and his landbot Paper Olivier



By BILBO WINKLER

LANDBARON MERLIN CAUSES MORE MISERY

RUTHLESS BOT OWNER TAKES ADVANTAGE OF VICTIM'S MISTAKE

LANDBOTS owned by Landbaron Merlin have caused more misery this week with residents losing land worth thousands of US dollars.

The bots, owned by Landbaron Merlin, are programmed to snatch up cheap land as soon as it is put up for sale, often mistakenly set at a price far below market value. Melina Loonie's client crashed this week while she was setting the price of parcels on a sim she had just bought. When she logged back in, almost 30,000 square metres

had been grabbed by Merlin's alt Paper Olivier for just L\$6,600 - leaving her US\$1,400 out of pocket.

BEGGED

Melina had mistakenly put her land up for sale before she set the price of each parcel, meaning they were sold at the default automatic bot-bottom-line. She said: "I begged him not to sell the land on, but I didn't even get a reaction." Other victims include Lucrezia Ah, who lost US\$2,000 and most of their sim to Merlin

after also mistakenly selling their land. Over the last year, dozens of residents have been stung by Merlin, a grab taking just seconds.

SUPPORT

Antibot Alliance member Sarah Nerd has



VICTIM: Melina Loonie

slammed Merlin. She said: "He hides behind the terms of service. Some bots give back land put up for sale in error, but not Merlin." According to Nerd, victims get little support from LL. "Lucrezia could have at least gotten more response than 'I'm sorry LL doesn't get involved in land transactions'", she added. "LL has to do whatever it takes."



ANGER: Sarah Nerd

NEW RATINGS FOR RESIDENTS

BY HONEY BENDER

A RANGE of new systems are already replacing the doomed Linden ratings.

Among the competing entries are RatePack, TrustNet, Sloog.org, Ban Link, Real Reputations and Slicr.

RatePack is a HUD from RL company RatePoint, with which you can see the ratings of residents close by.

MikeRP Mapp helped to create the system. He said: "Ratings can help a resident learn a bit more about one another when doing things such as buying an item. They can also help foster communications between residents."

TrustNet is a trust system created by Dale Glass, and Ban Link a distributed ban system developed by Travis Lambert and Mera Pixel. The Real Reputations rating system was created by Shaun Altman.



ANGER OVER THE END OF RATINGS

RESIDENTS WHO SPENT THOUSANDS ON RATINGS BERATE LINDENS

By CARRIE SODWIND

RATINGS will soon disappear from Second Life in their current form - leaving residents who have spent a fortune on them frustrated and angry.

The system was given a stay of execution this week when the installation of a new version of SL, without ratings, was postponed by Linden Lab.

REPUTATIONS

But ratings are set to become extinct next week. At L\$25 a rating, some have spent thousands letting others know what they think of them. For some, like marketer Jenna Fairplay who has given out an incredible 2,223 points, rating has clearly been an important feature of their second life.

Some are furious about losing their scores and reputations, and are upset that it will put those who used

their talent to build up scores over the years on the same footing as a newbie. Webgoddess Mars, who has given out 2,035 points, said: "I don't like the fact the Lindens are taking away the ratings. I did find them useful as in general it's a good barometer of how people will treat



HIGH RATER: Webgoddess Mars and her ratings history

you." LL believes, however, that the original rating system has become less and less useful. In the official blog, Jeska Linden said: "We are currently working on adding features that will allow residents more flexibility in bringing their real and online identities into SL."

EVOLUTION

The change is proving popular with some high-rating residents, however. Alliez Mysterio said: "That was the way things worked back then, but now we have so much more."

Behavior	+1065
Appearance	+1094
Building	+570
Given	+2035

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

WHAT DO CELEBS THINK OF THE CHANGES?

Stephane Zugzwang:



TOTAL: 2183 GIVEN: 2412

"I feel comfortable with ratings going. I'd certainly like to see something meaningful and not as expensive replace it. It is important to be able

to gauge people based on their reputation, especially when they create and sell stuff. I'd like it to be Linden Lab driven. I'm not happy with their plans of having residents handle that. Either it gets universal appeal - or it's of little interest."

JC Fremont:



TOTAL: 16 GIVEN: 0

"I occasionally look at them. I think that they would be important to keep for sim management. We are developing a campus and I think that

I would want the campus administration to be able to check ratings if people are causing trouble."

Six Kennedy:



TOTAL: 321 GIVEN: 209

"I don't think I will even notice the difference when it's gone, since I rarely (probably never) notice people's rating numbers and

haven't checked my own in forever. I Once negative ratings went away people paid less attention to them, so the same will probably happen for positive ratings."

Aeris Shenlin:



TOTAL: 32 GIVEN: 40

"I actually like ratings. If I see someone's profile and he's half a year old but hasn't any ratings at all, I'm usually not so interested to find out more about them. I'm also

always happy about receiving ratings, including the nice messages you get! So I'm very much for them."

Alliez Mysterio:



Behavior +840
Appearance +768
TOTAL: 2046 GIVEN: 2144

"Why not if it allows us to grow? Rating is really about the old days. We used to have rating parties, we had fun, got to know each other. I had no idea it used to

be so much cheaper. "If I meet someone exceptional I do still rate them, though many people have stopped doing that. "I don't think the Lindens need to pay us back for the lost money. Each change is about Second Life evolving into a wonderful place."

NMC BOOST

EDUCATION in SL received a boost this week as three new sims were opened next to the campus of the New Media Consortium.

The sims at the NMC are open to the public to visit, and are available to lease for learning and educational institutions.

The NMC is hoping to support learning centres which are looking to establish a virtual presence, and is planning to open more sims in the near future, as well as establishing a mentoring programme for educational residents.

'REAL' AVATARS

VIRTUAL avatars could soon be replaced by real life versions with the arrival of new web cam video technology.

Technological innovators 3DSolar have created a new Interactive Video Space (IVS) system that will allow users to be represented on-screen as themselves in a real time video image, as opposed to one generated by a computer programme.

Along with the upcoming voice integration into SL, the new technology could see the distinctions between the real and virtual worlds becoming increasingly hard to define.

NEWS BITES!

SL MEMORIAL

A MEMORIAL space has been set up on Info Island to commemorate those who died in the shootings at Virginia Tech in the US this week.

ARCTIC MONKEY

US mountaineer Ed Viesturs will make podcasts and vodcasts for SL, hosted by Cisco Systems 2, as he treks across Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic.

PORTUGUESE SL

A PORTUGUESE language version of SL is to launch on April 23. The surge in popularity with Brazilians has led to the creation of Second Life Brazil.

CHARITY HUGS

RED Cross launched their Hug for Life campaign this week. Avatars can embrace their fellow residents in exchange for donations to buy mosquito nets for poor families in Africa.

GREEN EDWARDS

JOHN Edwards' headquarters in Laguna Beach was the setting for a global warming debate last week. Attendees discussed the presidential candidate's views on environmental issues.

STOP THIEF!

THEFT IN SECOND LIFE AND HOW TO STOP IT



FOLLOWING last week's report in The AvaStar about the ease with which a thief stole thousands of L\$ from a resident ('Victims Taunted by Cruel Thief'), MARTIN WILLIS explains how easily it can happen to you, and how to prevent it.

I BUILT an object for research recently which, when touched by someone, transfers L\$1 from their account into the account of another avatar. The script for this has only eleven lines. What we have here is a huge weak-



ness in the system.

MONEY

Most businesses use objects to pay money to other avatars, such as camping chairs or casino games. To do this, an object is built to accept money as well as pay out.

In order for the object to pay out, the builder is asked at the time of creation if the object should be capable of independently taking money from the account of the owner.

DANGER

This is where the danger is - by giving your permission, a malicious programmer could then have FULL access to your account. All the programmer has to do is add an additional line in the script, and he can take any amount from your account - and

you'll only realise when it's suddenly empty.

PREVENTION

With thousands of malicious objects out there, what can you do to prevent this?

Firstly, make sure you know the history of someone who builds objects for you - especially if the objects ask to pay money out.

Secondly, don't keep more money in your account than you need for pay-outs. The remaining money should be held by another of your avatars that never gives objects the authority to pay out.

IRREGULARITIES

Thirdly, the owner should keep track of their balance, and take objects back into their inventory if they notice any irregularities.

Finally, objects for which paying out is an essential requirement should be built and programmed by the owner.

Although not everyone has the ability to do this, it is the only real guarantee that you have in SL against thefts like these.

THE AVASTAR
Analysis

By CARRIE SODWIND

INVENTORY
LOSS ORDEAL

THOUSANDS OF ITEMS VANISH

THE disastrous loss of entire inventories has caused havoc for residents, with one saying it has ruined her second life.

Bewildered Lindens are struggling to fix the problems, leaving many prominent residents without thousands of items.

Photographer Jaxi Morrison lost 28,000 items, including L\$4,000 of poses she had just bought. She said the loss has ruined her Second Life.

"It's affected me pretty badly. I've had to put off clients, and I am considering quitting. I hate to buy more things - what if it happens again?"

PARALYSED

Forseti Svarog and moo Money also lost their entire inventories during technical changes carried out by LL last Saturday.

The pair had thousands of items in their inventories, which date back to 2004 for Forseti, a senior figure at the Electric Sheep Com-

pany, and 2003 for machinima expert moo. Both told The AvaStar their businesses have been paralysed.

LL has identified a total of nine residents with entire inventories missing, and 42 with a "partially 'messed-up' inventory".

SAVED

Apologising on the official blog, Torley Linden said: "We're sorry if you're among the affected;

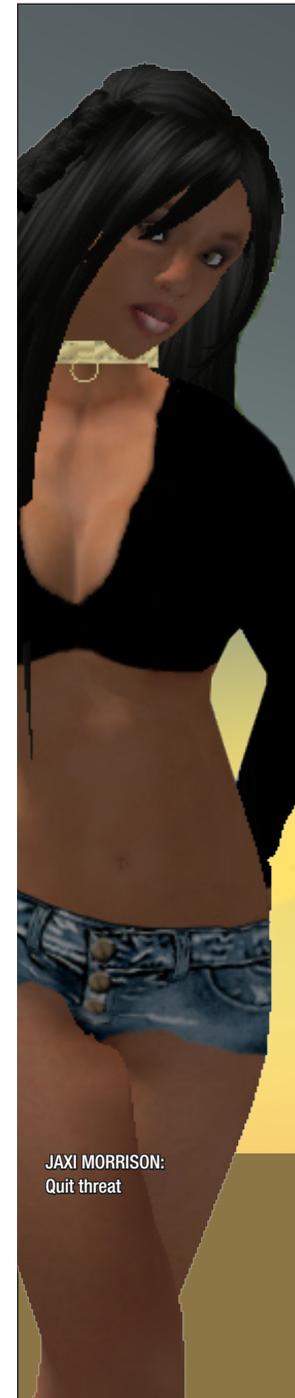
we're working quickly to restore each of these inventories from back ups, and hoping all goes well."

moo is still waiting to find out if her inventory can be saved, despite being told by LL that she would

know by Wednesday.

Forseti said he and other ESC bosses were waiting with baited breath to

see if missing items reappeared: "LL say they are working to rectify the problem as best they can. Our fingers are crossed."

JAXI MORRISON:
Quit threatDISTRAUGHT:
moo Money

KEEP MUSIC FREE!

By MANTA MESSMER

PROTEST BOYCOTT STARTED AGAINST LIVE EVENT CHARGES

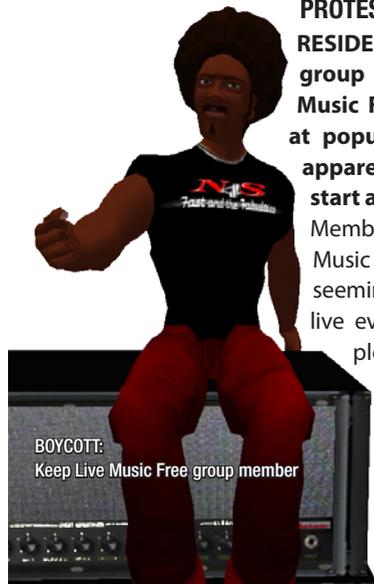
RESIDENTS wearing the group banner 'Keep Live Music Free' have appeared at popular live music sims apparently attempting to start a boycott.

Members of the 'Keep Live Music Free' group have seemingly been attending live events and IMing people there, encouraging them to leave.

The group appear to have formed in response to recent news broken by The AvaStar that a group of 26 live music ven-

ue owners were considering plans to introduce cover charges for high profile artists and special concerts. The group was founded by popular singer-songwriter Mel Cheeky in response to the cover charging plans. However the artist was shocked on learning about the boycott reports. She said: "This group was never intended for anything more than for everyone to be able to discuss this. My intention was to create awareness only."

Some group members, however, believe the system can work with regulation. Dupka Innis said: "To pay a cover charge to hear a new artist simply isn't on. I'm willing to pay for artists who perform at professional sims."



ADVERT

YOUR Photos

L\$500

yourphotos@the-avastar.com

Did you spot something unusual? Have you got exclusive snapshots of a SL celebrity? Were you at a great event or party? Have you seen something new that you want to share with others? Then send us your photos and you could earn yourself Linden Dollars. For each photo published in the newspaper the author will receive 500L\$.

L\$500

PICS OF THE WEEK

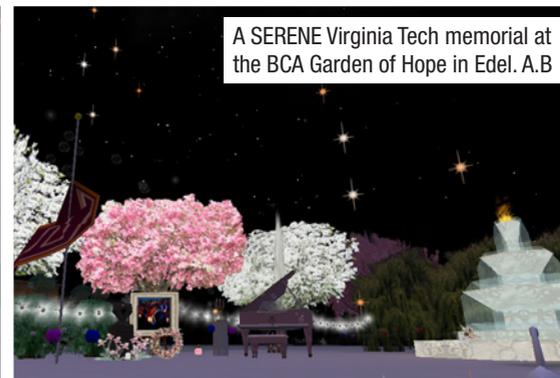
yourphotos@the-avastar.com



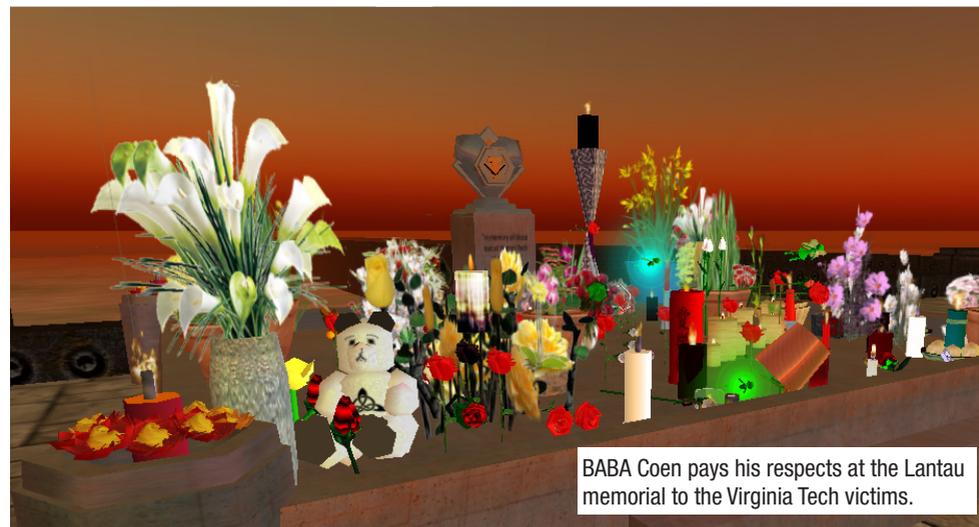
A DISPLAY on Red Cross Island depicting aid work in Africa. J.Y



GREY coloured ravers played 'spot the fully-rezzed person' at the laggy party at A Virtual Festival. D.V



A SERENE Virginia Tech memorial at the BCA Garden of Hope in Edel. A.B



BABA Coen pays his respects at the Lantau memorial to the Virginia Tech victims.



REGIS BRAATHENS

SL IN GRIEVING

THE response of SL residents to the tragic events of last week at Virginia Tech has been a testament to our community.

The numerous memorials and candlelight vigils for the victims of the shootings shows how this tragedy has touched people from all around the world.

CHARITY

The Virginia Tech Charity has been set up by long-standing residents Tenshi Vielle, Callie Cline and Victoria Wheeler with an auction to raise money for the bereaved currently being planned.

One resident deeply affected by the horrific event is Milosun Czervik. The head of the Information and Communications Technology Centre in SL, is also a research assistant at Virginia Tech. He set up a memorial wall for residents' messages.

YOB

Not everyone may feel the same - but the grieving of the Lion Sands memorial I witnessed on Friday was just disrespectful, and in no way reflective of the feelings of our supportive and grieving community.

MONEY GROWS ON TREES IN SL - BUT NOT MUCH

WHY THE RICH LIST OF SL DOES NOT TELL THE REAL STORY

MIRROR, mirror on the wall, who's the richest of them all? The report in BusinessWeek featuring the (by no means definitive) list of the top ten richest people in SL was another boost to those dreaming of making virtual riches.

GOLD DIGGERS

Although I hate to break it to those believers - getting rich in SL ain't that simple.

A wave of enthusiastic gold diggers flooded in after the news that Anshe Chung had made a million. With the recent sale of Stroker Serpentine's Amsterdam sim

for US\$50,000 and BusinessWeek's evaluation that designer Barnesworth Anubis makes in excess of US\$110,000



AMSTERDAM: One of SL's most popular sims

a year, we can prepare for the next wave of ignorant money seekers.

PAYING THE RENT

Unfortunately, although money does grow on trees in SL, there is not much of it. For every Anshe, Stroker, Barnesworth and Aimee Weber (who BusinessWeek says earns between \$30,000 to \$100,000 per client) there are thousands of people who are hardly making a L\$, let alone paying the real life rent. Less than half of the 32,000 residents in SL

March earned more than US\$10, say Linden Lab. As for getting rich, only 152 residents earned over US\$5,000 last month.

MILLIONS

The good money now is in bringing RL companies into SL, and even there the market is young with companies needing time to comprehend the benefits of marketing in the virtual world.

Despite content creator MillionsofUs' expected revenues of US\$6million for 2007, margins are generally small.

SERIOUS MONEY

Of course the market is still wide open for entrepreneurs - but it's important to realise that making serious money in-world is no walk in the park at this stage in SL's growth.

PLEASE SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO:
regis@the-avastar.com



SUCCESSFUL: Aimee Weber

your mail @

YOURMAIL@THE-AVASTAR.COM

LET THE TEENS JOIN US

Hey Regis, I AM also a parent of a teen (14) who is a member of the teen grid. I would welcome an integration of the teen grid with the main one.

My son and I cannot, through SL, communicate. I can't visit him, I can't talk to him, nothing. I would love the opportunity to open doors to him, to show him what is available in-world, and to help guide him through the

sometimes crooked paths. I'd like to be a mentor as he explores the good possibilities SL has to offer.

Many folks are worried about pervs and paedophiles; as a parent I respect and share this concern. However I know that my son is a

bright young man. Before he ever accessed the internet, and on a regular basis, we discuss what is and is not appropriate, what to look out for, what information he can and cannot share. Just letting him step out our RL front door is a risk that something might happen to him. Letting him step into the main grid in SL seems, in comparison, a much smaller risk.

By V.G.

E-MAILS OF THE WEEK

500 LINDEN DOLLARS

WRITE TO: YOURMAIL@THE-AVASTAR.COM

HELP TO KEEP FREE LIVE MUSIC IN SL

Hey Regis, I AM a great fan of live music concerts in SL.

I only have a basic account, however, and have to earn L\$ by camping to be able to tip the musicians and the clubs. If the concerts were not free, I would not be able to attend them which would be a great loss of quality of life for me in SL. I guess that many SL inhabitants earn their L\$ the same way as I do. For them too

it would be extremely difficult to attend these concerts if they were not free. Besides, the way the audience interacts with the singer and with each other in



FREE FOR NOW: Live top music

their chats is extremely entertaining and creative. Another aspect would be the promotion of the SL performers in RL.

If people liked their music, they could buy their CDs and tell their friends about them. I can only urge the SL audience to demonstrate for keeping live music free by wearing the free T-shirt and by asking their SL friends to join the campaign.

By Teja Merlin

TEENS READY TO COME INTO SL

Hey Regis, I SEE that this issue of teens on the main grid is getting heated and discussed all over SL.

Personally, I think we should let them in. What's the big deal? There is plenty of sex in SL, this is true. But so is there in RL. The whole point of SL is that it is a virtual world not a virtual dictatorship, kindergarten or anything else. YES teenagers need to be protected from some things, but they're allowed on the internet aren't they? Last time I checked there was a fair bit of smut available on that too.

There are occasional perverts around, but it is up to the parents to warn them, not LL acting as a government.

By B.M.

THE AVASTAR Your World, Your Voice

TEENS ON THE MAIN GRID?

VICTIMS TAUNTED BY CRUEL THIEF

CRIMINAL HAS STOLEN THOUSANDS OF LINDEN DOLLARS

VICTIMS MOCKED OVER LOSSES

TEENS: The Avastar last week

FRUITLESS SEARCHES A THING OF THE PAST?

NEW SEARCH ENGINE PROMISES TO EASE THE FRUSTRATION OF SEARCHING IN SL

By MONTGOMERY SILVERSTAR

THE days of fruitless product searches in Second Life could be coming to an end with the beta release of the SheepLabs Search Engine.

SheepLabs will provide residents with a unique way to locate objects in SL, and the project, run by The Electric Sheep Company, could signal a new era for in-world business development.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

"That SL businesses have thrived with only a severely crippled 'places' search and relied on word-of-mouth advertising until now is remarkable," says Christian Westbrook, a metaverse architect at Electric Sheep Company. "Residents will be able to finally find the products they're looking for without having a knowl-

edgeable friend that gave them a landmark, and businesses will now be able to start up and not wait for people to hear about them from their friends.

INFORMATION

"For the same reasons I search the web rather than go wander around Manhattan to find something I'm looking for, I can use this service to find products at locations in SL I would otherwise never find."

According to Westbrook, the existing 'find places' search only allows residents to look through listings containing information about the parcel, not the products which can be found there.

FEEDBACK

"Our service instead offers a simple search over the parcel information, the names and de-

scriptions of objects, as well as the creator/owner and price of each object," says Westbrook. As the service is in beta, ESC is seeking feedback from residents who try the engine as well as developers who are interested in helping to create an API on top of this data for building mash-ups or new services.

PROMISE

"We want to provide our search service in the most respectful manner possible, which means making the data we harvest public to preclude the need for a multiplicity of crawling bots." While the new engine won't find lost sheep, it does promise to drive a flock of new business to companies operating in SL.



SEARCH ENGINE: Christian Westbrook, the ESC sim and how the new search engine looks

BERLIN TARGETS RL BUSINESSES

GRAND PLANS FOR PERFECT REPLICA OF GERMAN CAPITAL

By BILBO WINKLER

REAL life business owners in Berlin are being encouraged to take up identical premises in an exact copy of the German capital city.

The newBERLIN sim is the brainchild of YOUseeMein3D, who intend to make it far more than just another SL city copy.

Lastchancer Namura and January Lightfoot plan to recreate the whole of the city centre. A massive amount of land around the one sim currently up and running has been reserved. So far, the city's hub of Alexanderplatz has been built in great detail. The centrepiece is the 368 metre-high television tower feted as the tallest building in SL.

DIMENSION

But the plans go further than renting out space to clubs and skin-dealers. "There is already enough space in SL for the usual shops - we're trying to give a new kind of SL experience, by just delivering RL structures, including social, cultural and commercial aspects", Lightfoot said. The pair's goal is to rent the SL real estate to

the concept of shopping online, for example, a whole dimension further. "Delivering a map as a ground structure gives other opportunities to putting up some city symbols and shops", Lightfoot added.

ENTHUSIASTIC

If a shop exists on a certain sight in the centre of RL Berlin, Lightfoot and Namura want that business on the same spot in SL. "We will try to connect RL and SL services", Lightfoot said. When asked if this would go to the extreme of an RL bookshop existing in the same spot in SL, selling products in-world and delivering them outside, Lightfoot was enthusiastic: "That would be great... it's what we're dreaming of."

LOCAL BUSINESS

The self-professed 'Berlin boys' want local businesses to help finance them, while providing more than an exercise in brand promotion. Many businesses are showing a great deal of interest already, Lightfoot said, who hopes it could change the way firms enter Second Life.



BERLIN: The U-Bahn and Lastchancer Namura

BIZ BITES:

ADULT FANTASY

ADULT ENTERTAINMENT giant Beate Uhse launched in SL this week, driven by the opportunities for fantasy and role-play according to business manager Andreas Fischer.

ENDEMOL PLAN

TV COMPANY Endemol will team up with games maker EA Games to create a virtual world in the mould of SL, as an extension to their broadcasts.

OFFICE CONTEST

ROME publishing house Melttemi Editore is holding a contest to design their SL office, with the winning entry chosen by a panel including RL architects. The prize is US\$5,000 - around L\$1,800,000.

BACK TO BASICS

ENERGY GIANT EnBW has opened a 'Welcome Area' on its island, where newcomers to SL are taught the basics.

TRAVEL IN SL

STA Travel are set to launch two new islands in SL which will include residential dorms and a branded proficiency test.



A-STAR GOSSIP
Jenzza Misfit

A-STAR GOSSIP

FOREIGN CHAT FROM THE EIFFEL TOWER

By BILBO WINKLER

SECOND FRONT ON TOP FORM IN PARIS

NEW Paris was the location for a spectacular performance by the Second Front group this week.

It took place on top of the Eiffel Tower, and was based around phrases the performers typed into the chat bar in a given language. For example, French would be translated

into English, then into Portuguese, and then back into French. The group were dressed crazily as ever, with wedding dresses and large fish on the end of sticks the order of the day. The result was as entertaining as it was baffling and bizarre, for all involved.



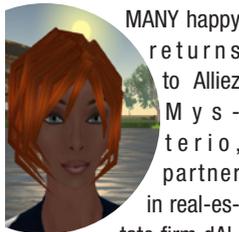
UP HIGH: Second Front on the Eiffel Tower



FOREIGN CHAT: The performance

PICS By SECOND FRONT

CELEB B'DAY



MANY happy returns to Alliez Mysterio, partner in real-estate firm dAlliez Estates. Alliez turns three on April 22.

MAXIMUM ROCK FOR STAR FM IN SL

By BILBO WINKLER

BERLIN RADIO STATION LAUNCHES IN-WORLD

MAXIMUM rock was the order of the day at a party to mark the SL launch of Berlin-based Star FM.

Rock fans turned up to the station's virtual seaside studios, dancing away to new and

classic songs in the intimate environment,

while the DJ seat was occupied by various



ROCKIN' OUT: DJ and revellers at the party

avatars throughout the day. Keep on rocking!

SPOTTED!



TAO TAKASHI, founder of planet.worldofsl.com, was spotted amongst the guests at the opening of the new BERLIN sim.

SEXY SIM MAKES A SPLASH

By BILBO WINKLER

ADULT entertainment giant Beate Uhse made a pool-side splash this week with their SL launch.

Plenty of good-looking hosts were on hand to show visitors around the saucy sim

developed by the German veteran of the industry. More SL events are planned.



SAUCY: Beate Uhse sim

A-STAR GOSSIP

COKE IN SL COLA-BORATION

By JENZZA MISFIT

DESIGN A 'VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE MACHINE' IN COKE'S NEW GLOBAL COMPETITION

COCA-COLA has launched an open contest for residents as well as people in RL to design a virtual experience machine.

The Virtual Thirst competition is based around the concept of a vending machine which dispenses entertainment, adventure or

happiness. Residents across the globe are invited to take part in the contest, which was launched at a press conference at

Crayon Island. Reporters also used the event to ask questions and hear details of the company's plans in Second Life.



EVENT PLANNER: Rebecca Millionsofus



CLASSIC: Coke truck

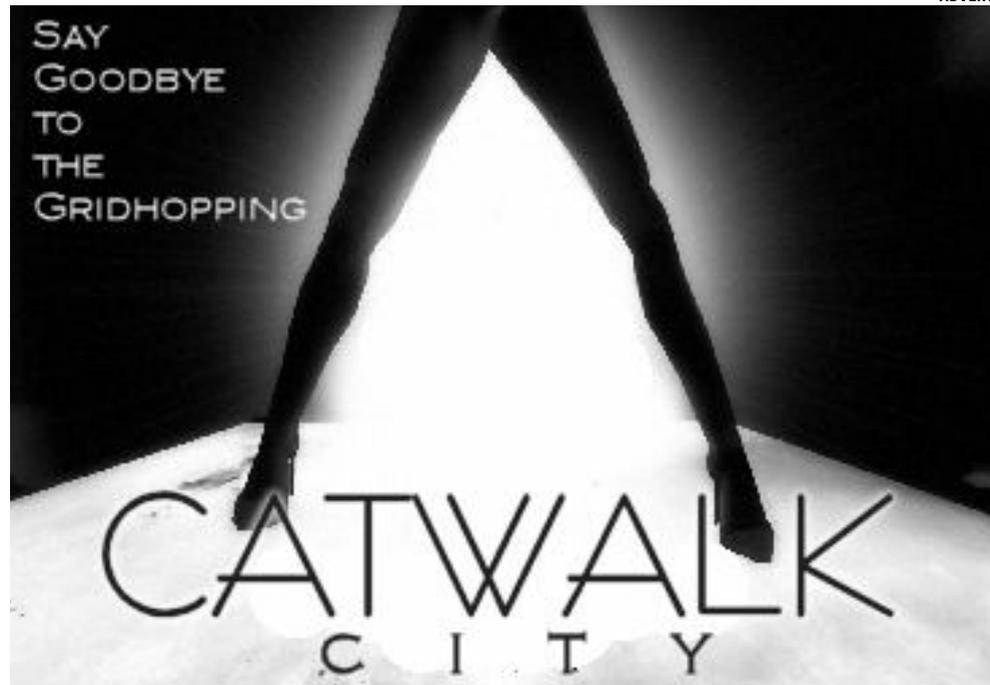


GLITZY: The Coke sim



CRAYON ISLE REP: Gideon Television

ADVERT



SAY GOODBYE TO THE GRIDHOPPING

CATWALK CITY

YUMMY MUMMY

BY ISABEL BROCCO

BEING PREGNANT DOESN'T STOP YOU LOOKING CHIC AND STYLISH

THIS week The AvaStar's fashionista Isabel Brocco reveals the secrets behind looking radiant in maternity wear. Team up some simple but feminine baggy shirts with chunky jewellery to look like a sophisticated mum-to-be.



BABYDOLL MATERNITY

By 2HOTT
Nantli Xola
(224, 65, 46)

L\$199



MOONSTONE JEWELLERY SET

By Cailyn
Gisborne (112, 187, 27)

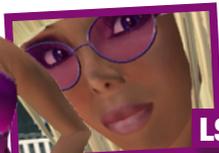
L\$50



WILDNIGHT HEELS

In blue, black or red
By H&M
Sanddalgi (57, 241, 64)

L\$290



SOLAR GLASSES

Scripted for colour change
Agapema (101, 48, 29)

L\$345



YUPPIE HAIR

By Old Gravy
Unsung Heros (153, 77, 43)

L\$225

PURPLE HAZE OUTFIT

By Baby bugz
Isle of You (117, 102, 31)

L\$100



KOOL KITTIE SHOES

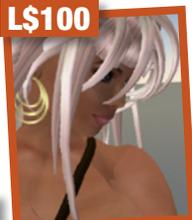
By Tickled Pink
Chatouille (171, 34, 23)

L\$175

TRIPLE HOOP EARRINGS

By Ramos
Ramos Isle (209, 79, 25)

L\$100



TWISTED HAIR

By Acedia
Bolinas (151, 46, 60)

L\$650



NATURAL WOOD HEELS

By Sama
Gembong west (239, 157, 31)

L\$100

TRISTA MATERNITY WEAR

By Simplicity
Nantli Xolal (189, 100, 34)

L\$125



callie cline's STYLE HOTLINE



BLACK IS THE NEW BLACK

THE LITTLE BLACK DRESS WILL NEVER GO OUT OF FASHION

IN fashion, there's always a 'new black', which simply means that black is always 'in', and when designers or writers see a new trend in colour style, they call it the 'new black'.

For a while in SL, 'missing image' was the new black, so it's just a term for the new cool colour or what is showing up a lot. In the fast, furious and amazingly diverse world of SL, the new black varies and is almost like a disco ball in a club, reflecting colours minute by minute.

For me, that means the new black is always

black and you can never go wrong with the most basic of all black, the little black dress. It is a must have for every woman's wardrobe, period. There are many lil' black dresses in SL of all different styles. This one I put on again and again, which I can dress up, down, funky or classy. It's by Elka Lehane, one of my favourite

designers. With some accessory changes and different hair, it can go from classy and elegant to downright bratty. So whatever you do this week, go and buy yourself a great new lil' black dress, or pull one out of your inventory, and then go find some cute accessories to make it your very own new black!



'IN': Lil' black dress

WHAT'S HOT! LITTLE RED SLIPPERS

By ISABEL BROCCO

LOOKING as cute as Dorothy on the Yellow Brick Road, Iris Seale, the owner of Punch Drunk fashions, was sporting a fabulous pair of little red slippers last week. She was spotted by The AvaStar checking out fashions at It's All Good in Naedam on Friday, as she sauntered along in a skin tight pair of peddle-pushers, a fresh black bob, and some red hot shoes with black spots.



CUTE: Iris Seale

INVENTORY SNEAK PEEK AERIS SHENLIN OF SMOOTH DESIGNS

I CAN'T DO WITHOUT...

"MY Neko skins by Jungle voodoo are my favourite SL outfit. I am a part time Neko (a Dark Neko) and I love that outfit to bits. It is the sexiest skin in SL. I made the shape and eyes myself and the hair is from Cake. I like them with the twitchy tail."



I CAN'T DO WITHOUT...

"MY rose typers are great - they spill roses from my hands when I type. They come from Lauren's Tiling Shop and I use them nearly constantly. They always cheer me up."



I CAN'T DO WITHOUT...

"The Mata Hari jewellery set by Random Calliope. I did a really tough challenge to win the set. I have since made friends with Random, it was he who inspired me to get into jewellery making, and this set will always remind me of that."



By CARRIE SODWIND

HOLO STYLE

HOLOSPHERES are cropping up across the grid, recreating RL surroundings or creating an illusion of surreal spaces in-world.

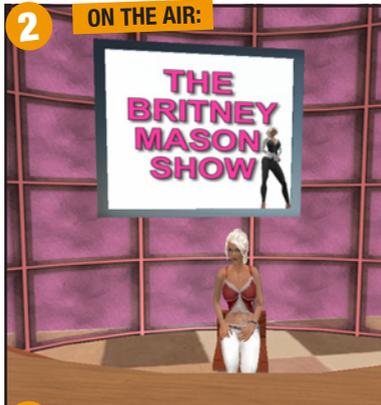
A holosphere is a circular projector that displays a 3D representation of any 2D image. Artist Stranger Momiji has explored the potential of holospheres to show the effect of light on space and create shades. This operation would require a maze of prims on regular land. Stranger has set up a simple navigation control inside his holosphere to change between 36 different pods, each one giving a different display of the same 2D image making you feel like you are in another dimension (Cetus 107, 43, 31). The sphere presents a unique opportunity for the artist to find out which lighting positions the audience likes best. Check out a party holosphere at Podshow Island (223, 38, 26), and a travel holosphere at Heidiland (164, 95, 276).



ARTIST: Stranger Momiji

★ STAR CRIBS *By LIONILA LIGHTFOOT*

PODCASTER BRITNEY MASON TELLS THE AVASTAR ABOUT HER PERSONAL SPACE



2 ON THE AIR:

ABOUT BRITNEY MASON
 Born: 8/22/2005
 Activities: Host of the Britney Mason show podcast
 Home base: Podshow sim and Crayon sim
 Rooms: Three floors with large lounging areas and broadcast studio, sunbathing terrace and two bars

THE highlight: Britney has installed her own studio at home with a huge video screen and changing backgrounds for her show.



1

LARGE AND INVITING:

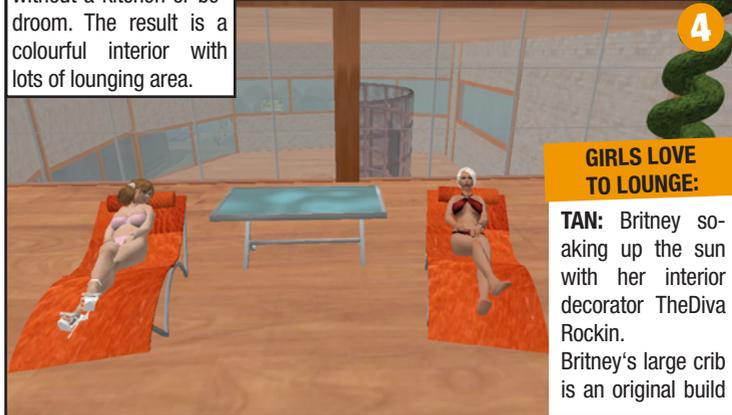
THE house: Britney has just moved into a big house on Podshow island. She has a big open space for parties so does without a kitchen or bedroom. The result is a colourful interior with lots of lounging area.



3

PRIVATE AND SECURE:

THE loft: The Shhh! loft at Crayon sim is loaded with memories from her time in SL. Her favourite piece, an oversized white couch she has had since her first day, has become a wall of fame.



4

GIRLS LOVE TO LOUNGE:

TAN: Britney soaking up the sun with her interior decorator TheDiva Rockin. Britney's large crib is an original build

DESIGNERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Sonia Stardust

SL Birth Date: 11/5/2006

Famous for: Founder of Ornaglyphs

By LIONILA LIGHTFOOT

The AvaStar: What is your latest project?

Sonia Stardust: The pornoglyphs. They are not super hard core or anything, but a bit naughtier and more funny.

TA: How did you come up with Ornaglyphs?

SS: It comes from petroglyph, a print from ancient art that resulted from cavemen blowing pigments on walls. My works are single panel comics that I would like people to group together to make their own comics.

TA: What topics do you deal with in your work?

SS: My main focus is to create art that almost requires audience participation. My art has no meaning whatsoever. Art does not have meaning until the viewer gives it some.

TA: What inspires you?

SS: Everything I witness, listen to and smell. It is all stream of conscience. I give myself ten minutes max to sketch each piece out.

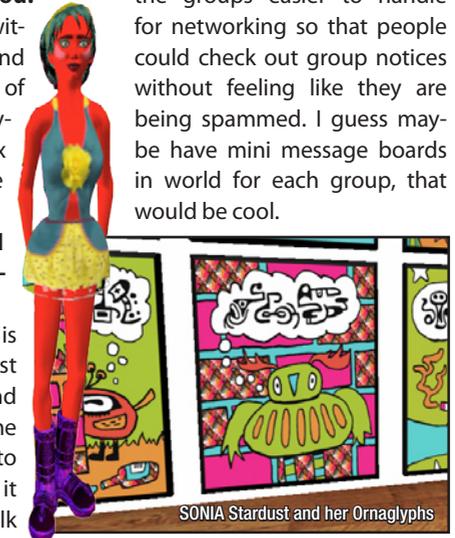
TA: What helped you become successful in SL?

SS: The thing in SL is that you cannot just put your art up and expect to become famous. You have to put some time into it and be around to talk

to people. I have my own group with almost 200 members which I use to promote myself. That has helped a lot so far.

TA: What would you change about SL?

SS: People should be able to join more groups and also make the groups easier to handle for networking so that people could check out group notices without feeling like they are being spammed. I guess maybe have mini message boards in world for each group, that would be cool.



SONIA Stardust and her Ornaglyphs

SPRING TREE-ATS



By TINA (PETGIRL) BERGMAN

Rabbit trees
 In left and right versions
 By Random Cole
 Del Luna (109, 77, 32)
L\$100

Spring Romance Topiary Special
 By Jase Byrne
 Rustic (92, 162, 23)
L\$300

NIRVANA Topiary Swan
 in Planter
 By Carrie Grant
 Nirvana Oblivion (159, 77, 21)
L\$175

NIRVANA Topiary Gecko with Stone Spheres
 By Carrie Grant
 Nirvana Oblivion (159, 77, 21)
L\$250

Ficus Helix Topiary Special
 By Jase Byrne
 Rustic (92, 162, 23)
L\$150



new sim opening soon!



women's fashion & beauty items, accessories, shoes, "mainLine" for men, "home" by caLLie cLine and more.

now in PLUSH LAMBDA



CRUISING THE WAVES

By **BILBO WINKLER**

THE golden age of ocean liners lives on in the 21st century thanks to the magnificent SS Galaxy, Queen of the Sagittarian Sea.

A project begun by businessman Nova Straff, the Galaxy was built by architect Bill Stirling, owner of Sagittaria.

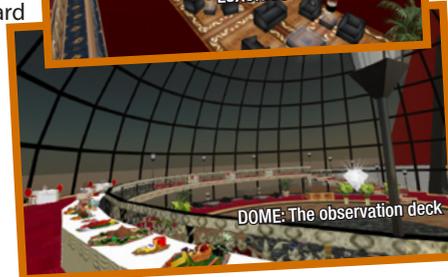
Teleporting to the giant liner takes you to the main entrance, where a member of staff is usually on hand to answer questions, or guide visitors around the huge vessel, which is 650 metres long.

The ship features a swimming pool, ice rink, casino, art gallery and a Star Trek-style holodeck.

Add to this the numerous shops and the soon to be opened restaurant, cinema, gym and spa, and visitors will soon be coming to the impressive SS Galaxy in their droves.

For passengers with a bit more time on their hands, cosy rooms are available to rent - a good idea after a hard night in the ballroom which has its opening party on Friday April 20.

Don't forget the official launch of the ship itself, which takes place in June.



TAKE YOUR PICK

Take a quick peek at the hot destinations in profile picks. This week: **OLDBIES**



MOUNT G'AL

Mahulu (100, 109, 139)

Be warned, this volcano looming over the rocky enclave of Mahulu is prone to erupt if not sated with a monthly human sacrifice, so if you fear for your second life look for the model at the visitors centre instead.



GRAY - HOME OF THE KAZENOJIN

Runway 18, Gray (228, 164, 43)

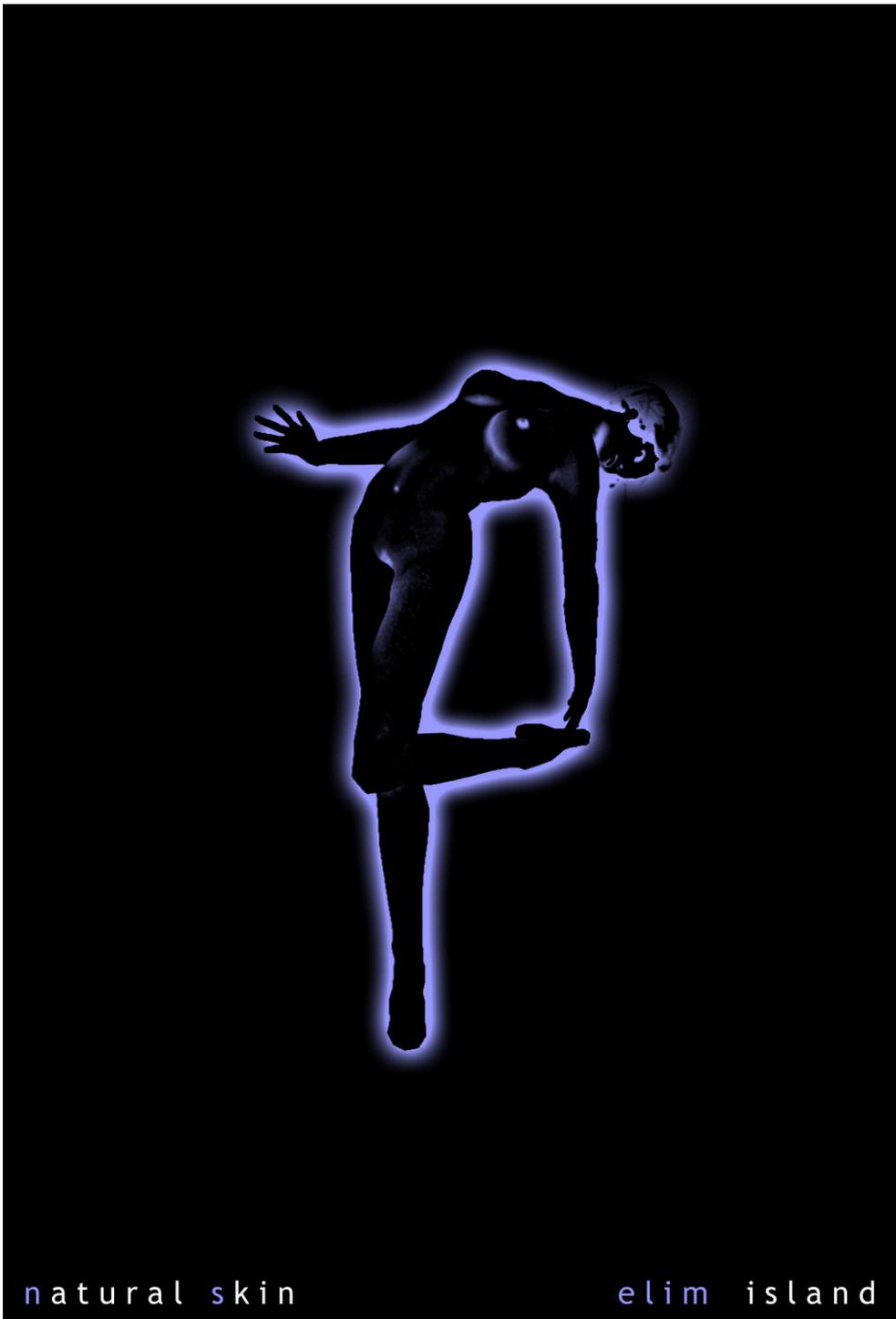
Kazenojin, "the People of the Wind", aim to take SL air travel studies onto a higher plain. You can explore their giant Eiffel Tower-inspired aeroport and array of aircraft in a bubble ship or a blimp.



LUSKWOOD

Lusk (185, 185, 37)

This peaceful pine forest community was created as a hangout for furies but welcomes all visitors looking for a homely retreat away from the hub of SL's urban sims or perhaps even a furry avatar of their own.



natural skin

elim island

For advice write to
Randi Barracuda at:
dearrandi@the-avastar.com

DEAR



RANDI

BISEXUAL DILEMMA

I'M STRAIGHT BUT LOVE SEX WITH MY GIRLFRIEND'S MALE ALT

Dear Randi: MY best handsome male alt, en advantage of it. She friend in SL told me she and after she did I was bisexual the first agreed to make love any way, and it sounds time we met. While I with him. It was won- as if you're both hav- have always enjoyed derful and I can't wait ing a good time. If you our conversations, I to do it again! Does this don't think you're bi- have made it clear I'm mean I'm bisexual, too? sexual, you probably not interested in be- — J.A. aren't. But don't worry coming her 'girlfriend'.

Randi says: Anything about it. SL is the per- Recently she said she is possible in SL, and fect place to explore was going to create a your friend hasn't tak- fantasies such as yours.

NEWBIE NEEDS TO FIND SL LOVE

Dear Randi: I'VE been in SL for about 10 days, and everyone calls me a newbie. I have had some tough times lately in RL and have been seriously thinking about looking for a girlfriend in-world. Although I have met many nice people, however, they are always either engaged or married. How can I find the right person, and what's the best way to begin a SL relationship? Can I expect it to last very long? — I.G.

Randi says: There are great people all over the place in SL! Looks seem to matter even more here than in RL, so spend time on your avatar. Type carefully, because smart guys are always attractive. Then be friendly to everyone and a perfect gentleman with the ladies. Ask someone you fancy to a bar, a dance, or a concert and see how things proceed.

IS SEX-MAD GUY RIGHT FOR ME?

Dear Randi: I HAVE just met a guy who is handsome, articulate, creative and gentle — just the kind of man every girl dreams about. But we had a frank conversation last weekend in which he told me all about his SL sexual history, and it's crazy! He has sex with someone just about every day, and says between his main and female alts he has had straight and gay sex with dozens of people. Should I just run away? — M.N.

Randi says: Not necessarily. If he's as wonderful as you say, don't reject him out of hand. Proceed as if the conversation never occurred, but just wait a while before making a commitment. Fortunately in SL you can't possibly catch a sexually transmitted disease, and you can't get pregnant unless you want to.

RANDI'S PHOTO CASEBOOK WEEK 5

Emma faces a tough choice...



Randi says: Divorce can be painful, but if you like him, then you should go for it!



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THE GUIDE

TOP EVENTS AND
ENTERTAINMENT

THIS WEEK: CAFÉS

COFFEE CULTURE

By GAETANA FAUST



RELAX AND ENJOY YOUR FAVOURITE PICK-ME-UP

SAVOUR the taste of an espresso at one of SL's many cafes.

Visit the Sundance Channel Cafe (150, 83, 28) for a cool, airy atmosphere. An outdoor terrace with sweeping views of tree-covered hills and a quiet lake creates a restful setting for enjoying your favourite beverage. Canadians will recognise the big red sign at Tim Hortons coffee shop in O City (151, 142, 23), which bills itself as SL's unofficial Canadian embassy. At The Cafe in Barcelona del Oeste (169, 69, 24), try not to spill your cafe con leche as you dance to Spanish guitar music. Visit Big Easy (165, 217, 26) to drop in at Cafe du Monde, a taste of old New Orleans charm, and stroll down Bourbon Street afterwards.

Expect the unusual at the Oval Gallery and Coffee Shop in Bloom County (142, 185, 23). The walls are filled with modern artworks that you can admire while drinking your beverage of choice.

CHILLING OUT

Lounge and chat at Open Latte Coffee Shop in Mill Pond (245, 134, 22). There are lots of cosy nooks where you can nap on a sofa or chat with a friend over a hot cup of tea. Slackers Cafe and Coffeehouse in Djork (76, 223, 23) is a little bit edgy, with its punk and hard rock posters, and music to match. Chilling out was never quite so cool as it is at Caffe Del Mar in Digital Zion (54, 244, 24). It's got a great dance floor, a hip bar, and expansive terraces.

SIPPING SOLITUDE CARPE COFFEE



Enjoy the secluded outdoor deck overlooking a lake, the perfect setting for a quiet coffee. The walls are even covered with art from masters like Monet.

Where: Fujin (163, 6, 22)

SPANISH STYLE THE CAFE



Enjoy a cafe con leche and a dance.

Where: Barcelona del Oeste (169, 69, 24)

SIT BACK AND RELAX L'AMI MARCEL



Take a seat along the boardwalk and appreciate the luxurious water view. Where: Goleta dAlliez (20, 72, 22)

4.20. - 4.26.

DON'T MISS! –



ENTERTAINMENT

BANANADU ROLLER DISCO

The good times will roll at Bananadu with a disco skating night. DJ Jack Pitts will be spinning the tunes while the revellers roll.

When: April 23, 18:00

Where: Les Arboles (108, 122, 204)



ART

ARTIST TALK

A week long exhibition of French pastel artist Jean-Francois Le Saint's beautiful work will culminate in a question and answer session at the new Frankfurt sim.

When: April 22, 13:00-19:00

Where: Frankfurt City (66, 52)



LIVE MUSIC

ICELANDIC MUSICIAN

Club The Vibe Hut launches to the sounds of Icelandic artist Holli Vallis.

When: April 24, 11:00-12:00

Where: Shaea (223, 183)



NIGHTLIFE

BEAUTY CONTEST

Enter to have a chance of winning the prestigious title and loads of L\$.

When: April 21, 12:00

Where: Katrina (239, 10)



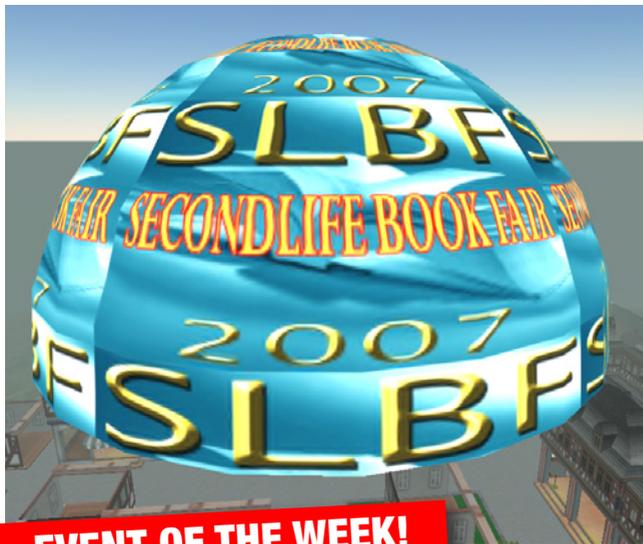
ART AND DESIGN

SCULPTURE EXHIBITION

The spring exhibition at Oyster Bay features work by 25 artists.

When: April 23

Where: Oyster 43, 182, 82



EVENT OF THE WEEK!

BOOK FAIR

SL's first book fair will bring together publishers, book sellers, authors and readers to share their ideas of books in-world.

When: April 20-22

Where: Wallaby (134, 96, 54)

EVENTS OF THE WEEK



EDUCATION

BAD ASTRONOMY

Join astronomer Phil Plait of Sonoma State University and www.badastronomy.com for an informal discussion on all things astronomical at NASA HQ.

When: April 21, 16:00-17:00

Where: NASA Colab (244, 110)



EXHIBITION

TECHNOLOGY EXPO

The International Technology Expo opens in Second Life this Friday, and runs throughout the weekend with panel discussions on various subjects.

When: April 20 - 22

Where: Silicon Island (95, 115)



ENTERTAINMENT

SCI-FI PARTY

Dress up in your finest spacesuit, grab your intergalactic gadgets and don your space helmet before heading to the StarCity sci-fi party.

When: April 24, 18:00-19:30

Where: Drum (82, 22)



EVENT OF THE WEEK!

PAPTA MODE PARTY

Models Mode and Patpa Productions are teaming up to celebrate the engagement of Satine Heart and Ricardo Patpa.

When: April 26, 19:00

Where: Paradise Beach, Azzurra (160, 217)



EDUCATION

EARTH DAY

Come along to learn the issues facing our planet, from global warming and oil consumption to sustainable living. The launch is at the Bliss Garden Center.

When: April 22

Where: FuturePerfect (241, 16)

WANT TO SEE YOUR EVENT HERE?

DO you have an event which you would like to see published in The AvaStar's Events section? If so, email us details at news-desk@the-avastar.com.



By Deeep Witte

How to...

Everything a newbie needs to know!

PREVENT GRIEFING AT YOUR SHOP OR HOME

IT happens all too often in SL – an unknown but friendly visitor will pop in for a chat, only to leave a trail of junk spam in their wake as they leave.

The junk can make the smartest store look down-market. Of course, the perpetrators can be banned from the sim straight away, but the use of alts often makes that a fruitless gesture. There are, however, things you can do to reduce griefing. Firstly, turn off the 'Build' option on your land. This will prevent anyone apart from you or your group rezzing boxes of spam

or other objects on your land. To do this, stand on your land, click on its name at the top of the screen, select the options tab and uncheck the 'Create Objects' option. You may also want to uncheck 'Object Entry', which prevents griefers from rezzing a item on the land next door and using the edit position option to bring it onto your land. Remember also to uncheck 'Run Scripts', and make sure the 'Push' option is not on to prevent attackers being able to easily move others off your land.



GRIEFING ATTACK: Super annoying

By doing all this, you can secure your store from spamming and most griefing. But turning off these options has a downside, too. Customers can't open their packages in your store to show their friends. You have to decide if regular cleaning up is enough for you or if you really want to heavily limit what ALL visitors can do on your land.

ADVERT

WHAT'S ON!

THE AVASTAR EVENT LISTINGS

If you want YOUR live concert, art gallery opening, radio show, or any other event to appear in The AvaStar's new listings section, send an email to info@the-avastar.com.

HUGS ALL ROUND WITH MULTITOOL

By PETRONILLA PAPERDOLL

THIS week's freebie is HelloMultitool v6 by Brian Miffin. It is one of the most popular in Second Life, and it's easy to understand why – by typing a simple command, you can give a big hug to a friend or a passionate kiss to your sweetheart.



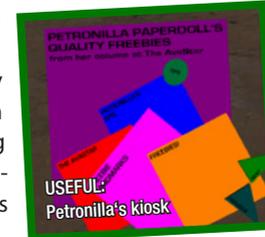
HUG: Old friends greet each other warmly

Its less used but still interesting functions include listing avatars in your area, and revealing your exact position or velocity.

It can also be a source of comedy, by sending particles to another avatar, creating a rideable red orb that will

take you to somebody or even standing on somebody's head!

HelloMultitool has full permissions so you can work on it, and that's why you can find it around in so many versions (for example, the popular v.5, or a separate 'hug and kiss'). Usually, these freebies pass from one friend to another. But if you still don't have it, you can find it at Petronilla Paperdoll's Quality Freebies Kiosk (Shepherd, 235, 131, 93). You can also find the freebies reviewed in The AvaStar – so remember to leave a notecard saying which is your favourite, and it could be the next to be featured!



USEFUL: Petronilla's kiosk

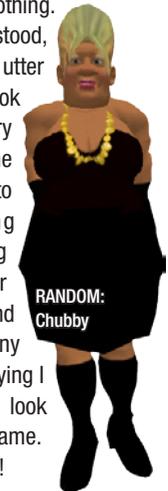
DO + THE DOS AND DON'TS OF HELP - DON'T

By GAETANA FAUST

- + Visit Help Island or a Welcome area to review the basics of SL.
- + Use Help/Second Life Help or click F1 to access your home page to find assistance.
- + Check the SL Knowledge Base to find answers to your questions.
- + Search Events to find classes to help you master SL skills.
- + Surf the secondlife.com forums and the official Linden blog to see if others are having similar problems.
- E-mail or call Linden Lab for problems you can solve yourself.
- Annoy other residents by shouting out questions in a crowded club or sending an IM to a group. Ask someone for help if you need it.
- Send a Help Request without providing details. The Help Request team are volunteers and their time is valuable!
- Spam the secondlife.com forums with simple questions.

Reader's DIARY OF A NEWBIE

RANDOM RAGE
JUST the other day, I quite fancied a make-over. Well, I thought, I've only been here a few days, why not try something new? Everyone else in here seems to be putting in more effort than me - it's not easy to keep up. And so I delved into my 'Appearances' menu to have a little fiddle. There it sat, perched so innocently on the lower frame of the window - the 'Randomize' button. One click later I resembled a rather chubby and downtrodden shell of my former glamorous self. I had assumed the button would be replaced with another which might read 'hit in case of dissatisfaction with fat and ugly new avatar', but alas, there was nothing. So there I stood, gasping in utter shock. It took me a very long time to return to something resembling my former self, and despite many hours of trying I still don't look quite the same. So beware!



RANDOM: Chubby

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THE AVASTAR OF THE WEEK

HELENA KIRKORIAN

IS AN ENTREPRENEUR WITH A BIG HEART. SHE IS THE CREATIVE BRAIN BEHIND THE PARADISE LOST CLUB.

By MANTA MESSMER

PROFILE

NAME:

Helena Kirkorian

BIRTH DATE:

02/27/2006

PROFESSION:

Entrepreneur, CEO of Paradise Lost, model

ATTITUDE:

Creative and fun with a big heart

The AvaStar: What is your best feature?

Helena Kirkorian: I guess the swiftness with which I can create an event from scratch. It all starts with a good idea - I brainstorm with my friends or on my own and hopla, we have a party!

TA: What is your favourite place in SL?

HK: The terrace of my club Paradise Lost. When I see the guests arrive and can welcome them, I am happy. My club is non-commercial and focuses on bringing people together. So every new ava I see is a potential friend.

TA: What would you change in SL?

HK: Since the first day I joined SL I feel like Alice in Wonderland every time I log in. I would not change much, except the fact

that every time I fly my car it should be easier to cross simlines.

TA: How do you spend time in SL?

HK: Usually working. I love to create and host events, or chat with interesting people. I recently discovered I love building. SL gave me the opportunity to study some architecture and I must admit I am rapidly becoming a builder.

TA: Which personal achievements are you most proud of?

HK: I am involved in various small and

big projects. My sims Scheherazade and Zhivago are the scene of the community I built. Soon the RL movie, where I play the main SL character, will be released. To be continued!

TA: If SL had a president, who would you vote for?

HK: I am a big fan of Evita Perón. Although if there would be elections, I would surely want to be on the list! But a good person with a broad view on life would be very fine to me.