

STUDENT LIFE

Fake rings a put off for would-be suitors

By Eric Edwards
The Orlando Sentinel
(KRT)

I wouldn't want to say it's easy being a woman.

If I did, I'd probably get strung up by my own small intestine before I even finished this column.

But when it comes to dating, women who have it good often suffer an embarrassment of Riches ... and Davids and Henrys and Chucks.

It seems some women get so much attention from admiring menfolk they have been forced to devise a way to weed out some of the less-suitable suitors.

While there are women who would love the extra attention, those who are subjected to that onslaught have found that more is not always better when it comes to finding Mr. Right. So in order to keep some of the wolves of dating at bay, these princesses of popularity picked up on the fake engagement ring.

The New York Post recently reported that these faux rocks are the accessories of the season for fashionable ladies who just want to be left alone.

They drop \$10 on a gaudy stone, apply to left ring finger and watch as one-time pursuers fade into the background.

One woman told the Post that she no longer has any trouble walking past leering/howling construction workers. When the guys stop shoveling dirt and start shoveling lines, she just flashes her ring and the curtain falls.

Of course, this raises the question: Why don't these women wear wedding bands? But I guess if you're going for the fake-out, you might as well do it with the style that only a diamond can bring.

While I admire any innovation that

makes single life easier, I wonder if these young ladies realize that not only may they be chasing away Mr. Wrong, their two-carat fake may also be dissuading real catches from making passes.

Let's face it: It would be madness for any guy to hit on a woman who is wearing an enormous jewel. As far as I can tell, most women who sport engagement rings are so proud of their new accessory you don't even have to see the ring to know they're spoken for.

Frankly, there are enough honestly engaged women in the world who are off-limits that it seems unfair for women to muddy the waters of dating just because they hate to tell a guy to buzz off.

Fortunately for men who have fallen victim to the fake engagement ring dupe and who spend their nights cold, lonely and without a tender woman's lap on which to lay their head, the "lap pillow" has been introduced in Tokyo.

Manufactured by Trane KK, the lap pillow resembles the look and feel of a woman's lap in a mini-skirt.

According to the company, which sells the dolls for under \$100, single men have taken an instant liking to the pillows and they have already shipped about 3,000 of them.

With innovative ideas such as the fake engagement ring and the fake woman's lap, it looks as if society is making strides toward segregating the sexes so much that our grandkids will want to huddle around the fireside when we're old and listen to tales about the archaic ritual of "dating."

That is, if we are able to get up off our fake women's laps long enough to go out and find a woman who's not wearing a faux engagement ring and might be interested in joining us for a cup of coffee sometime.

Improve your vocabulary

By Doug Worgul
Knight Ridder Newspapers
(KRT)

Duh. Here's a way to improve the quality of your life in 2005: Improve the quality of your vocabulary.

That's right. Your vocabulary. The words you use to communicate. When you use better words, you'll get better results. Your kids will listen and obey. Your spouse will smile and agree with you. And your boss will finally begin to understand just how important you really are to the future of the organization. All that and you'll solve the crossword puzzle in half the time.

First, start reading more books. Books are where all the really cool words are. Generally speaking, books are written by pretty smart people. And if not, they're edited by pretty smart people. These people use some fine words. Words you, too, could use if only you'd learn them. But first you have to read more books.

Go to a bookstore and browse a bit. Find a couple of volumes that look interesting and read a few pages or even a few chapters everyday at lunch or at night. Pretty soon you'll stumble on some words you don't know.

That brings us to our next step.

When you come across a word you don't know in a book, or in conversation, or while listening to the radio, write the word down. For that specific purpose, start carrying around a little spiral notebook or a little journal with blank pages. Carry a pen or pencil, too.

Then buy a new dictionary. If you already have a dictionary, there's a good chance that it's too old to have

many of the words in it. These days the new words are as important as the old ones. And they're coming up with new words all the time.

While you're at it, buy a new thesaurus. A thesaurus is almost as important as a dictionary in enhancing your vocabulary. (If you're not sure what a thesaurus is, look it up in your new dictionary.)

Every night, look up words in the dictionary and in the thesaurus. Practice saying them aloud. Use them in a sentence or two.

Then forget about them. Don't try to use them in conversation the next day. You may not have learned them quite well enough yet, and you may misuse them and embarrass yourself. Then you'll be less likely to continue your efforts to build your vocabulary. And that would be a shame. Instead, just listen for the new words. Listen to how other folks use the words in context.

Listening is probably more important than talking when trying to improve your vocabulary.

Make collecting new words a habit. When you find a good one while reading, or listening, make a note of it and, later on, look it up and file it away in your memory. The right time for you to use the word will be here before you know it, and, though they may not know exactly why, your kids, your spouse and your boss will take you just a little more seriously and treat you with a bit more respect.

SOURCES:

www.ckow.com/
how_13383_improve-
vocabulary.html
www.uic.edu/depts/counselctr/
ace/vocabulary.htm

TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE YOUR VOCABULARY

- Read more magazines, or expand your reading to include different kinds of magazines.

- Read poetry. Words are to poets as notes are to musicians. They use them better than anyone else. Reading poetry will also show you how to use the words you've known your entire life in entirely new ways.

- Learn root words. Once you get friendly with that new dictionary you'll start noticing the connections between words. Recognizing the building blocks that create words is the foundation of a good vocabulary.

- Get yourself one of those little "word-a-day" calendars for your desk.

- Play word games like Scrabble or MadLibs with your family. This will result in significant benefits beyond vocabulary improvement.

- Take a foreign language class. Learning another language is a great way to improve your use of your own language.

- Identify some of your old favorites - words you overuse in your everyday conversation and try to substitute new words that mean the same thing.

Ice-skating is winter fun

By Bill Dow
Knight Ridder Newspapers
(KRT)

DETROIT -Recreational ice skating continues to be a popular winter activity that can provide an enjoyable cardiovascular workout and an ideal social opportunity.

"I like ice skating because you feel free and don't have to worry about anything," says Mikenzie Frost, 11, of Dearborn, Mich.

With her friends Sarah Cifaldi and Miranda Micallef she enjoyed a recent afternoon at the Campus Martius rink in downtown Detroit. The three met several years ago while taking figure skating lessons.

Dan McAskin, vice president of operations for H&R Block Financial Advisors, skates three times a week at the facility during lunchtime.

"I hadn't skated in a long time, and I thought it would be a nice break during the day," he says. "It reminds me of the feeling I had skating as a kid, the sense of freedom and the exhilaration you feel from the ease of movement and speed."

As a result of the opening of the Rink at Campus Martius, across the street from the new Computare building, people young and old are discovering, and in many cases rediscovering, the joy of ice skating.

Since the new rink opened in the third week of November, more than 25,000 people have showed up to skate, sometimes after waiting in long lines for the 450 available pairs of rental skates, according to Harry Datz, the Campus Martius rink operator for Magic Ice USA, which runs the facility.

Age isn't a factor. Instructors say it's never too late, or too early, to learn how to skate properly and enjoy the benefits of an activity that dates back centuries to the days when Swedes used animal bones for blades as a means of speedier travel.

At the Troy Sports Center, Marta Markiewicz is an instructor and coordinator of the Learn to Skate program that runs throughout the year.

"I've taught 21/2-year-olds to folks in their 60s," says Markiewicz, who has seen more adults joining the ranks of recreational skaters.

"For many adults who either skated as a child or never skated before, there's a growing interest in learning to develop the skills necessary to enjoy the activity with their children" she says. "For kids, learning to skate is a confidence builder and a good exercise for a generation of children glued to television and video games."

Jaimi Tarnow, a former skater with the Ice

Capades and Holiday on Ice shows who now gives lessons at the Rink at Campus Martius, agrees.

"Skating not only promotes better coordination and balance, but your legs become stronger and you can obtain a nice cardiovascular workout," she says. "It's also great because it's something you can do with your friends and family. When you go to the movies, you can't chat, but at the rink, you can laugh and have fun."

Markiewicz offers these skating tips for beginners young and old:

Sign up for lessons: A professional can show you the proper ways to skate and stop so you will have an enjoyable and safe experience. Many arenas offer instructions for recreational skating, figure skating and hockey skating.

Use properly fitted skates and take care of them: You may first want to rent skates at a local arena to determine whether you want to take lessons.

If you do pursue skating, invest in good-quality skates that offer proper ankle support. There are a lot of cheap skates on the market with poor ankle support. An instructor can suggest a dealer who knows how to properly fit skates. Avoid buying vinyl skates.

New skates out of the box are not sharpened. Make sure they are properly sharpened before skating. Skates should be sharpened on average after every 15-20 hours of use.

Use rubber skate guards when walking in the skates so the blades won't get nicked.

After skating, wipe the skates with a towel and store them with so-called soakers or towels on the blades. Do not store skates with the rubber guards attached because that will cause the blade to rust.

What to wear: Some rinks are colder than others, so whether you're indoors or outdoors, dress warmly and appropriately. Don't overdo it, however. You'll want to be able to move and feel comfortable. You'll warm up as you skate.

Sweatshirts and sweaters with a turtleneck and a lighter jacket are a good option. Wear gloves or mittens and, if you're outdoors, a hat.

Do not wear socks that are too thick because they can restrict circulation.

If you're in charge of younger children who will be falling a lot, consider dressing them in snow pants, but not a heavy jacket that restricts movement.

Although helmets are not required for taking lessons at most rinks, they are recommended for new skaters. A hockey helmet is best; otherwise, use a properly fitted bike helmet.

Large 1-Topping Pizza

\$7.99

with coupon

4402 Buffalo Rd., Erie

899-2313

Dine-in, Carryout or Delivery

Lunch Buffet Everyday 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

All You Can Eat

Pizza, Pasta & Salad

\$4.99

Wednesday Night Buffet 5 - 8pm

All You Can Eat Pizza, Pasta & Salad

\$5.99

Adults

\$2.99

Children ages 4-10

Large 1-Topping Pizza

\$7.99

Offer available on Pan and Thin 'n Crispy crust. Offer available on dine-in, carryout, or delivery orders. Up to 4 orders per person. \$1.00 delivery charge may apply. Limited time offer valid only with current student ID. EXPIRES 5/31/05

Large 1-Topping Pizza

\$7.99

Offer available on Pan and Thin 'n Crispy crust. Offer available on dine-in, carryout, or delivery orders. Up to 4 orders per person. \$1.00 delivery charge may apply. Limited time offer valid only with current student ID. EXPIRES 5/31/05

Large 1-Topping Pizza

\$7.99

Offer available on Pan and Thin 'n Crispy crust. Offer available on dine-in, carryout, or delivery orders. Up to 4 orders per person. \$1.00 delivery charge may apply. Limited time offer valid only with current student ID. EXPIRES 5/31/05

Large 1-Topping Pizza

\$7.99

Offer available on Pan and Thin 'n Crispy crust. Offer available on dine-in, carryout, or delivery orders. Up to 4 orders per person. \$1.00 delivery charge may apply. Limited time offer valid only with current student ID. EXPIRES 5/31/05