

OPERATION MATCH

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To:

Operation Match

COMPATIBILITY RESEARCH, INC. / HARVARD-CENTRAL OFFICES / 872 MASSACHUSETTS AVE. / CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02139



OPERATION MATCH

last name (please print legibly)										first name									
street or dormitory address																			
city										state					zip code				
college										telephone number									

Have you given a complete mailing address?
 Have you put down your correct area code?
 Have you put one number and one number
 only in each box?

PART ONE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75

PART TWO

MYSELF

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	29	29	30

MY IDEAL DATE

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	29	29	30

One in a million

You may not know it, but you're one in a million. No one else is quite like you—you have different tastes and different attitudes from those of anyone else you know. But you're one in a million in another sense. If you live in an area with several thousand college students, the number of possible matches for dating is several million. You yourself have a choice of several thousand dates, and be modest—that's too many to check out.

Here's where OPERATION MATCH—the original computer dating service featured on national T.V. and in TIME, LOOK, and GLAMOUR magazines—comes in. If you're the modern, adventurous type, you'll probably want to take part in one of the most interesting social experiments ever.

HAVE YOU MET YOUR MATCH? OPERATION MATCH is the original computer matching project—the only one of its kind.

It's the brainchild of several mixer-weary Harvard graduates who realized that most college students know what kind of people they enjoy dating. Blind dates were fine up to a point, but there had to be a better way than the present haphazard system. Why not use a computer?

HOW DO WE KNOW IT WILL WORK? With OPERATION MATCH, you answer a personality test especially designed for you and your dating habits.

This test has evolved through matching over a quarter of a million college students in the last year and a half. Evaluation questionnaires were sent out and the results analyzed statistically by Dr. Gunther Weil and Dr. Alan Cohen of Harvard University. Their analysis and continual refinement of the questionnaire and programming has now enabled us to take the blindness out of a blind date.

HOW DO WE DO IT? You take the personality test beginning on the next page, answering on the answer sheet enclosed in this booklet. Then you fold up the answer sheet, which is printed as a business reply envelope, enclose \$4.00 (cash, check, or money order), and drop the envelope in a mail box.

When OPERATION MATCH receives your "vital statistics," they are placed in the IBM 7090 computer memory file. The computer then scans the qualifications of every member of the opposite sex from your area and selects the five or more matches best for you.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF OPERATION MATCH:

1. **Continuous processing.** After your matches are computed, your answers remain in the computer memory. So by applying early, you'll be among the first to receive your matches—and you'll have an added advantage. As more people apply their answers will be compared with yours, so you may be matched several more times.
2. **The double-answer form.** You answer each question of Part Two twice—once describing yourself, once describing your ideal date. After all, the idea isn't necessarily to match you with someone similar to you, but with someone who meets your specifications. The double-answer form insures that **you**, not the computer, do the choosing.
3. **Two-way matches.** Your matches will be mutual, chosen on the basis of your desirability to your dates as well as their desirability to you. In other words, you'll like your dates and they'll like you.
4. **Zip Codes.** Your exact location and that of your matches will be given added emphasis in the matching process through the use of the new **zip code** system, developed by the United States Post Office.
5. **Reporting.** As soon as the computer has typed out the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your dates, the printed sheet will be mailed to you.

But the biggest feature of OPERATION MATCH is the excitement of meeting new people.

Be sure to return your answer sheet right away. Be sure your zip code has been properly filled in. The earlier you apply, the more matches you will receive.

Of course, the more people who take part in OPERATION MATCH, the more perfect your matches will be. So if OPERATION MATCH interests you, tell your friends about it. They may be one in a million too.

Operation Match Quantitative Personality Projection Test V

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GENERAL DIRECTIONS

Answers are to be entered on the special answer sheet provided with this booklet. For each question, make sure you enter one answer and one answer only, leaving no blanks. Make sure your numbers are clearly legible.

The success of OPERATION MATCH depends on the accuracy with which you answer these questions. For best results replies should be made spontaneously. Some questions are clearly more important than others, and the computer accordingly assigns them different emphasis in the matching process. In many cases you will determine the emphasis yourself.

Begin answering in box 1 of Part One on the answer sheet, writing the number corresponding to your answer.

PART ONE: Answer each question of this part once only.

SECTION I: Absolute Factors

Certain factors must be satisfied before the computer will test a potential match any further. The factors in this section are of this absolute type. In each of them, however, you are allowed to indicate as wide a range of preferences for your date as you wish.

1. My race is:

- (1) Caucasian (white)
- (2) Oriental
- (3) Negro

2. My date's race should be:

- (1) Caucasian only
- (2) Oriental only
- (3) Negro only
- (4) Caucasian or Oriental
- (5) Caucasian or Negro
- (6) Oriental or Negro
- (7) Caucasian, Oriental, or Negro

3. I am presently:

- (1) a full-time college or graduate student
- (2) a part-time college or graduate student
- (3) no longer attending college or graduate school

4. I am enrolled in or have attended:

- (1) a four-year college
- (2) a three-year college
- (3) a two-year college
- (4) a graduate school

5. My religious background is:

- (1) Protestant
- (2) Catholic
- (3) Jewish
- (4) other denominations
- (5) unaffiliated

6. Dating someone of my own religion is:

- (1) unimportant
- (2) slightly important
- (3) moderately important
- (4) very important

Answer "1" (yes) or "2" (no) to each of the following five questions

My date's religious background may be:

- | | | |
|------------------|---------|--------|
| 7. Protestant | (1) Yes | (2) No |
| 8. Catholic | (1) Yes | (2) No |
| 9. Jewish | (1) Yes | (2) No |
| 10. other | (1) Yes | (2) No |
| 11. unaffiliated | (1) Yes | (2) No |

In answering the following three questions refer to the table at right

- | | |
|---|--|
| 12. My college class is: | (1) first year in college |
| | (2) second year in college |
| | (3) third year in college |
| | (4) fourth year in college |
| 13. The ideal college class for my date is: | (5) graduated from college this year |
| | (6) graduated from college one year ago |
| | (7) graduated from college two years ago |
| | (8) graduated from college three or more years ago |
14. Men: I would consider dating a girl whose college class is as low as (indicate lowest acceptable college class):
- Women: I would consider dating a man whose college class is as high as (indicate highest acceptable college class):

In answering the following three questions refer to the table at right

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 15. My height is: | (1) 5' or under |
| 16. The ideal height for my date is: | (2) 5' to 5'2" |
| | (3) 5'2" to 5'4" |
| 17. Men: I would consider dating a girl as short as (indicate minimum acceptable height): | (4) 5'4" to 5'6" |
| | (5) 5'6" to 5'8" |
| | (6) 5'8" to 5'10" |
| Women: I would consider dating a man as tall as (indicate maximum acceptable height): | (7) 5'10" to 6' |
| | (8) 6' to 6'2" |
| | (9) 6'2" or above |

In answering the following three questions refer to the table at right

18. My age is: (1) 17
 19. The ideal age for my date is: (2) 18
 (3) 19
 20. Men: I would consider dating a girl as young as (indicate minimum acceptable age): (4) 20
 (5) 21
 (6) 22
 Women: I would consider dating a man as old as (indicate maximum acceptable age): (7) 23
 (8) 24 or 25
 (9) 26 or 27

21. My dates may live as far from me as:

- (1) 15 miles
 (2) 25 miles
 (3) 50 miles
 (4) more than 50 miles

NOTE: Make sure you have written your correct zip code on the answer sheet. This will help determine the area from which your matches will be drawn.

SECTION II: Interests

Indicate your interest in each of the following activities and interests by writing 1, 2, 3, or 4 in the appropriate answer box. Use the following code:

- (1) One of my major (or most active) interests
 (2) very interested
 (3) interested
 (4) not interested

For example, if you were very interested in folk music, you would write a 2 in box 22 of Part One. The last question allows you to weigh the importance of this section.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 22. folk music | 34. medicine | 47. television |
| 23. rock and roll or popular music | 35. law | 48. automobiles |
| 24. classical music | 36. agriculture | 49. theater and drama |
| 25. jazz | 37. teaching | 50. foreign languages |
| 26. dancing | 38. community service | 51. sunbathing |
| 27. art or painting | 39. playing bridge | 52. football |
| 28. literature | 40. swimming and water sports | 53. baseball |
| 29. natural sciences and mathematics | 41. skiing (snow) | 54. basketball |
| 30. psychology, sociology and anthropology | 42. bowling | 55. How important is it that your date share the interests you have indicated? |
| 31. history, government, and politics | 43. golf | (1) unimportant |
| 32. economics and business | 44. tennis | (2) slightly important |
| 33. travel | 45. camping, hiking, and mountain climbing | (3) moderately important |
| | 46. movies | (4) very important |

SECTION III: Sexual Attitudes

The answers to the questions in this section are arranged on a one-to-five scale ranging from "yes" to "no." If your answer to a particular question is a definite yes, write "1" in the appropriate box; if it is a qualified yes, write "2," if it is neither yes nor no, write "3," and so on.

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| 56. Is extensive sexual activity preparation for your marriage? | YES NO
1 2 3 4 5 | 59. Persons involved in serious dating need to be fully informed about birth control. | YES NO
1 2 3 4 5 |
| 57. Relative to your age group, do you consider yourself sexually experienced? | YES NO
1 2 3 4 5 | 60. How important is it to you that your date share your attitudes toward sex? | |
| 58. Would you want your ideal date to be sexually experienced? | YES NO
1 2 3 4 5 | (1) unimportant (3) moderately important
(2) slightly important (4) very important | |

SECTION IV: Psychological Valence

A. Read each statement as it applies to yourself and your attitudes. If the statement is true or mostly true for you, put a 1 in the appropriate box. If the statement is false or mostly false for you, put a 2 in the appropriate box. Although individual items may present difficult decisions, please choose the response which is appropriate for you most of the time.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 61. I don't like things to be uncertain or unpredictable. | 64. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others. |
| 62. Once I make up my mind, I seldom change it. | 65. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable. |
| 63. I often wish people would be more definite about things. | 66. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. |

B. Below are three pairs of pictures. For each pair, pick the picture you prefer and indicate your choice by putting its number in the appropriate box.

67. (1)



(2)



68. (1)



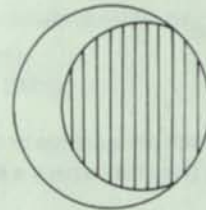
(2)



69. (1)



(2)



SECTION V: Situations

Personality differences are often reflected in the way that individuals react to specific situations. Below are several situations in which personal reactions may vary widely. In each case read the paragraph and select the response which is nearest to your own probable reaction, then write your answer in the appropriate box. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers—your own reaction is the correct response.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 70. Imagine yourself facing four doors. Behind the first door is \$20. Behind the second door is either \$5 or \$30. Behind the third door is either \$50 or someone ready to throw a pail of cold water. Behind the fourth door is either \$100 or an angry skunk. You may open any door but you must face the consequences. Which do you open? | 71. Two friends of yours who are in love tentatively decide to live together to "try out" the relationship before getting married. They come to you for your opinion about their plan. Your advice is; |
| (1) The first door. | (1) This might ruin their relationship—it's morally wrong. |
| (2) The second door. | (2) If they were really in love, they would get married. |
| (3) The third door. | (3) You would encourage them to do it with some reservation. |
| (4) The fourth door. | (4) You would tell them enthusiastically to go ahead. |

72. Imagine yourself at a party where you know only your date, who disappears. The people are friendly enough, but are strangely dressed and are acting peculiarly. Your primary reaction is:

- (1) Find my date and leave unless I know what is going on.
- (2) Feel somewhat uncomfortable—it just does not make sense.
- (3) Want to remain at the party—it's pleasantly mysterious.
- (4) Definitely want to remain—I love the unusual.

73. You have just gone to a large dance with a date. You soon see that there are many opportunities for making new friends.

- (1) Deliberately try to enlarge your circle of romantic possibilities.
- (2) Don't run after anybody but don't turn off possibilities either.
- (3) Feel a conflict between your desires and your commitment for an evening.
- (4) Remain with your date for the evening.

74. Which of the following questions do you find the most interesting to think about?

- (1) Who am I?
- (2) What will I be doing in ten years?
- (3) Can marriage really work?
- (4) What is the meaning of life?

75. Your best friend's steady date has just made a pass at you. You are surprised but can't help being interested just the same. If you were alone together your reaction to this situation would be:

- (1) You follow through, aware of the consequences, but not really caring about them.
- (2) You would like to follow through but your conscience prevents you from doing so.
- (3) You follow through even though you realize that you will feel guilty later.
- (4) You are shocked and dismayed and tell her (him) so.

PART TWO

Part Two of the answer sheet is divided into two smaller equal parts, one headed "myself" and the other "my ideal date." You will be answering each of the next thirty questions twice. During the first answering, in the part headed "myself," select the term for each question which best describes you yourself and write its number in the appropriate box. During the second answering, in the part headed "my ideal date," describe your ideal date. In other words, answer the questions in the way you would like your date to have answered them.

For example, if your political affiliation is Democrat and you would like a date who is also a Democrat, enter a "2" in answer to question 1 during both first and second answerings. If you are a Democrat but would like a date who is an Independent, enter a "2" for the first answering and a "3" for the second.

If, during the second answering, the way your date answers a particular question is unimportant to you, you may enter a "0" (zero) in the box corresponding to the question, and the computer will not use it in assigning your matches. For example, if you do not care what your date's political affiliation is, enter a "0" in box 1 for your date. Be sure, however, that you use no zeros in answering the questions of the part headed "myself."

SECTION VI: General Information

1. Political affiliation:

- (1) Republican
- (2) Democrat
- (3) Independent

2. I smoke:

- (1) heavily (a pack of cigarettes or more a day)
- (2) moderately (less than a pack a day)
- (3) never

3. Social Class

- (1) upper
- (2) upper middle
- (3) middle
- (4) lower middle
- (5) lower

5. I presently attend church or synagogue:

- (1) once a week or more
- (2) once or twice a month
- (3) less than once a month
- (4) never

6. I come from a town or city with a population of:

- (1) over 500,000
- (2) 50,000 to 500,000
- (3) 10,000 to 50,000
- (4) under 10,000

7. In dating situations I enjoy drinking:

- (1) always
- (2) sometimes
- (3) occasionally
- (4) never

8. Average academic record:

- (1) A- or above
- (2) B or B+
- (3) C+ or B-
- (4) C- or C
- (5) below C-

4. On the average I expect my Operation Match dates to be:

- (1) unsuccessful
- (2) as good as any blind date
- (3) fairly successful
- (4) extremely successful

9. Family income:

- (1) over \$25,000
- (2) \$15,000 to \$25,000
- (3) \$10,000 to \$15,000
- (4) \$7,500 to \$10,000
- (5) \$5,000 to \$7,500
- (6) under \$5,000

10. Relative to other persons of my age, my general intelligence should be considered:

- (1) very superior
- (2) superior
- (3) above average
- (4) average
- (5) below average

11. Father's education:

- (1) completed grade school
- (2) completed high school
- (3) completed college
- (4) completed graduate training

12. College Board Scholastic Aptitude Test math score:

- (1) 701 or above
- (2) 601 to 700
- (3) 501 to 600
- (4) 401 to 500
- (5) 301 to 400
- (6) 300 or below
- (7) have not taken college boards

13. College Board Scholastic Aptitude Test verbal score:

- (1) 701 or above
- (2) 601 to 700
- (3) 501 to 600
- (4) 401 to 500
- (5) 301 to 400
- (6) 300 or below
- (7) have not taken college boards

SECTION VII: Semantic Differentials

For each of the following pairs of opposing qualities, select the point on the one-to-five scale which best describes you and enter your answer on the answer sheet. For example, if you are very talkative, write "1" for yourself in box 14. If you are less talkative, write "2," and so on. Again, during the second answering, you may enter a zero for any question for which your date's answer is unimportant to you.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 14. talkative | 1 2 3 4 5 | taciturn | 20. interested in | 1 2 3 4 5 | not interested in marriage |
| | | | marriage partner | | partner |
| 15. read avidly | 1 2 3 4 5 | read occasionally | 21. impulsive | 1 2 3 4 5 | inhibited |
| 16. no close family | 1 2 3 4 5 | close family attachments | 22. extremely healthy | 1 2 3 4 5 | occasionally ill |
| attachments | | | 23. conformist | 1 2 3 4 5 | nonconformist |
| 17. politically | 1 2 3 4 5 | politically indifferent | 24. well-groomed | 1 2 3 4 5 | not concerned with |
| concerned | | | | | appearance |
| 18. politically liberal | 1 2 3 4 5 | politically conservative | 25. usually serious | 1 2 3 4 5 | usually prefer humorous |
| 19. financially | 1 2 3 4 5 | financially dependent | | | aspects |
| independent | | | | | |

SECTION VIII: Personal Appearance

Answer once for yourself and once for your ideal date, as in the previous two sections.

26. My hair is:

- (1) blond
- (2) brown
- (3) black
- (4) red

27. My eyes are:

- (1) blue
- (2) green
- (3) hazel
- (4) brown

28. My build (weight in proportion to height) is:

- (1) heavy
- (2)
- (3) average
- (4)
- (5) light

29. Members of the opposite sex consider me:

- (1) beautiful (women)
very handsome (men)
- (2)
- (3) attractive
- (4)
- (5) average
- (6)
- (7) unattractive

30. Physical attractiveness (question 29) is:

- (1) unimportant
- (2) slightly important
- (3) moderately important
- (4) very important

Mail your application promptly. The earlier your application is received, the more matches you may get as more people join OPERATION MATCH. All data provided OPERATION MATCH is the property of Compatibility Research, Inc. and will remain confidential. Thank you for participating.

OPERATION MATCH has produced more than its share of fun dates.—**TIME MAGAZINE**

Computer dates are sweeping the campus, replacing old fashioned boy-meets-girl devices; punch bowls are out, punch cards are in.—**LOOK**

The Computer takes over in one more area—automated dating is the new fad on campuses across the country.—**GLAMOUR**

Electronic computers to match up married couples were recommended as a logical approach by Dr. I. A. Burch, psychologist, and Director of the Circuit court (Cook County) Conciliation Service.—**CHIC. DAILY NEWS**

It reduces the anxiety of the blind date; you know that the girl wants to go out with someone roughly like you.—**DR. BENSON R. SNYDER, CHIEF PSYCHIATRIST M. I. T.**

It was uncanny...It was like instant rapport. I'm recommending OPERATION MATCH to all my unmarried friends.—**MRS. M. P. (CHICAGO MATCHBRIDE)**

It was something like having an Aunt Tillie who says she has a girl for you to take out. Only this time, Aunt Tillie was IBM.—**MR. N. B. (NEW YORK MATCHGROOM)**

I just went out with my first MATCH date—and wow!—**JOAN E., A SAN FRANCISCO REGISTERED NURSE AND SOCIAL WORKER.**

I found OPERATION MATCH to be a welcome solution for people like myself who are "tied down" with work and grad school.—**MARY B., BOSTON SCHOOL TEACHER.**

My first MATCH date and I are still dating, and we hope to get married in June of 1967. We have only known each other for three months, but we both feel that we have known each other so much longer. We share such a large number of interests that we can't get over the idea that we were matched so well with each other.—**MARY R., SILVER SPRINGS, MARYLAND.**



OPERATION MATCH AREA CODES

EASTERN REGION

Answer sheets from the Eastern Region must be postmarked no later than October 25.

- 01 Boston, Mass.
- 02 Buffalo, N.Y.
- 03 Central Connecticut
(Hartford — Storrs)
- 04 Montreal, Canada
- 06 New Haven, Conn.
- 10 Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 11 Providence, R.I.
- 12 Southern Tier of New York
(Ithaca — Binghamton —
Elmira — Cortland)
- 13 Washington, D.C.
- 14 Western Massachusetts
(Springfield — Amherst)

SOUTHERN REGION

Answer sheets from the Southern Region must be postmarked no later than October 25.

- 21 Atlanta, Ga.
- 22 Central Virginia
(Richmond — Roanoke —
Charlottesville)
- 23 Durham — Chapel Hill —
Raleigh — Greensboro, N.C.

MIDWESTERN REGION

Answer sheets from the Midwestern Region must be postmarked no later than November 15.

- 31 Ann Arbor, Mich.
- 38 Central Mo.
- 35 Detroit, Mich.
- 36 Madison, Wisc.
- 37 St. Louis, Mo.

WESTERN REGION

Answer sheets from the Western Region must be postmarked no later than November 8.

- 41 Denver — Boulder, Colo.
- 42 Los Angeles, Calif.
- 43 San Francisco — Oakland —
Berkeley, Calif.
- 44 San Jose — Palo Alto, Calif.
- 45 Seattle — Tacoma, Wash.

METROPOLITAN REGION

Answer sheets from the Metropolitan Region must be postmarked no later than November 8.

- 05 Newark — Jersey City, N.J.
- 07 New York City
(Brooklyn — Queens)
- 08 New York City
(Manhattan — Bronx)
- 09 Philadelphia, Pa.

GLAMOUR

♀ ♡ ♂

The Operation Match staff were so taken with the girl on our cover—model Kathy Carpenter—that they named her Miss Match, invited her to their annual blast.

Kathy
with Jeff Tarr.

OUR OWN MISS MATCH



→ On page 234, you'll find a detailed quiz, prepared for us by Jeff Tarr and his staff. Answer it according to instructions; mail your results to us, with \$1, and you'll receive in return a personal letter—to you, from Jeff's computer—telling you the kind of man that's right (and is probably looking) for you.

SPECIAL OFFER

The computer takes over in one more area—automated dating is the new fad on campuses across the country. The giant of the new computer-date-bureau industry, with branches in eight cities, is Harvard-based Operation Match, which has paired over 100,000 college students with their “ideal dates” since its inception last year. Here, Operation Match's twenty-one-year-old president, Jeff Tarr, tells all about how it started, how it grew, and what he's learned about who should date whom, and why. **BY JEFF TARR**

The question people ask us most often about Match is how it came about. The truth is that it just happened. A little over a year ago my roommates and I were sitting around discussing dating in general, and blind dates in particular. It seemed to us that a very extensive but unsophisticated method of “fixing up” one's friends with each other had become an accepted way of meeting people on campuses everywhere. The results were often painful for everyone concerned, because your friends of the same sex don't really know what makes you compatible with a member of the opposite sex. They project their own feelings into the situation with great subjectivity.

The essential idea behind Operation Match is the pooling of resources into the biggest little black book ever, and using a computer as a clearinghouse for the information. At the time the idea seemed like a natural for college students who have learned to avoid the cattle shows known as “mixers.” We didn't really know then how right we were.

When Match began last spring, it was just an idea. A questionnaire had to be devised and distributed. A computer program had to be written and college representatives had to be found.

My own background is in Social Relations, and Match seemed like a great vehicle for applying the study I was doing on dating habits, and then using the information for analysis in my thesis. When we had written a questionnaire and consulted with professionals in the field we had a good experimental mechanism with which to begin. By March first, 10,000 questionnaires and answer sheets had been printed and were being passed around on campuses in the Boston area. We devised the double-answer form in order to avoid the mistake of arbitrarily matching people with similar traits or people with contrary traits under the assumption that “opposites attract.” After all, compatibility is more like chemistry than physics. The double-answer form asked each participant to answer each of the seventy-five questions twice, once describing himself, and once describing his or her ideal date. As one of our representatives put it, “One man's kook is another's ideal.”

When returns started coming back from applicants we noticed that we were getting responses from places as far away as Dartmouth, Princeton, and even one from Juneau, Alaska. Pretty soon all of New England had heard about Match, through the grape-

vine or the local papers, and everyone was clamoring to join. More questionnaires had to be printed and circulated, until 8,000 students finally applied.

We began each day with a suspenseful trip to the post office to see how many returns there were. Some of our mail was addressed rather oddly, but soon the post office personnel got to know us. We received a postal card addressed to, “Cupid Computer Company Founders,” and a lot of mail for, “Love Machine, Cambridge, Mass.,” and even “Operation Match, Cambridge, Mass.” (I think.)

The returns were so numerous from Smith College and neighboring Amherst that we decided the situation needed checking out. One week about eight of us piled into cars and began a tour that eventually took us to Smith, Mt. Holyoke, Amherst, Bennington, Williams, and Vassar. By combining “business” with pleasure, we managed to leave what may be a permanent mark on the histories of these schools. For example, I remember the chaos when our three sixteen-foot balloons painted with OPERATION MATCH on them blew up almost simultaneously on a quad at Smith. There may be some pieces still in the trees. Then there was the day we received an envelope at our office (a friend's living-room floor) with names of almost 500 Vassar girls who wanted applications.

By mid-April the results were out. 8,000 lists of names and addresses arrived in 8,000 college mail boxes on the same morning. For a few days the telephones got a real workout and we all wished we owned a stock in A.T.&T.

The same week, U.C.L.A. coed Vicky Albright appeared on the cover of *Newsweek's* Campus '65 edition. When we saw her picture we immediately invited her to fly to Harvard to be crowned “Miss Match.” She accepted, and when she arrived we matched her up electronically with Kevin Lewis, then a Harvard senior. They spent the weekend on the town and are still corresponding, though she is in Hollywood and he is studying in England.

The fellow who got the most out of Match was a Cornell medical student who received 154 matches, over 125 of them coming from Wellesley. He was invited up to Wellesley for “Tree Day,” their annual spring celebration. A girl from Vassar received almost as many boys' names.

In researching the information for (Continued on page 230)

ASK THE COMPUTER

(Continued from page 179)

the popularity of these two applicants, we found their answers were ideally stereotyped for what many people wanted. The boy was a first-year medical student, about six feet tall, handsome, and intelligent. The Vassar girl was attractive, about five feet, four inches tall, and bilingual. Both were from upper-middle-class backgrounds, politically liberal, and well-traveled. We are finding now that this stereotyping process is more difficult with the more extensive questionnaire that we have developed, and that the "collective ideal" varies from campus to campus. The ethos and values of a student body depend largely upon its region of the country, average class background, and such variables as whether the school is isolated or urban, large or small, public or private, and coed or not.

Over the summer we spread Match to a dozen cities coast-to-coast. This brought us mail from all over the country with such comments as "just hurry" (from New York), and "I want a girl who surfs, whistles, and votes Republican, preferably all at once" (San Francisco).

By this time some of the people who were matched in the first run were already becoming engaged. One couple near Chicago had grown up in the same town, gone to the same high school, and never met until introduced through Match. They announced their engagement six weeks after meeting.

As gratifying as it is to us to see some of
(Continued on page 232)

the Match couples getting married, this isn't really what we originally had in mind. Our statistics show that people apply for different reasons, and predictably enough, the concern girls show for getting married increases directly with their age and college class.

Becoming a nationwide operation presented its problems. Besides regional differences which necessitated a more extensive and precise questionnaire, there were also local problems everywhere. At Berkeley we were confused by some people with the Free Speech movement. And the Harvard student who headed up Match in San Francisco over the summer had 3,000 pounds of questionnaires in his garage until his father tried to park his car in the same space.

By this fall Match was on over 500 college campuses in 26 areas of the country. The number of applications was so overwhelming that Match had become, in the words of one New Yorker, "the greatest thing in dating since dancing was invented." Once again this spring we've spread, this time to 2,000 campuses in over 50 areas of the country.

Often people wonder if the excitement hasn't gone out of Match for me. Instead, it has become increasingly stimulating for all of us. Now we have our own office (a warehouse with chairs). We get mail from virtually all over the world. The data we've gathered in each matching program has enabled us to continually improve the questionnaire and work in many refinements. One of the interesting bits that have turned up in research is the fact that it's actually the more adventuresome, modern, vital students who find their curiosity challenged by Match. They don't need Match to get dates, they enjoy it because it "takes the blindness out of a blind date," as a girl from Northwestern put it. Usually the fellows call the girls on their list right away. They talk for a while, and often get together for a coffee date before spending an evening together. One boy said he had thirteen coffee dates in one weekend at Smith. He doesn't drink coffee anymore, but he still visits Smith quite often.

I, myself, have probably dated about twenty girls through Match, a few of them for quite a while. My dilemma on a couple of occasions when I met my date was not having anyone to blame but myself.

We hear a lot of stories, most of them probably true, about odd combinations we've created. One couple that was matched had been going together for a long time and had just broken up. A girl at Michigan State was matched up with her roommate's steady boyfriend. And a girl who mistakenly coded herself as a boy was matched with her own roommate.

We've come a long way since our first run with its 8,000 New England students. About 100,000 students have applied nationally and been matched so far. On all of our answer forms we have always solicited "Comments and Suggestions" from our participants. The notes in this section of the application range from constructive comments to great humor. Some of the suggestions have caused us to re-examine our questionnaire and make specific

ASK THE COMPUTER

(Continued from page 230)

changes. For example, in our first test we asked students to give the range of points within which their I.Q. fall. Many of the comments explained that most students don't know their own I.Q., and can at best estimate it. This prompted us to check the data and we found that the answers did indeed point out a misconception. The estimates averaged much higher than the scores we know are achieved by college students in New England. Either only brilliant people applied to Match or something was wrong. Eventually we developed a system to measure intelligence and verbal expressiveness through several different questions.

An interesting fact is that about twice as high a percentage of girls have suggestions than boys. More boys, however, have comments.

Our present system of "continuous processing" enables us to keep applications on file until the end of the academic term. That is, as new people apply they are matched against previous applicants as well as other new ones. So a person who applies early may get match-lists as often as every two weeks. We have a lot of ideas for the future, too, some of which will be implemented as early as this coming September. Pretty soon we hope to install our first Date Machine. This will consist of a coin-operated keyboard on which anyone desiring a date for the evening will merely code the answers to some questions. Within seconds the keyboard will automatically type out the name of a match-date who is free for the evening, nearby, and has also registered as wanting a date.

All of this may sound very far-out but it will be a reality in the foreseeable future.

To give an idea of some of the data we are gathering, we have cross-tabulated several variables with one another. For instance, one finding is that the higher a girl's social class, the stronger her demands for an attractive man are. The higher a girl's SAT verbal score, the less likely she is to smoke. But the heavier a smoker a girl is, the more likely she is to consider herself "sexually experienced." These facts may seem somewhat incongruous, but these and others point to an entirely new theory for interaction among students dating as they go through college. Over-all it seems that values are traded off over the four years. That is, what is important in dating changes for each individual as they become more conscious of marriage and more realistic in self-evaluation. Everyone begins with an idea of what they want. The adjustment is a re-definition of values determined by the experience of dating.

All in all, it's been a very exciting year with Match, as rich in experiences for me as I could wish. We've all enjoyed doing what we do because it brings us into daily contact with the most volatile and stimulating five million people in the American population. I only hope that after graduation this June, I'll be able to maintain the ties with the campus that have developed through Match. Of course my values may change as I near the time to get married myself.



The New York Times
nytimes.com



March 29, 2006

David Leonhardt

Computing the Mysteries of Attraction

ELIZABETH BRERETON was a freshman at Connecticut College and Robert Smith was a sophomore at Wesleyan in 1965 when they became a part of what might have been this country's first computer dating service.

It was called Operation Match, and it sent questionnaires to college campuses around the country. "There were stacks of them as you went into the dorms," Ms. Brereton remembered. Students rated their own looks, intelligence and interests on a scale from one to five and described their ideal date using the same measures. They then returned the survey, along with a \$3 fee, to the Operation Match offices in Cambridge, Mass.

The idea had sprung out of a late-night discussion among some Harvard students about the inanity of blind dates and mixers. The students realized that computers had made it possible to pair up compatible dates far more easily than the stiff campus dating scene of the 1960's could. You wouldn't have to worry about circumstance keeping you from meeting your perfect match at a party. You would have a list to work from.

Ms. Brereton's and Mr. Smith's responses, like the thousands of others, were transferred to punch cards and fed into an enormous Avco 1790 computer, according to Harvard publications. Six weeks later, it spat out lists of mates for everyone.

When Ms. Brereton got hers in the mail, the 10 names on it included Mr. Smith, a tall future lawyer from New Jersey. And Mr. Smith's list included Ms. Brereton, a tall upstate New Yorker planning to become a social worker.

But neither one of them picked up the phone to call the other.

OPERATION MATCH had its moment in the sun, appearing in the Valentine Day's issue of Look magazine and on the CBS quiz show "To Tell the Truth." But it never really had much of a chance. There just was not enough computing power at the time. For a matchmaking system to succeed, it would need to analyze surveys instantaneously and let students sit in front of computers for themselves. It would, of course, need the Internet.

Today, online personal ads have mushroomed into a \$500 million annual business, with Barry Diller and Yahoo among the biggest players. No other industry makes as much money online from monthly fees, not even pornography, according to Jupiter Research.

But the dating sites have their own problems. There are thousands upon thousands of listings on the big sites, like Match.com, and they are often filled with exaggerations. The business is not growing rapidly anymore. So the original idea that those Harvard students had — compatibility through technology — is suddenly hot again.

Match.com has started Chemistry.com, which relies on the compatibility theories of a Rutgers anthropologist. The plot of the recent comedy "Must Love Dogs," with John Cusack and Diane Lane, revolved around PerfectMatch, another site. Further up the cultural spectrum, The Atlantic Monthly devoted its March cover story to the different academic ideas behind Chemistry, PerfectMatch and a third site, eHarmony.

There is, in fact, some legitimate social science here. For one thing, similar people really are more likely to stay together.

During the first five years of marriage, the divorce rate for a couple of the same religion hovers around 24 percent, no matter what that religion is. But it jumps to 38 percent for a marriage between a mainline Protestant and a Catholic and 42 percent for one between a Jew and a Christian, according to Evelyn L. Lehrer, an economist at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Divorce rates are also somewhat higher for interracial couples and for couples with a wife who is at least four years older than her husband. (When the man is a lot older, on the other hand, divorce is no more likely than when spouses are about the same age.)

This is a bit depressing, because it sounds almost like an excuse for segregation. But take the data for what they are — national averages, not individual destinies — and averages are quite useful when thousands of people are involved. Chemistry and eHarmony both match people with similar demographic profiles.

From here, the sites move into the still murky science of personalities. PerfectMatch deems some traits, like energy level and optimism, important for a couple to share, so that they don't clash over how to lead their lives. But with others — flexibility, perfectionism, emotion — a marriage can benefit from difference.

I have no idea which of these theories will end up being right. And the people running the sites insist they have no illusions about replacing the mystery of human attraction. "What this does is try to narrow it down so you spend less time with people who are totally out of the question," said Pepper Schwartz, the sociologist behind PerfectMatch's system. "We're just upping your chances."

It is the same thing innovative people are doing in all kinds of fields now. Doctors are combining patient records with medical databases to double-check their intuition. Ben S. Bernanke, the new Federal Reserve chairman, is attracted to the notion of letting an economic formula help set interest rates. Big league baseball is in the midst of a scientific revolution, using extensive data to make better decisions about ballplayers.

But love seems like the final frontier in the debate between gut instinct and hard evidence. It's just hard to accept that a computer might know something about romance that we don't. Which brings us back to Ms. Brereton and Mr. Smith.

In 1969, four years after he filled out his Operation Match survey, Mr. Smith went to a mixer, of all things, for graduate students at the University of Chicago. He saw a woman across the room he wanted to meet, and he walked over to introduce himself. Her name was Elizabeth Brereton. "We knew immediately that we had been matched by Operation Match," she said. Four months later, they were engaged.

They have spent the last three decades living outside of Boston in a house that has been filled with children, friends and more than its fair share of overnight guests. I met their oldest child, Matthew, in first grade, and during college I spent an entire summer living in the Smiths' guest room.

So in honor of the Smiths, here is a prediction about which matchmaking site will finally fulfill Operation Match's grandest ambitions. It will be the one that helps pair people up while making them think that they have found love all on their own.

E-mail: leonhardt@nytimes.com

2 Harvard Men Replacing Cupid With Computer

SUN MAR 14 1965

By TIMOTHY LELAND

The sign on the door—written in big bold letters—advertised: YOUR BUSINESS IS OUR PLEASURE. YOUR PLEASURE IS OUR BUSINESS.

A. M. GLOBE

And inside, Saturday, two Harvard juniors were busy masterminding the cleverest business enterprise since I.D. Rockefeller invested in oil.

"We're just about ready to get off the ground," Jeff C. Tarr, 26, told the Globe. "We

should begin mailing by Tuesday."

Jeff is co-founder of what could be the biggest money-making venture since Pres. Pusey launched the university's Centennial fund drive.

It's called Compatibility Research Inc., with headquarters in room G-35 of Winthrop House.

The business of this business is an item with a limitless market—love.

The Harvard entrepreneurs have captured Cupid. Or, to

be more exact, they have computerized Cupid.

"For three dollars and five minutes of time, we're going to provide any boy who takes our service with the name and telephone number of his dream girl. And for the same price, we'll provide a girl with her ideal guy. It's as simple as that," Jeff said.

This is the way it will work. Each person who takes the service will be sent a questionnaire to fill out and return, post haste, to Compatibility Research.

These will then be coded onto IBM cards and whisked through a computer, which will analyze all the personality profiles and match the couples up scientifically in less time than it takes to blow a kiss.

"A computer," observed Jeff, "can find the right date for a person in a split second, when it might take him or her three years to do it alone."

"People have too little time as it is these days, without spending a lot of it unnecessarily searching around for someone they have something in common with. Why waste the time?"

Some of the questions on the questionnaire, to the layman, might seem a little far off the mark, but Jeff—a social relations major—says each one has its own "special significance."

One, for example, asks: "What kind of cream after shave lotion do you prefer?"

1. English Leather
2. Old Spice
3. Royal Dym
4. None

Presumably, two people who feel the same way about Old Spice may hit it off pretty well together.

Jeff and his co-partner—Vaughan Morrill III—incorporated the company last week with a total of \$1250 invested in it. Since then, it has been operating with smoothness.

"We've got salesmen selling at between 50 and 60 colleges in the Boston area and we've already received over 2000 letters in response to our poster," said Jeff happily.

Tuesday is D-Day for Compatibility Research Inc. That's the day the first batch of questionnaires will be sent out.

By Apr. 9, we'll start processing them in the computer, and within a couple of weeks after that, there should be a lot of happy new couples in the Boston area," he said.

Does he plan to run his own questionnaire through the cupid-computer?

"Damn right I do," he answered the Globe's inquiry. "Two or three times at least. That's the beauty of being a company president."

Boston Globe (A.M.)

March 14, 1965

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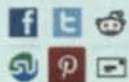
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Issue: Feb, 1966

Posted in: Computers, Origins

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13 Comments



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Origins of Computer Dating (Feb, 1966)

I wonder if Gene Shalit already had that crazy mustache when he wrote this in 1966. I was looking for a picture of him to link to and I found this [instead](#). (warning: may not be safe for work. Contains 8-bit music and pictures of Gene Shalit)

Also check out: [HOW TO SELECT A MATE \(Jan, 1965\)](#), and [The Truth About Petting \(Jan, 1937\)](#)

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New dating craze sweeps the campus

boy... girl... ...computer

ONLY ON COMPUTERS, faster than the eye can blink, by letters started with names of college guys and girls—typed, scanned, checked and matched. Into the mills sped the computer-like pairs, into P.D. boxes at schools across the land. Fingers boys grab their phones... now come ready with to date... it's thousands of letters for the air... now job connections start, and ones are exchanged! A nationwide dating system is on. Thousands of boys and girls who've never met since weekends together, for now that punch-card dating's here, can skip the far behind? And oh, it's so right, today. The Great God Computer has met the word. Fate, destiny, Genghis Khan. Call it dating, call it mating, it's based out of the minds of Jeff Tate (left) and Vaughn Sherrell, Harvard undergraduates who plotted Operation Match, the digit dating system that ties up college couples with magnetic tape. The match technique is here! In just nine months, more 100,000 colleges paid more than \$300,000 to Match! and to its MIT Inc. Contact! for the names of at least five compatible dates. Does it work? When Teddman, a Yale senior, spent a New Haven weekend with his computer Matched date, Nancy Schreiber, an English major at Smith. Result, as long date's journey brightened into night: a half-way for cupid's computer.

PRODUCED BY GENE SHALIT
PHOTOGRAPHED BY PHILLIP HARRINGTON

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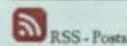
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boy... girl... computer

New dating craze sweeps the campus

PRODUCED BY GENE SHALIT, PHOTOGRAPHED BY PHILLIP HARRINGTON

Out of computers, faster than the eye can blink, fly letters stacked with names of college guys and girlsâ€”taped, scanned, checked and matched. Into the mails speed the compatible pairs, into P.O. boxes at schools across the land. Eager boys grab their phones... anxious coeds wait in dorms ... a thousand burrrrrrrings jar the air ... snow-job conversations start, and yeses are exchanged: A nationwide dating spree is on. Thousands of boys and girls who've never met plan weekends together, for now that punch-card dating's here, can flings be far behind? And oh, it's so right, baby. The Great God Computer has sent the word. Fate. Destiny. Go-go-go. Call it dating, call it mating, it flashed out of the minds of Jeff Tarr (left) and Vaughn Morrill, Harvard undergraduates who plotted Operation Match, the dig-it dating system that ties up college couples with magnetic tape. The match mystique is here: In just nine months, some 100,000 collegians paid more than \$300,000 to Match (and to its MIT foe, Contact) for the names of at least five compatible dates. Does it work? Nikos Tsirikas, a Yale senior, spent a New Haven weekend with his computer-Matched date, Nancy Schreiber, an English major at Smith. Result, as long date's journey brightened into night: a bull's-eye for cupid's computer.

"How come you're still single? Don't you know any nice computers?"

Perhaps no mother has yet said that to her daughter, but don't bet it won't happen, because Big Matchmaker is watching you. From Boston to Berkeley, computer dates are sweeping the campus, replacing old-fashioned boy-meets-girl devices; punch bowls are out, punch cards are in.

The boys who put data in dating are Jeff Tarr and Vaughn Morrill, Harvard undergraduates. At school last winter, they and several other juniors â€”long on ingenuity but short on ingenuesâ€”devised a computer process to match boys with girls of similar characteristics. They formed a corporation (Morrill soon sold out to Tarr), called the scheme Operation Match, flooded nearby schools with personality questionnaires to be filled out, and waited for the response.

They didn't wait long: 8,000 answer sheets piled in, each accompanied by the three-dollar fee. Of every 100 applicants, 52 were girls. Clearly, the lads weren't the only lonely collegians in New England. As dates were made, much of the loneliness vanished, for many found that their dates were indeed compatible. Through a complex system of two-way matching, the computer

[manifesto/http://en.wikipedia.org/w/manifesto](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/manifesto) [...]

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does not pair a boy with his "ideal" girl unless he is also the girl's "ideal" boy. Students were so enthusiastic about this cross-check that they not only answered the 135 questions (Examples: Is extensive sexual activity [in] preparation for marriage, part of "growing up?" Do you believe in a God who answers prayer?), they even added comments and special instructions. Yale: "Please do not fold, bend or spindle my date." Vassar: "Where, O where is Superman?" Dartmouth: "No dogs please! Have mercy!" Harvard: "Have you any buxom blondes who like poetry?" Mount Holyoke: "None of those dancing bears from Amherst." Williams: "This is the greatest excuse for calling up a strange girl that I've ever heard." Sarah Lawrence: "Help!"

Elated, Tarr rented a middling-capacity computer for \$100 an hour ("I couldn't swing the million to buy it."), fed in the coded punch cards ("When guys said we sent them some hot numbers, they meant it literally.") and sped the names of computer-picked dates to students all over New England. By summer, Operation Match was attracting applications from coast to coast, the staff had grown to a dozen, and Tarr had tied up with Data Network, a Wall St. firm that provided working capital and technical assistance.

In just nine months, some 90,000 applications had been received, \$270,000 grossed and the road to romance strewn with guys, girls and gaffes.

A Vassarite who was sent the names of other girls demanded \$20 for defamation of character. A Radcliffe senior, getting into the spirit of things, telephoned a girl on her list and said cheerfully, "I hear you're my ideal date." At Stanford, a coed was matched with her roommate's fiancé. Girls get brothers. Couples going steady apply, just for reassurance. When a Pembroke College freshman was paired with her former boyfriend, she began seeing him again. "Maybe the computer knows something that I don't know," she said.

Not everyone gets what he expects. For some, there is an embarrassment of witches, but others find agreeable surprises. A Northwestern University junior reported: "The girl you sent me didn't have much upstairs, but what a staircase!"

Match, now graduated to an IBM 7094, guarantees five names to each applicant, but occasionally, a response sets cupid aquiver. Amy Fiedler, 18, blue-eyed, blonde Vassar sophomore, got 112 names. There wasn't time to date them all before the semester ended, so many called her at her home in New York. "We had the horrors here for a couple of weeks," her mother says laughingly. "One boy applied under two different names, and he showed up at our house twice!"

Tarr acknowledges that there are goofs, but he remains carefree. "You can't get hung up about every complaint," says Tarr. "You've got to look at it existentially."

Jeff, 5' 7", likes girls, dates often. "If there's some chick I'm dying to go out with," he says, "I can drop her a note in my capacity as president of Match and say, Dear Joan, You have been selected by a highly personal process

called Random Sampling to be interviewed extensively by myself. . . . and Tarr breaks into ingratiating laughter.

"Some romanticists complain that we're too commercial," he says. "But we're not trying to take the love out of love; we're just trying to make it more efficient. We supply everything but the spark."

Actually, computer dating supplies more. According to Dr. Benson R. Snyder, MIT's chief psychiatrist, it acts as a method that society condones for introducing a girl and a boy. "A boy knows that the girl has expressed her willingness to date by the act of joining. I think that's one of the most important things that it provides. It reduces the anxiety of the blind date; you know that the girl wants to go out with someone roughly like you.

"However," warns Dr. Snyder, "if this is taken too seriously, and it becomes institutionalized, it could be seen as a pressure for a safe, conformistic approach. In all relationships, there is a need for the unexpected; even that which is a little anxiety-laden."

With all the joys and ploys of computer dating, social life at sexually segregated schools in the Ivy League remains plenty anxiety-laden. At non-coed schools like Yale and Dartmouth, students lead lives of social isolation. Many are consumed by plans for weekend dates. "We try to pack a whole week into Friday and Saturday night," says a Princeton sophomore. "If we don't make outâ€"if we don't sleep with the girlâ€"the whole thing's a colossal failure."

Comments a distinguished New York psychoanalyst: "Ivy League students are forced to behave like monk-scholars. When they're freed on weekends, they seek emotional release. Almost all college boys are psychological adolescents, with an overpowering need for companionship, and they cannot be expected to live in seclusion. It's no surprise that sexual relations are more and more common among college-aged boys and girls."

"All-boy colleges create a climate for fantasy," says Carter Wiseman, a Yale sophomore. "Girls become unreal beings, so on the weekend, you try to force the reality to fit into the fantasy you've created, and it won't work!"

"Getting dates down here for the weekend is a terrible waste of time," says John de Forest of Yale. "Hotel accommodations for the girl, expenses, arrangements . . . trying to find a girl in the first place. That's why Match is here to stay. I approve of it as a way to meet people, although I have no faith in the questionnaire's ability to match compatible people. The machine has no way of telling whether or not the girl has pazazz!"

But, Wiseman insists, "The odds of getting along with a girl are better if she's been screened by a computer. Say you're interested in Renaissance art, and the machine gives you a chick who's interested in Renaissance art, you've got a basis to build on. You can't just go up to some girl on the street and say, 'Hello, do you like Botticelli?'"

"In midwinter, it's tough to meet a girl a couple of hundred miles away on any pretext whatever," says a snowbound Dartmouth senior. "Match is a great icebreaker; the girl will at least talk to you if you call."

Even before boys telephone their matches, most girls have a line on them through Ivy-vine sourcesâ€”tipsters at boys' schools and upper-class girls who've dated extensively. Lists are passed through the dorms, where girls pencil comments next to familiar names: cool; hang up when he calls; swings; fink.

"What troubles me about all this computer jazz," says a sophomore at Connecticut College, "is my feeling that boys don't level when they fill in their questionnaires. I was honest with mine, but I wonder if some guys fill out theirs to see if they can get a first-nighter."

"Boys want one kind of a girl to date, but someone quite different to marry," says a Mount Holyoke senior. "Guys are just out for a good time, but I don't know any girl who goes on a date without marriage crossing her mind. When college kids are together, the girl thinks: 'I wonder what it would be like to be married to this fellow?' and the boy thinks, 'I wonder what it would be like to sleep with this girl?'"

"I don't see how the questionnaire can possibly result in compatible matches," says Ellen Robinson of Connecticut. "Guys don't care about attitudes and interests. They all want a blonde with a great figure. But if you must fill out a questionnaire, I think the one from Contact is better."

She gets no argument from David DeWan, 22, the MIT graduate student who owns Contact, Match's principal rival in New England. "The Match questionnaire is unbeatable for national distribution," he says. "But in the Northeast, I can use a vocabulary that will be more effective than it would be in the Midwest. Phrases like verbal fluency and aesthetic appreciation sell far better at schools like Princeton and Harvard."

DeWan, a brilliant math and engineering student, does not have an organization as sprawling or yeasty as Tarr's. In fact, he has no organization at all. A frugal man, he runs deep in the black: He has no full-time employees. His office is a room in his grandparents' home, near Cambridge. He uses a Honeywell 200 computer at three o'clock in the morning, when the rental is low. In one distribution of questionnaires, he drew 11,000 responses at four dollars each.

DeWan has been going steady with a girl at Wellesley, so when he organized Contact, they put themselves to the test. Sure enough, the computer matched them. But the computer also matched her with an Amherst boy, who won her away. "It was very sad," says DeWan, "but it proved my system works. It found her a more compatible guy."

"I think that's a riot," says Dr. Snyder, who invited DeWan to discuss the computer project at a meeting of the MIT psychiatric staff. "I was a little bit appalled by its 1984 overtones, but was much less concerned after we talked.

Contact provides students with a chance to get over the initial hurdle of knowing that they're not going to be immediately rejected. At their age, it's often difficult to make the kind of small talk that's so important at the initial stages of a relationship. My guess is that computer-matched people are more able to explore comfortably their interests. I think it's a useful social mechanism, but it would be misused if boys used it merely to make a connection for a sexual good time."

"I don't know that Match and Contact can really work," gainsays Dr. Morris S. Davis, astronomer and director of the Yale Computer Center. "Until body chemistry can be inputted into the computer to stimulate the actual reactions of two persons, I have my doubts concerning the efficacy of the method."

Dr. Snyder agrees that the computer can't predict compatibility. "But it's not just chemistry," he insists. "It's because you can't program something as complicated as the whole cluster of feelings and associations that surround a boy's notion of what a girl ought to be. What a computer can do is increase the probability of a satisfactory relationship by removing incompatible persons."

To test this theory, Christopher Walker, a senior at Yale, organized a dance for 200 college boys and girls, who were selected at random, matched by computer and tested before and after the dance. They spent time with their matches, then with dates they "picked up" during the dance's designated free period. Preliminary findings: Most had most fun with their "pickups." "If it turns out that way," says Walker, a psychology student who is a great admirer of Match, "it will be because a dance is a one-night stand, where the only thing that counts is physical attraction."

Not everyone has faith in computers. At the University of Wisconsin, two enterprising graduate students, Glenn Weisfeld and Michael Rappaport, have a service called SECS—Scientific Evaluation of Compatibility Service. They offer a short questionnaire, charge one dollar, provide one date, and somehow, it works. Says Weisfeld, "We had our proudest moment when we were congratulated for making SECS a four-letter word."

Just the same, Tarr feels the future belongs to the computer. He's working on campus installations of hundreds of special typewriters, all linked to a centralized "mother computer." A boy, typing his requirements, will receive in seconds the name of a compatible girl on his campus who's free that night. Tarr is also organizing a travel service. On deck: a transatlantic cruise by an ocean liner packed with compatible couples. (Rejected name: Ship of Fools. Scene: night. The deck awash with moonlight. In the shadows, a boy sings, "Come To Me, My Correlated Baby." Below decks, in the salon, a girl murmurs, "How do I love thee? Let me count the punch cards.") Tarr already has outposts in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, will soon go international, providing students summer dates all over Europe.

Since collegians must fulfill each other's requirements, the questionnaire is designed to produce the profile of the applicant and the profile of the

applicant's ideal date. Boys have discovered that there is more to getting the girl of their daydreams than ordering a blonde, intelligent, wealthy, sexually experienced wench. They must also try to guess what kind of boy such a girl would request, then describe themselves to conform to her data. The future suggests itself: A boy answers the questions artfully. A girl does too. The computer whirs. They receive each other's name. Breathlessly, they make a date. They meet. They stop short. There they are: Plain Jane and So-So-Sol. Two liars. But they are, after all, exactly alike, and they have been matched. It is the computer's moment of triumph.

GENE SHALIT

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13 comments

Casandro says:
April 8, 2008
10:58 pm

<http://www.youtube.com/...>

That's a song from that time about computer dating.

"Computer #3"

Computers and love are found far earlier in fact. For example the "Moonbillies" had a song named "lectronic brain". I don't know the year, but I think that was earlier.

Michael Patrick says:
April 9, 2008
10:46 am

boy.....girl.....computer..... lawyer.....divorce.....
alimony.....

Charlie says:
April 9, 2008
10:51 am

What, you don't have faith in the perfect matching capabilities of a Honeywell 200?

Blurgie says:
April 9, 2008
11:16 am

Whether it's safe for work or not, it's not safe for eyeballs. I think that many Gene Shalits broke my brain.

Michael L. says:
April 10, 2008
5:01 pm

Note the photo caption at the bottom pf page 32 (page 3): that must be the model and actress Shelly Hack (b. 1947), whom readers of a certain age will remember from the Charlie perfume commercials.

jmyint says:
April 12, 2008
11:02 am

Harvard Magazine did an update on Jeff Tarr in 2003.

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THE DAWN OF COMPUTER DATING

In 1965 in a dorm room at Harvard...

The Love Machines

Finding a date by computer is commonplace today. Not so in 1965, when two student-run companies at Harvard rushed to usher in a new era of mating.

By Dan Slater

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MILES DONOVAN

A general interest publication and a runner-up to *Life*, *Look* magazine was trying to stay on top of the computer revolution when, in the fall of 1965, it spotted a good story coming out of Boston. Two rival companies at Harvard, both student-run, were making money hand over fist by using computers to help students find dates. *Look's* editors dispatched Gene Shalit, then a 29-year-old culture reporter, to investigate.

The concept of computer dating had taken root at Harvard earlier that year, when a junior math major named Jeff Tarr decided he was fed up with coming home alone from mixers with Radcliffe, the women's college across the way. Despite Tarr's towering stature in the math department, he was, at 5 feet 7 inches, less than a heartthrob. Tarr's eureka moment, like that of so

many innovators before and after him, reflected the desperation of a guy who couldn't get a date. That he could also make a fortune by expanding the mating pool from Wheaton to Wellesley, from Pembroke to Mount Holyoke, was an afterthought.

Tarr raised \$1,250 and recruited classmate Vaughan Morrill. Tarr wrote a questionnaire that asked students

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to answer 75 questions about themselves and another 75 about their "ideal date." But Tarr was just a math guy; computer science did not yet exist as a major. So he paid a friend \$100 to program an IBM 1401 that would match questionnaires with similar responses.

Tarr and Morrill distributed the questionnaire to Boston-area colleges. Students filled it out and returned it with a \$3 subscription fee. Tarr paid "punch-card ladies" to transfer each answer onto Hollerith punch cards that were then run through the 1401. Within days the student would receive a computer printout with the names, phone numbers, addresses, and graduating years of six people. Tarr and Morrill gave their parent company a scientific-sounding name: Compatibility Research Inc. They called the dating service Operation Match.

In March, just weeks before the official launch of Operation Match, *Boston Globe* reporter Timothy Leland received a tip and rushed over to Tarr's corporate headquarters—dorm room G-35, Winthrop House—where he was greeted by a sign on the door: "YOUR BUSINESS IS OUR PLEASURE. YOUR PLEASURE IS OUR BUSINESS."

Half naked and shaving when Leland barged in, Tarr improvised. Operation Match, he jested, had done a study on which kinds of women preferred which kinds of after-shaves.

"And?" Leland asked.

Tarr explained that Old Spice attracts the all-American ladies, while Royall Lyme gets the preppy types. Fascinated, Leland jotted this down for his article—the first in-depth piece ever produced on the computer-dating industry—which would run under the front-page headline "2 Harvard Men Replacing Cupid With Computer." Jeff Tarr, Leland wrote, was "masterminding the cleverest business enterprise since J.D. Rockefeller invested in oil." His computer, Leland later observed, would "analyze all the personality profiles in a



"The girl you sent me didn't have much upstairs, but what a staircase!" wrote one early client of a computer-dating service.

matter of seconds, and match the couples up in less time than it takes to say 'Je t'adore.'"

For virtually all of human history the search for a mate has been predicated on scarcity: One met only so many people in his or her lifetime. They optimized their options within a circumscribed pool, chose someone, settled down, and, in the best of cases, found something they called happiness. Even when "women's lib" came along and the legal and cultural restraints surrounding divorce began to ease in the 1960s and 1970s, making it easier to leave failed relationships, many chose to stick with the devil they knew because of scarcity of compatible mates, believing it was better to be in a so-so relationship than no relationship at all.

But wait. Suppose some Harvard math whiz came along with an idea to harness technology in a way that was so big, so fresh, that it could change the game entirely? Not by solving some riddle of scarcity, but by smashing the whole concept of scarcity to pieces, eradicating its relevancy. Why settle for the smug and entitled "Cliffies," asked the height-challenged Jeff Tarr, when I can meet every girl at every school?

"A computer," Tarr told Leland, "can find the right date for a person in a split second, when it might take him or her three years to do it alone." Leland wanted to know if Tarr planned to run his own questionnaire through the computer. "Darn right I do," said Tarr. "Two or three times at least. That's the beauty of being a company president."

Tarr's idea of computer-aided dating, to use modern parlance, went viral. By the fall of '65, six months after the launch, some 90,000 Operation Match questionnaires had been received, amounting to \$270,000 in gross profits, or nearly \$2 million in today's dollars. Not bad for a scholarship student from small-town Maine.

Tarr had tapped into a vein of loneliness and frustration at single-sex schools in the Northeast and beyond. "This is the greatest excuse for calling up a strange girl that I've ever heard," wrote a computer dater from Williams in a letter to the company.

"No dogs please!" wrote another from Dartmouth.

"The girl you sent me didn't have much upstairs," wrote a third, from Northwestern, "but what a staircase!"

A female computer dater from Connecticut College suspected "that boys don't level" on their questionnaires. "I was honest with mine," she reported, "but I wonder if some guys fill out theirs to see if they can get a first-nighter."

It was clear that Operation Match was going to need a bigger staff. Tarr pulled in another classmate, a chemistry major named David Crump. Then, walking through Cambridge one day, Tarr struck up a conversation with a dropout from Cornell named Douglas Ginsburg. A pot-smoking free spirit looking for a cause, Ginsburg was not yet on his way to becoming a Harvard Law School professor and Supreme Court nominee. "A computer-dating service?" laughed Ginsburg. He signed on right away.

Profits aside, everyone wanted to know the same thing: Did it work? Did the computer really make good matches? "I approve of it as a way to meet people," said a subscriber from Yale, "although I have no faith in the questionnaire's ability to match compatible people. The machine has no way of telling whether or not the girl has pizzazz!" By pizzazz, the student referred to that mysterious aspect of romantic connection,



Match Makers

Computer-dating pioneers Jeff Tarr and Vaughan Morrill during their Harvard days

chemistry. How could such an elusive quality be quantified?

Tarr made no claims it could. "We're not trying to take the love out of love," he told Shalit, "we're just trying to make it more efficient. We supply everything but the spark." Operation Match might get 10,000 questionnaires returned from any given geographical area. Tarr and his partners would then do a series of "sorts"—sorting the questionnaires, for instance, according to age, then height, then religion, and so on. After five or six sorts, the pools would become too small to further differentiate. The vast majority of the 150 questions never came into play. Computer dating was about more dates, not better dates.

Harvard being Harvard—a place where students have historically evaded traditional career paths by creating their own

jobs—it didn't take long before Operation Match met its first competitor. In the summer of 1965, David Dewan, an MIT grad, was preparing to enter Harvard Business School. Having followed the success of Operation Match as it was chronicled in the pages of the *Harvard Crimson*, Dewan thought he could steal some market share.

Over the summer he drafted his own dating questionnaire and taught himself how to write code for the Honeywell 200, a car-sized contraption that, at around 3 in the morning, could be rented for \$30 an hour from a small Boston mutual-fund company called Fidelity.

Dewan came to the business with a seriousness that Harvard people associate with their geek rivals at MIT. A rich kid who wore Brooks Brothers and drove a Jaguar, he borrowed \$10,000 from his grandfather to start his business. He called the service Eros and its parent company Contact Inc.

Dewan entered the fledgling market with guns blazing, telling the *Crimson* that Operation Match's questionnaire was "less sophisticated, appealing to the big, Mid-west universities." In truth, very little distinguished Contact from Operation Match. Operation Match sold its questionnaires for \$3 while Contact charged \$4. The questions reflected the politics and preoccupations of the era. Both offered three options

for race: Caucasian, Oriental, or Negro. Contact's questionnaire was more strait-laced, seeking daters' opinions on whether civil rights laws should be strengthened and, prophetically, whether the computer is invading too many aspects of personal life.

With no full-time employees, Dewan operated Contact out of his grandparents' home near Cambridge. In one distribution of questionnaires, he drew 11,000 responses at \$4 each, or \$44,000 in gross profits, more than \$250,000 in today's dollars.

Tarr may have been a jokester, but he wasn't going to stand by while Dewan cornered the industry that he had pioneered. In retaliation for Dewan's trash-talking to the *Crimson*, Operation Match alerted authorities that Dewan intended to paper Harvard Yard with questionnaires for Contact. Things got ugly, fast. On September 29, 1965, campus police collared Dewan for the dubious crime of "distributing questionnaires without a permit." The next day the *Crimson* splashed the news across its front page: "University Police Eject Man from Winthrop House."

Dewan's enthusiasm was unchecked. "The way I envision things, in 50 years computers may well have reduced our work week to zero hours," he told the *Sarasota Journal*. "We'll date through com-


Puzzles on Page 35

THE GLOBE PUZZLE SOLUTION

A	O	A	N	R	O	N	E	D	S	R	S
A	O	N	A	L	O	A	N	O	E	L	E
N	A	M	A	R	E	I	R	A	H	N	I
G	L	B	H	T	R	O	M	A	O	M	A
D	G	A	V	H	E	L	E	T	E	I	E
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SUDOKU SOLUTION

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2	7	5	4	8	9	3	1	6
4	6	3	1	7	5	8	2	9
9	1	8	3	6	2	4	5	7
3	4	9	6	1	7	5	8	2
8	2	1	5	9	4	7	6	3
6	5	7	8	2	3	9	4	1



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The Love Machines

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

puters, mate through computers, select our home with the help of computers, and plan our recreation with computers. It will be a fantastic time and my company and I hope to be a large part of it." He was right on all counts save the one.

Thirty years later, online dating would encounter a strong stigma; to "date online" suggested an inability to meet people in real life. But in the '60s, when Tarr and Dewan brought the first incarnations of computer dating to college kids, stigma didn't surround the medium. Sure, people debated whether Operation Match and Contact worked, whether the chance of meeting someone you liked "via the punch cards" was any better than trolling at a mixer. Yet on campus there was little embarrassment or shame.

For one thing, a celebrated singles culture was emerging outside Harvard's walls. In urban areas across the country, the energetic young were spending disposable income in "singles bars." City papers

announced upcoming singles events. *The New York Review of Books*, known for its highbrow readers, began its famous personals column in 1965. Developers constructed youth-oriented apartment complexes. Guidebooks helped the unattached navigate the scene. Rebelling against their parents' suburban sprawl and soulless conformity, youth of the 1960s saw staying single as an exciting adventure for those up to the challenge.

But even while Dewan turned out to be a visionary, his first taste of utopia was bittersweet. "Back then I was going out with a girl from Wellesley," he recalled four decades later. "I gave her a free questionnaire, because she helped me distribute in the dorms there. When we ran it through the computer, she and I matched. That was exciting! But I forgot that she also received five other matches, including a guy from Amherst, whom she later dumped me for." ■

Dan Slater's Love in the Time of Algorithms will be released on January 24. Send comments to magazine@globe.com.



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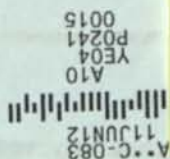
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NEW YORKER





TOM/INE

For many people in their twenties, Internet dating is no less natural a way to meet than the night-club-bathroom line.

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE

Sex, love, and loneliness on the Internet.

BY NICK PAUMGARTEN

In the fall of 1964, on a visit to the World's Fair, in Queens, Lewis Altfest, a twenty-five-year-old accountant, came upon an open-air display called the Parker Pen Pavilion, where a giant computer clicked and whirled at the job of selecting foreign pen pals for curious pavilion visitors. You filled out a questionnaire, fed it into the machine, and almost instantly received a card with the name and address of a like-minded participant in some far-flung locale—your ideal match. Altfest thought this was pretty nifty. He called up his friend Robert Ross, a programmer at I.B.M., and they began considering ways to adapt this approach to find matches closer to home. They'd heard about some students at Harvard who'd come up with a program called Operation Match, which used a computer to find dates for people. A year later, Altfest and Ross had a prototype, which they called Project TACT, an acronym for Technical Automated Compatibility Testing—New York City's first computer-dating service.

Each client paid five dollars and answered more than a hundred multiple-choice questions. One section asked subjects to choose from a list of "dislikes": "1. Affected people. 2. Birth control. 3. Foreigners. 4. Free love. 5. Homosexuals. 6. Interracial marriage," and so on. Another question, in a section called "Philosophy of Life Values," read, "Had I the ability I would most like to do the work of (choose two): (1) Schweitzer. (2) Einstein. (3) Picasso." Some of the questions were gender-specific. Men were asked to rank drawings of women's hair styles: a back-combed updo, a Patty Duke bob. Women were asked to look at a trio of sketches of men in various settings, and to say where they'd prefer to find their ideal man: in camp chopping wood, in a studio painting a canvas, or in a garage working a pillar drill. TACT transferred the answers onto a computer punch card and fed the

card into an I.B.M. 1400 Series computer, which then spit out your matches: five blue cards, if you were a woman, or five pink ones, if you were a man.

In the beginning, TACT was restricted to the Upper East Side, an early sexual-revolution testing ground. The demolition of the Third Avenue Elevated subway line set off a building boom and a white-collar influx, most notably of young educated women who suddenly found themselves free of family, opprobrium, and, thanks to birth control, the problem of sexual consequence. Within a year, more than five thousand subscribers had signed on.

Over time, TACT expanded to the rest of New York. It would invite dozens of matched couples to singles parties, knowing that people might be more comfortable in a group setting. Ross and Altfest enjoyed a brief media blitz. They wound up in the pages of the *New York Herald Tribune* and in *Cosmopolitan*. The *Cosmo* correspondent's first match was with a gym teacher who told her over the phone that his favorite sport was "indoor wrestling—with girls." (He stood her up, complaining of a backache.) One of TACT's print advertisements featured a photograph of a beautiful blond woman. "Some people think Computer dating services attract only losers," the copy read, quoting a TACT subscriber. "This loser happens to be a talented fashion illustrator for one of New York's largest advertising agencies. She makes Quiche Lorraine, plays chess, and like me she loves to ski. Some loser!"

One day, a woman named Patricia Lahrmer, from 1010 WINS, a local radio station, came to TACT to do an interview. She was the station's first female reporter, and she had chosen, as her debut feature, a three-part story on how New York couples meet. (A previous installment had been about a singles bar—Maxwell's Plum, on the Upper

East Side, one of the first that so-called "respectable" single women could patronize on their own.) She had planned to interview Altfest, but he was out of the office, and she ended up talking to Ross. The batteries died on her tape recorder, so they made a date to finish the interview later that week, which turned into dinner for two. They started seeing each other, and two years afterward they were married. Ross had hoped that TACT would help him meet someone, and, in a way, it had.

After a couple of years, Ross grew bored with TACT and went into finance instead. He and Lahrmer moved to London. Looking back now, he says that he considered computer dating to be little more than a gimmick and a fad.

The process of selecting and securing a partner, whether for conceiving and rearing children, or for enhancing one's socioeconomic standing, or for attempting motel-room acrobatics, or merely for finding companionship in a cold and lonely universe, is as consequential as it can be inefficient or irresolute. Lives hang in the balance, and yet we have typically relied for our choices on happenstance—offhand referrals, late nights at the office, or the dream of meeting cute.

Online dating sites, whatever their more mercenary motives, draw on the premise that there has got to be a better way. They approach the primeval mystery of human attraction with a systematic and almost Promethean hand. They rely on algorithms, those often proprietary mathematical equations and processes which make it possible to perform computational feats beyond the reach of the naked brain. Some add an extra layer of projection and interpretation; they adhere to a certain theory of compatibility, rooted in psychology or brain chemistry or genetic coding, or they define themselves by other, more

readily obvious indicators of similitude, such as race, religion, sexual predilection, sense of humor, or musical taste. There are those which basically allow you to browse through profiles as you would boxes of cereal on a shelf in the store. Others choose for you; they bring five boxes of cereal to your door, ask you to select one, and then return to the warehouse with the four others. Or else they leave you with all five.

It is tempting to think of online dating as a sophisticated way to address the ancient and fundamental problem of sorting humans into pairs, except that the problem isn't very old. Civilization, in its various guises, had it pretty much worked out. Society—family, tribe, caste, church, village, probate court—established and enforced its connubial protocols for the presumed good of everyone, except maybe for the couples themselves. The criteria for compatibility had little to do with mutual affection or a shared enthusiasm for spicy food and Fleetwood Mac. Happiness, self-fulfillment, "me time," a woman's needs: these didn't rate. As for romantic love, it was an almost mutually exclusive cate-

gory of human experience. As much as it may have evolved, in the human animal, as a motivation system for mate-finding, it was rarely given great consideration in the final reckoning of conjugal choice.

The twentieth century reduced it all to smithereens. The Pill, women in the workforce, widespread deferment of marriage, rising divorce rates, gay rights—these set off a prolonged but erratic improvisation on a replacement. In a fractured and bewildered landscape of fern bars, ladies' nights, Plato's Retreat, "The Bachelor," sexting, and the concept of the "cougar," the Internet promised reconnection, profusion, and processing power.

The obvious advantage of online dating is that it provides a wider pool of possibility and choice. In some respects, for the masses of grownups seeking mates, either for a night or for life, dating is an attempt to approximate the collegiate condition—that surfeit both of supply and demand, of information and authentication. A college campus is a habitat of abundance and access, with a fluid and fairly ruthless vetting appa-

ratus. A city also has abundance and access, especially for the young, but as people pair off, and as they corral themselves, through profession, geography, and taste, into cliques and castes, the range of available mates shrinks. We run out of friends of friends and friends of friends of friends. You can get to thinking that the single ones are single for a reason.

If your herd is larger, your top choice is likely to be better, in theory, anyway. This can cause problems. When there is something better out there, you can't help trying to find it. You fall prey to the tyranny of choice—the idea that people, when faced with too many options, find it harder to make a selection. If you are trying to choose a boyfriend out of a herd of thousands, you may choose none of them. Or you see someone until someone better comes along. The term for this is "trading up." It can lead you to think that your opportunities are virtually infinite, and therefore to question what you have. It can turn people into products.

For some, of course, there is no end game; Internet dating can be sport in an end in itself. One guy told me he regarded it as "target practice"—a way to sharpen his skills. If you're looking only to get laid, the industry's algorithmic-matching pretense is of little account; you merely want to be cut loose in the cereal. The Internet can arrange this for you.

But if you really are eager, to say nothing of desperate, for a long-term partner you may have to contend with something else—the tyranny of unwitting compromise. Often the people who go on the sites that promise you a match are so primed to find one that they jump at the first or the second or the third who comes along. The people who are looking may not be the people you are looking for. "It's a selection problem when you round up a bunch of people who want to settle down," Chris Coyne, one of the founders of a site called OK Cupid, told me. Some people are too picky, and others aren't picky enough. Some hitters swing at every first pitch, and others always strike out looking. Many sites, either because of their methods or because of their reputations, tend to attract one or the other.

"Internet dating" is a bit of a misnomer. You don't date online, you meet



"It's like 'Family Circus' meets 'The Wire,' but on a cruise ship."

people online. It's a search mechanism. The question is, is it a better one than, say, taking up hot yoga, attending a lot of book parties, or hitting happy hour at Tony Roma's?

Match.com, one of the first Internet dating sites, went live in 1995. It is now the biggest dating site in the world and is itself the biggest aggregator of other dating sites; under the name Match, it owns thirty in all, and accounts for about a quarter of the revenues of its parent company, I.A.C., Barry Diller's collection of media properties. In 2010, fee-based dating Web sites grossed over a billion dollars. According to a recent study commissioned by Match.com, online is now the third most common way for people to meet. (The most common are "through work/school" and "through friends/family.") One in six new marriages is the result of meetings on Internet dating sites. (Nobody's counting one-night stands.) For many people in their twenties, accustomed to conducting much of their social life online, it is no less natural a way to hook up than the church social or the night-club-bathroom line.

There are thousands of dating sites; the big ones, such as Match.com and eHarmony (among the fee-based services) and PlentyOfFish and OK Cupid (among the free ones), hog most of the traffic. Pay sites make money through monthly subscriptions; you can't send or receive a message without one. Free sites rely on advertising. Mark Brooks, the editor of the trade magazine *Online Personals Watch*, said, "Starting a site is like starting a restaurant. It's a sexy business, looks like fun, yet it's hard to make money." There is, as yet, a disconnect between success and profit. "The way these companies make money is not directly correlated to the utility that users get from the product," Harj Taggar, a partner at the Silicon Valley seed fund Y Combinator, told me. "What they really should be doing is making money if they match you with people you like."

Some sites proceed from a simple gimmick. ScientificMatch attempts to pair people according to their DNA, and claims that this approach leads to a higher rate of female orgasms. A site called Ashley Madison notoriously connects cheat-



ing spouses. Howaboutwe.com asks only that you complete a sentence that begins "How about we . . ." with a suggestion for a first date, be it a Martini at the Carlyle or a canoe trip on the Gowanus Canal. (Your suggestion should theoretically be a sufficient signal of your taste and imagination, and an impetus for getting off-line as soon as possible. Apparently, a big winner has been a ride on the Staten Island Ferry.) The cutting edge is in mobile and location-based technology, such as Grindr, a smartphone app for gay men that tells subscribers when there are other willing subscribers in their vicinity. Many Internet dating companies, including Grindr, are trying to devise ways to make this kind of thing work for straight people, which means making it work for straight women, who may not need an app to know that they are surrounded by willing straight men.

Most of the Internet dating sites still rely, as TACT did, on the questionnaire. The raw material, in the matching process, is a mass of stated preference: your desire or intolerance for certain traits and characteristics. Many of the sites make do with that alone. The more sophisticated ones attempt to identify and exploit the dissonance between what you say you want and what you really appear to want, through the choices you make online.

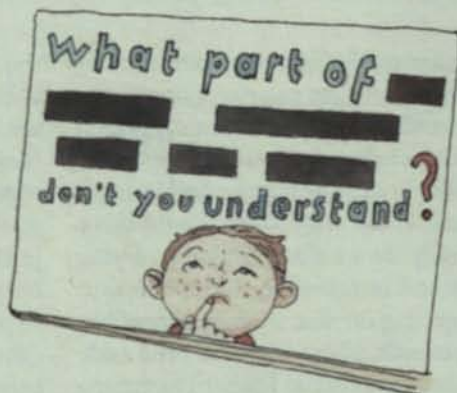
"What you do is more important than what you say," Greg Blatt, who is

the C.E.O. of I.A.C., and a former C.E.O. of Match.com, told me. (Blatt not only runs the company; he's also a client. He is one of those guys who say they enjoy dating.) You may specify that you'd like your date to be blond or tall or Jewish or a non-smoking Democrat, but you may have a habit of reaching out to pot-smoking South Asian Republicans. This is called "revealed preference," and it is the essential element in Match's algorithmic process. Match knows what's right for you—even if it doesn't really know you. After taking stock of your stated and revealed preferences, the software finds people on the site who have similar dissonances between the two, and uses their experiences to approximate what yours should be. You may have sent introductory messages to only two people, and marked a few others with a wink—a nonverbal expression of interest—but Match will have hundreds of people in its database who have done a lot more on the site, and whose behavior yours seems to resemble. From them, depending on the degree of correlation, the software extrapolates about you.

The trick is in weighting each variable. How significant is hair-color dissonance? Do political views, or fan allegiances, matter? The weightings can change over time, as nuances or tendencies emerge. The algorithms learn. And sometimes behavior changes—political opinion matters more in an election

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year, for example—and the algorithms scramble to keep up.

An engineer named Amarnath Thombre oversees Match's base algorithm, which takes into account fifteen hundred variables: whether you smoke, whether you can go out with a smoker, whether your behavior says otherwise. These are compared with the variables of others, creating a series of so-called "interactions." Each interaction has a score: a numerical expression of shared trait-tolerance. The closest analogy, Thombre told me, is to Netflix, which uses a similar process to suggest movies you might like—"except that the movie doesn't have to like you back."

I've been on two real dates in my life, both of them in my freshman year of college, nearly a quarter century ago. The first, as it happens, was with the eldest daughter of Robert Ross, the founder of TACT. We met at a party and took up with each other for a while. The date itself came later, on the first night of Christmas vacation. We went to "Burn This" on Broadway. I remember John Malkovich stomping around onstage and then my date catching a train back to Scarsdale. She remembers that we went to a Chinese restaurant and (this hurts) that I ordered a tequila sunrise. That night, anyway, was the end of it for us.

For the next date, on the advice of a classmate from Staten Island, who claimed to have dating experience, I took a sophomore I liked to a T.G.I. Friday's, in a shopping center on Route 1 in New Jersey. On the drive there, a fuse blew, knocking out the car stereo, and so I pulled over, removed the fuse box, fashioned a fuse out of some aluminum foil from a pack of cigarettes, and got the cassette deck going again. My companion could not have known that this would hold up as the lone MacGyver moment in a lifetime of my standing around uselessly while other people fix stuff, but she can attest to it now, as she has usually been the one, since then, doing the fixing. We've been together for twenty-three years. Needless to say, we had no idea that anything we were saying or doing that night, or even that year, would lead us to where we are today, which is married, with children, a mortgage, and a budding fear of the inevitable moment when one of us will die before the other.

So, for the purposes of this story, I didn't do any online dating of my own. Instead, I went out for coffee or drinks with various women who, according to their friends, had had extraordinary or, at least, numerous adventures dating online. To the extent that a date can sometimes feel like an interview, these interviews often felt a little like dates. We sized each other up. We doled out tidbits of immoderate disclosure.

I talked to men, too, of course, but there is something simultaneously reductive and disingenuous in most men's assessments of their requirements and conquests. Some research has suggested that it is men, more than women, who yearn for marriage, but this may be merely a case of stated preference. Men want someone who will take care of them, make them look good, and have sex with them—not necessarily in that order. It may be that this is all that women really want, too, but they are better at disguising or obscuring it. They deal in calculus, while men, for the most part, traffic in simple sums.

A common observation, about both the Internet dating world and the world at large, is that there is an apparent surplus of available women, especially in their thirties and beyond, and a shortage of recommendable men. The explanation for this asymmetry, which isn't exactly news, is that men can and usually do pursue younger women, and that often the men who are single are exactly the ones who prefer them. For women surveying a landscape of banished husbands or perpetual boys, the biological rationale offers little solace. Neither does the Internet.

Everyone these days seems to have an online-dating story or a friend with online-dating stories. Pervasiveness has helped to chip away at the stigma; people no longer think of online dating as a last resort for desperadoes and creeps. The success story is a standard of the genre. But anyone who has spent a lot of time dating online, and not just dabbling, has his or her share of horror stories, too.

Earlier this year, a Los Angeles filmmaker named Carole Markin sued Match.com in California state court after she was allegedly raped by a man she met on the site; he turned out to be a convicted sex offender. (Twenty years ago, Markin published a book called

"Bad Dates," for which she solicited anecdotes from the likes of Johnny Bench, Vincent Price, Lyle Alzado, Isaac Asimov, and Minnesota Fats. They suggest that all good dates may be alike but that each bad one is bad in its own way.) Markin's suit asked not for money but for an injunction against Match.com to prevent it from signing up any new members until it institutes a system for background checks. (A few days later, the company announced that it would start checking subscribers against the national registry of sex offenders.) To some extent, such incidents, as terrible as they are, merely reflect the frequency of such transactional hazards in the wider world. Bars don't do background checks, either.

Most bad dates aren't that kind of bad. They are just awkward, or excruciating. One woman, a forty-six-year-old divorced mother of two, likened them to airplane crashes: the trouble usually occurs during takeoff and landing—the minute you meet and the minute you leave. You can often tell right away if this person who's been so charming in his e-mails is a creep or a bore. If not, it becomes clear at the end of the evening, when he sticks his tongue down your throat. Or doesn't. One woman who has dated fifty-eight men since her divorce, a few years ago, told me that she maintains a chart, both to keep the men straight and to try to discern patterns—as though there might be a unified-field theory of why men are dogs.

The dating profile, like the Facebook or Myspace profile, is a vehicle for projecting a curated and stylized version of oneself into the world. In a way, the online persona, with its lists of favorite bands and books, its roster of essential values and tourist destinations, represents a cheaper and more direct way of signalling one's worth and taste than the kinds of affect that people have relied on for centuries—headgear, jewelry, perfume, tattoos. Demonstrating the ability, and the inclination, to write well is a rough equivalent to showing up in a black Mercedes. And yet a sentiment I heard again and again, from women who instinctively prized nothing so much as a well-written profile, was that, as rare as it may be, "good writing is only a sign of good writing." Graceful prose does not a gentleman make.

The fact that you can't get away with lying in your profile for long doesn't prevent a lot of people from doing it. They post old photographs of themselves, or photos of other people, or click on "athletic" rather than "could lose a few pounds," or identify themselves as single when they are anything but. Sometimes the man says he's straight but the profile reads gay. Sometimes he neglects to mention that he is a convicted felon. OK Cupid, in an analysis of its own data, has confirmed what I heard anecdotally: that men exaggerate their income (by twenty per cent) and their height (by two inches), perhaps intuiting that women pay closer attention to these data points than to any others. But women lie about these things, too. A date is an exercise in adjustment.

It is an axiom of Internet dating that everyone allegedly has a sense of humor, even if evidence of it is infrequently on display. You don't have to prove that you love to curl up with the *Sunday Times* or take walks on the beach (a very crowded beach, to judge by daters' profiles), but, if you say you are funny, then you should probably show it. Demonstrating funniness can be fraught. Irony isn't for everyone. But everyone isn't for everyone, either.

I had a talk-about-dating date with a freelance researcher named Julia Kamin, who, over twelve years as a dater on various sites, has boiled down all the competing compatibility criteria to the question of, as she put it, "Are we laughing at the same shit?" This epiphany inspired her to build a site—makeeachotherlaugh.com—on which you rate cartoons and videos, and the algorithms match you up. As she has gone around telling people about her idea, she says, "women get instantly excited. Men are, like, 'Um, O.K., maybe.'" It might be that women want to be amused while men want to be considered amusing. "I really should have two sites," Kamin said. "Hemakesme-laugh.com and shelaughsatmyjokes.com." (She bought both URLs.)

Good writing on Internet dating sites may be rare because males know that the best way to get laid is to send messages to as many females as possible. To be efficient, they put very little work into each message and therefore pay scant attention to each woman's profile. The come-on becomes spam and gums

up the works, or scares women away, which in turn can lead to a different kind of gender disparity: a room full of dudes. "There is a fundamental imbalance in the social dynamic," Harj Taggar, the investor at Y Combinator, told me. "The most valuable asset is attractive females. As soon as you get them, you get loads of creepy guys."

The online dating sites are themselves a little like online-dating-site suitors. They want you. They exaggerate their height and salary. They hide their bald spots and back fat. Each has a distinct personality and a carefully curated profile—a look, a strong side, and, to borrow from TACT, a philosophy of life values. Nothing determines the atmosphere and experience of an Internet dating service more than the people who use it, but sometimes the sites reflect the personalities or predilections of their founders.

OK Cupid, in its profile, comes across as the witty, literate geek-hipster, the math major with the Daft Punk vinyl collection and the mumblecore screenplay in development. Get to know it a little better and you'll find that it contains multitudes—old folks, squares, more Jews than JDate, the polyamorous crowd. Dating sites have for the most part always had either a squalid or a chain-store ambience. OK Cupid, with a breezy, facetious tone, an intuitive approach, and proprietary matching stratagems, comes close to feeling like a contemporary Internet product, and a pastime for the young. By reputation, it's where you go if you want to hook up, although perhaps not if you are, as the vulgate has it, "looking for someone"—the phrase that connotes a desire for commitment but a countervailing aversion to compromise. Owing to high traffic and a sprightly character, OK Cupid was also perhaps the most desirable eligible bachelor out there, until February, when it was bought, for fifty million dollars, by Match.

OK Cupid's founders, who have stayed on since the sale, are four math majors from Harvard. While still in school, in the late nineties, they created a successful company called the Spark, which composed and posted online study guides along the lines of Cliffs Notes. At the time, they experimented

NO IDEAS BUT IN THINGS

We checked the vents and hidden apertures of the house, then ran out of ideas of where it might be open to the world. So we couldn't figure out how the squirrel was getting in. We each had methods that succeeded in shooing him, or her, out the door—but none of them lasted. Whether it was the same squirrel—terrified when in the house, and persistently so—or various we couldn't tell because, tipped off by a glance, he zigzagged from froze-to-vapor, vanishing, Zorro-like, until signs would tell us he had revisited the sideboard to dig in the begonia. (Escaping Newcastle in a search for coal.) We plotted his counter-escape, laying a path of pecans to a window opening on the yard. A few days would pass, and, believing him gone, we felt inexplicably better than when we began. Then, from another room, the amplified skritch of nutmeg being grated—and, crash. Bracelets off dresser tops, bud vases, candy dishes, things houses have that the back yard doesn't. You don't think of squirrels knocking things over, but inside it was like living with the Ghost and Mrs. Muir.

with a dating site called SparkMatch. The fodder for their matching apparatus was a handful of personality tests and droll questionnaires that they'd posted on the Spark to lure traffic. They sold the company to Barnes & Noble in 2001 and then reunited in 2003 to revive the dating idea. To solve the chicken-egg conundrum of a dating site—to attract users, you need users—they created a handful of quizzes, chief among them the Dating Persona Test. A man might learn, for example, that he's a Billy Goat, a Backrubber, a Vapor Trail, a Poolboy, or the Last Man on Earth. The Hornivore ("roaming, sexual, subhuman") might want to consider the female type Genghis Khunt ("master of man, bringer of pain") and avoid the Sonnet ("romantic, hopeful, composed"). They also urged people to submit their own quizzes. By now, users have submitted more than forty-three thousand quizzes to the site. Answer this or that pile of questions and you can find out which "Lost" character/chess piece/chemical element you are.

Essentially, OK Cupid opened a parlor-game emporium and then got down to the business of pairing off the patrons. The quizzes had no bearing on the matching, and at this point they are half-hidden on the site. They were merely bait—a pickup line, a push-up bra. There

is a different question regimen for matching. On OK Cupid, the questions are submitted by users. There are three variables to each question: your own answer, the answer you'd like a match to give, and how important you think this answer should be. The questions are ranked in order of how effective they are at sorting people. Some questions might be of utmost importance ("Have you ever murdered anyone?") but of little use, in sorting people. Others that divide well ("Do you like Brussels sprouts?") will not do so meaningfully.

And yet some questions are unpredictably predictive. One of the founders, Christian Rudder, maintains the OK Trends blog, sifting through the mountains of data and composing clever, mathematically sourced synopses of his findings. There are now nearly two hundred and eighty thousand questions on the site; OK Cupid has collected more than eight hundred million answers. (People on the site answer an average of three hundred questions.) Rudder has discovered, for example, that the answer to the question "Do you like the taste of beer?" is more predictive than any other of whether you're willing to have sex on a first date. (That is, people on OK Cupid who have answered yes to one are likely to have answered yes to the other.) OK Cupid has also analyzed couples

When we couldn't trust the quiet or prove his absence, we cast him as that hapless shade: worry. Our own gray area, scat-trailing proof of feral anxiety. But after a few cycles of release-and-catch I grew bored with the idea, with its untamed projections. Since he dashes up walls, (yanked, like a pulley), or seeks treasure in a five-inch pot, daily, why not adopt him as optimism's travelling rep? I tried. But the sun comes up, we step toward the stove, and he shoots out like a cue ball, banks off the kitchen door—what mayhem is caused by going to make coffee!—and the day, again, begins with a shriek. We are now in week three and I accept that, inside, the squirrel is going to stand for something else. And so is the May rain and so is the day you took off your coat and the tulips joined in with the cherry blossoms and the people came out and the pear-tree petals floated down in polka dots around the tulips, and even around the cars. We name life in relation to whatever we step out from when we open the door, and whatever comes back in on its own.

—Jessica Greenbaum

who have met on the site and have since left it. Of the 34,620 couples the site has analyzed, the casual first-date question whose shared answer was most likely to signal a shot at longevity (beyond the purview of OK Cupid, anyway) was "Do you like horror movies?" When I signed up for the site, some of the first things I was asked were "Are clams alive?" and "Which is bigger, the sun or the earth?" It's hard to discern the significance.

The purpose of the blog is to attract attention: the findings, like the quizzes, are to lure you in. Rudder has written a lot about looks: whether or not it helps to show cleavage (women) or a bare midriff (men)—the answers were Yes, Especially as You Age, and Yes, If You Have Good Abs and Are Not a Congressman. He found that women generally prefer it when in photos men are looking away from the camera (hypothesis: less intimidating), and that men prefer the opposite (they want a woman's full attention). A user can rate other people's profiles. The matching algorithms take these ratings into account and show you people who are roughly within your range of attractiveness, according to the opinions of others. The idea behind the matching algorithms, Chris Coyne told me, is to replicate the experience you have off-line. "We tried to imagine software that would be like your friend in the real world,"

Coyne said. "If I were your friend and I told you that So-and-So would be the perfect date, your response to me would be to start asking me questions. Does she like dancing? Does she smoke pot? Is she a furry? Is she tall? On the Internet, people will ask—and answer—extremely personal questions."

OK Cupid sends all your answers to its servers, which are housed on Broad Street in New York. The algorithms find the people out there whose answers best correspond to yours—how yours fit their desires and how theirs meet yours, and according to what degree of importance. It's a Venn diagram. And then the algorithms determine how exceptional those particular correlations are: it's more statistically significant to share an affection for the Willys than for the Beatles. The match is expressed as a percentage. Each match search requires tens of millions of mathematical operations. To the extent that OK Cupid has any abiding faith, it is in mathematics.

There's another layer: how to sort the matches. "You've got to make sure certain people don't get all the attention," Rudder said. "In a bar, it's self-correcting. You see ten guys standing around one woman, maybe you don't walk over

and try to introduce yourself. Online, people have no idea how 'surrounded' a person is. And that creates a shitty situation. Dudes don't get messages back. Some women get overwhelmed." And so the attractiveness ratings, as well as the frequency of messaging, are factored in. As on Match.com, the algorithms pay attention to revealed preferences. "We watch people who don't know they're being watched," Sam Yagan, the company's C.E.O., said. "But not in a Big Brother way." The algorithms learn as they go, changing the weighting for certain variables to adjust to the success or the failure rate of the earlier iterations. The goal is to connect you with someone with whom you have enough in common to want to strike up an e-mail correspondence and then quickly meet in person. It is not OK Cupid's concern whether you are suited for a lifetime together.

OK Cupid winds up with a lot of data. This enables the researchers to conjure from their database the person you may not realize you have in mind. "Like that guy in high school with the Camaro and the mustache who bow-hunts on weekends," Rudder said. "You can find that guy of the imagination by using statistics." The database also gives them a vast pool to sell to academics. In no other milieu do so many people, from such a broad demographic swath, willingly answer so many intimate questions. It is a gold mine for social scientists. In the past nine months, OK Cupid

has sold its raw data (redacted or made anonymous to protect the privacy of its customers) to half a dozen academics. Gregory Huber and Neil Malhotra, political scientists at Yale and Stanford, respectively, are sifting through OK Cupid data to determine how political opinions factor in to choosing social partners. Rudder, for his part, has determined that Republicans

have more in common with Republicans than Democrats have in common with Democrats, which led him to conclude, "The Democrats are doomed."

OK Cupid's office occupies a single floor of an office building a block away from the Port Authority Bus Terminal, that old redoubt of pimps. It's an open-air loft space, with the four



founders at desks in the middle of a phalanx of young men (and one woman) staring at screens. The four are Sam Yagan, the C.E.O.; Chris Coyne, the president and creative director; Max Krohn, the C.T.O.; and Christian Rudder, the editorial director. As they all like to say, Sam is the business, Chris is the product, Max is the tech, and Christian is the blog.

Yagan, who is thirty-four, is also the face. A Chicagoan with the mischievous self-assurance of a renegade salesman—he can seem solicitous and scornful at once—he does appearances on “Rachael Ray” and meetings with the suits at L.A.C. He makes grandiose claims with a mixture of mirth and sincerity. As he said to me one day, “We are the most important search engine on the Web, not Google. The search for companionship is more important than the search for song lyrics.”

All four founders maintain profiles on OK Cupid, but they are all married, and they all met their wives the analogue way. Yagan met his wife, Jessica, in high school, outside Chicago, where she and their two kids now live; she works for McDonald’s, overseeing the sustainability of its supply chain. He commutes to New York every week, bunking in a hotel. Rudder, who is thirty-five and from Little Rock, met his wife, a public-relations executive from Long Island named Reshma Patel, twelve years ago through friends. They live in a modest apartment in Williamsburg, and often have friends over at night to play German board games. Coyne and his wife, Jennie Tarr Coyne, who have a toddler and a child on the way, have been together eight years, but sometimes they go out and pretend it’s their first date. She is from Manhattan and works in the education department at the Frick Collection. They were classmates at Harvard, but they met again a few years later outside a night club in New York. He had a drunken woman on each arm. “Don’t I know you?” he said.

“I was a little grossed out,” she recalled. “I decided I was done with him.”

“She decided she had to have me,” Coyne said.

Afterward, she looked him up on the Internet, and discovered that he’d come from a town in Maine near where her fa-

ther, Jeff Tarr, also a Harvard graduate, grew up, and that they had gone to the same Scout camp. Chris and Jennie began e-mailing each other, and eventually went out on a date. She considers herself an excellent matchmaker, with a well-tested compatibility theory of her own—that a man and a woman should look alike. (In 2004, *Evolutionary Psychology* published a study of this phenomenon titled, “Narcissism guides mate selection: Humans mate assortatively, as revealed by facial resemblance, following an algorithm of ‘self seeking like.’”) She and Coyne are both blond, fair, and lean, although, because he is seventeen inches taller, she worried they’d be ill matched. They were engaged within a year. They moved into an apartment in the same building as her parents: the San Remo, on Central Park West. Jennie’s father, too, had started out in the computer-dating business; at Harvard, he’d been one of the founders of Operation Match, the inspiration for TACT.

The Coynes’ marriage has a whiff of a phantom variable that the matching algorithms don’t seem to take into account: fate. Serendipity and coincidence are the photosynthesis of romance, hinting at some kind of supernatural preordination, the sense that two people are made for each other. The Internet subverts Kismet. And yet Coyne and his wife both have a profile on the site, and the algorithms have determined that she is his No. 1 match. He is her No. 2. She struck up a correspondence with her No. 1, a man in England, who eventually, after she friended him on Facebook, stopped writing her back.

For all the fun that twenty-somethings are having hooking up with their Hornivores, their Sonnets, and their Poolboys, it turns out that the fastest-growing online-dating demographic is people over fifty—a function perhaps of expanding computer literacy and diminished opportunity. I recently got to know a woman I’ll call Mary Taft, who is seventy-six, has a doctorate in education, and has been married and divorced twice. She lives outside Boston. As a single mother, in her forties, she gave up men for a while. “When you have a kid, dating is very

hard, unless you have a lot of money or you don’t give a damn,” she told me. When her son was ready to go to college, she started dating again. She was fifty-eight. Through a dating service, she met an economist, who was eight years younger than she. They lived together for a decade. Eventually, Taft told me, “he had to go to other cities to look for other jobs. I didn’t go. And that was that.” In 2000, she put an ad in *Harvard Magazine*. “This seemed horrible to me, but I got all kinds of responses. A nice guy from Vermont drove all the way down to see me.” And then, when she was almost seventy, she discovered Internet dating, and the frequency and variety of her assignments intensified.

She met a mathematician who lived in Amsterdam, and flew over to meet him but discovered within minutes that he suffered from full-blown O.C.D. She drove up to New Hampshire in the rain for lunch with a man with whom she’d been carrying on a promising e-mail and telephone correspondence for a few days, but he told her that he found her unattractive. She met a financier on Yahoo’s dating site. They got together for coffee at Café Panoplia, in Cambridge. He was handsome, charming, and bright. He was also, as a friend’s follow-up Google search revealed, a felon, and had served time in prison in a RICO case. “I did see him again,” she said. “And then I realized how crazy he was. He wasn’t nice, either.” For two years, she has had an off-and-on affair with a forty-seven-year-old man she met on Yahoo, and she recently met a man on Match.com who showed up for their first date wearing a woman’s sun hat, slippers, and three purses. He invited her to accompany him to Norway to meet the Queen.

“You have to learn the rules,” she said. “But there are no rules.” More often than not, she initiates contact. “At my age, I have to.” She also feels that, in her profile, she has to shave a few years from her age and leave out the fact that she has a doctoral degree, having concluded that men are often scared off by it. She has gone online as a man, just to survey the terrain, and estimates that in her age range women outnumber men ten to one. “Men my age are grabbed up immediately by friends,”

she said. "Or else they believe that younger women are more interested in sex."

"I've learned, forget about writing," she said. "Meet a person as soon as you can. Anyway, the profiles you read, they're like bathtubs. There's no variation."

If the dating sites had a mixer, you might find OK Cupid by the bar, muttering factoids and jokes, and Match.com in the middle of the room, conspicuously dropping everyone's first names into his sentences. The clean-shaven gentleman on the couch, with the excellent posture, the pastel golf shirt, and that strangely chaste yet fiery look in his eye? That would be eHarmony. EHarmony is the squarest of the sites, the one most overtly geared to-

ward finding you a spouse. It was launched, in 2000, by Neil Clark Warren, a clinical psychologist who had spent three decades treating and studying married couples and working out theories about what made their marriages succeed or fail. He had noticed that he was spending most of his time negotiating exit strategies in marriages that were already irreparably broken, mainly because the couples shouldn't have been married in the first place. From his own research, and his review of the academic and clinical literature, he concluded that two people were more likely to stay together, and stay together happily, if they shared certain psychological traits. As he has often said, opposites attract—and then they attack. He designed eHarmony to identify and align these shared traits, and to

keep opposites away from each other.

Warren was also a seminarian and a devout Christian, and eHarmony started out as a predominantly Christian site. The evangelical conservative James Dobson, through his organization Focus on the Family, had published advice books that Warren had written and provided early support and publicity for eHarmony. It didn't match gay couples (its stated reason being that it hadn't done any research on them), and it sometimes had trouble finding matches for certain kinds of people (atheists, for example, and people who'd been divorced twice). As it has grown into the second-biggest fee-based dating service in the world, eHarmony has expanded and shed its more orthodox orientation, and severed its connections to Dobson. In 2009, under pressure from a slew of class-action lawsuits, it created a separate site specifically for homosexuals. Still, the foundational findings of Warren's psychology practice remain in place—the so-called "29 Dimensions of Compatibility," which have been divided into "Core Traits" and "Vital Attributes."

These undergo constant fine-tuning in what eHarmony calls its "relationship lab," on the ground floor of an anonymous office building in Pasadena. The director of the lab, and the senior director of research and development at eHarmony, is a psychologist named Gian Gonzaga. He and his staff bring in couples and observe them as they perform various tasks. Then they come to conclusions about the human condition, which they put to use in improving their matching algorithms and, perhaps just as important, in getting out the word that they are doing so. There is a touch of Potemkin in the enterprise.

One night in March, Gonzaga invited me to observe a session that was part of a five-year longitudinal study he is conducting of three hundred and one married couples. EHarmony had solicited them on its site, in churches, and from registration lists at bridal shows. Of the three hundred and one, fifty-five had met on eHarmony.

Gonzaga, an affable Philadelphian, introduced me to one of his colleagues, Heather Setrakian, who was running the study. She was also his wife. They'd met in the psychology department at U.C.L.A., where Gonzaga was conduct-



ing a study on married couples. Setrakian, who had a master's in clinical psychology, was the project coordinator. To test their procedures, they needed a man and a woman to impersonate a married couple for multiple sessions. Gonzaga and Setrakian became the impersonators, and fell in love. "Some of our fake marriages had a lot more money than we have now, and a trampoline, and in-laws in Utah," Setrakian said.

The eHarmony relationship lab consists of four windowless interview rooms, each of them furnished with a couch, easy chairs, silk flowers, and semi-hidden cameras. The walls were painted beige, to better frame telltale facial expressions and physical gestures on videotape. "With white walls, blondes wash out," Gonzaga explained. Down the hall was the control room, with several computer screens on which Gonzaga and Setrakian and their team of researchers observe their test subjects.

Each couple came for an interview three or so months before their wedding, and then periodically afterward. They also filled out questionnaires and diaries according to a schedule. In the lab, they were asked to participate in four types of interaction, where first one spouse, and then the other, initiates a discussion. (The discussions ranged from two to ten minutes.) One was called "capitalization," in which each spouse starts a discussion of something good that has happened to him or her; Gonzaga and the team would monitor the other spouse's manner of dealing with his or her mate's good fortune. ("The more you are similar to someone, the easier it is to validate them," Gonzaga said. "Sharing the event requires sharing a sense of self.") Another is called "the tease," in which one spouse adopts a funny or critical nickname for the other, and they discuss its origins and appropriateness. "We look at the delivery of the tease," Gonzaga said. "Is the tease relationship enhancing or bullying? When done well, it's verbal play. It helps test the bond."

"Then you have to think about the valence of the tease," Setrakian said. "Teasing can be overwhelmingly negative yet delivered with positive emotion."

A third interaction is conflict resolution; the husband chooses something that has been bugging him about his wife, and they spend ten minutes hash-

ing it out. Then the wife gets her shot. Gonzaga is on the lookout for what he calls "skills"—techniques and behaviors that a couple may or may not have for dealing with good and bad news. "Skills come into sharper relief when spouses are under duress." He cited eye-rolling as an example of a contemptuous gesture that might indicate a lack of skill: "When you see that, it does not bode well for the marriage."

Gonzaga showed me recordings of several sessions involving some couples in the program. (Their participation in the study is confidential, but they had consented to let me watch their sessions.) Each couple appeared in split screen, although they'd sat across from each other in the lab. In the conflict-resolution segment, each spouse chooses an area of grievance from a list called the Inventory of Marital Problems, developed by psychologists in 1981. The list encompasses, to name just a few, Children, Religion, In-laws/Parents/Relatives, Household Management, Unrealistic Expectations, Sex, Trust. Each subject rates each category on a scale of 1 to 7, ranging from Not a Problem to Major Problem. One couple, who had met on eHarmony, had as its issue the wife's moods, and the husband's fear of them. "Why is my temper a problem?" the wife said.

"I'm not saying it's serious," the husband said.

"If it's not serious, why are you bringing it up?"

"I walk on eggshells around you."

"I asked you to wash the toaster, and you gave me a hard time about that."

Setrakian said, "See, she's turned it into a conversation about him again."

"Look at how she belittles him," Gonzaga said. Apparently, this behavior did not augur well.

A second couple—I'll call them Leon and Leona—had also met on eHarmony. He was a third-generation Mexican-American from the San Gabriel Valley who worked for the city of Los Angeles. She was a Mexican immigrant who worked as a family therapist. They were both heavysset and inclined toward a projection of light amusement, although hers seemed more acerbic. He had had a mostly fruitless dating career. "I was a novice," he said. She had mostly dated guys from her neighborhood who

lived with their parents, hadn't gone to school, and couldn't communicate as well as she. "I want a man who doesn't have a rap sheet and doesn't sell drugs out of his mama's house," she said. EHarmony selected her as a compatible partner for Leon, but he put her aside at first, because her name was too much like his. Finally, they went through the stages of communication. (Since they had both studied psychology, he asked her in an e-mail early on, "What's your theoretical orientation?" to which she recalls thinking, Do you really fucking care? Who asks that question?) On the day of their first date, she spent the morning helping a friend buy a wedding ring in Beverly Hills and the afternoon attending the wedding of a friend in the Valley, where she caught the bride's bouquet. ("I wasn't trying to get it or anything. It bounced off the ceiling into my hands.") So perhaps she was inclined, when she met Leon, at a Ben & Jerry's in Burbank, to see him in a favorable light. After three years, they moved in together, and married a year later. They have a one-year-old son.

I watched the tease. Typically, Gonzaga gives the subjects initials to choose from, and the couple uses them to come up with a moniker. "My favorite nickname of all time, in a study out of Wisconsin, someone got the initials L.I. and came up with Little Impotent," Gonzaga recalls. "You get a lot of Ass Detective and Huge Fart." Leona was given the initials B.D. and chose the moniker Boob Dude.

"Boob Dude?" Leon said.

"Boob Dude."

"Boob Dude. Why?"

"Because, like, you tease me about not paying attention to little details, but hello!" Leona looked at him coolly and said, "You're such a boob, dude."

"That's pretty good."

"It's pretty good, huh?"

"I like this part of the study."

"You're such a boob."

"No, you're a boob."

"No, you're a boob. You're, like, 'Put the dog down,' but your ass is in an air-conditioned car, and I'm holding the stuff. You're such a boob, dude."

Back in the control room, Gonzaga explained that their teasing had a flirtatious and sympathetic tone, which was a sign that their senses of humor were aligned and that therefore they were

harmonious—tease-wise, at least. Perhaps eHarmony had chosen well.

"And then you come out with some grapes," Leona said.

"And you're, like, 'Are those for me?'"

"I didn't say, 'Are those for me?'" I said, "Oh, that was really nice."

"And then you said, 'They're mine.' And that's something I probably would have said."

"You don't share, dude."

"I do, too. I share."

"You share after you're done."

"That's not true. I share with you my pastrami."

As they giggled, Gonzaga's voice came over the intercom, announcing the end of the session.

In 2005, in response to the success of eHarmony, Match.com began developing a new site—a longer-term-relationship operation with a scientific underpinning. The white coat whom Match.com recruited for this new counter-venture was a biological anthropologist named Helen Fisher, a research professor at Rutgers and a renowned scholar of human attraction and attachment. Fisher's observations and findings regarding the human personality, romantic or otherwise, are rooted in her study of the human species over the millennia and in the role that brain chemistry plays in temperament, especially with regard to love, attraction, choice, and compatibility. She has used brain scans to track the activity of chemicals in the brains of people in various states of romantic agitation. She has devised four personality types, or "dimensions" (explorer, negotiator, builder, director), that correspond to various neurochemicals (respectively, dopamine, estrogen/oxytocin, serotonin, testosterone). Although the proposition of four types is not new (Plato, Jung), her nomenclature and their biochemical foundation represent a frontier of relationship science, albeit one that is thinly populated and open to flanking attack.

The new site was christened Chemistry.com. To sign up, you take a personality test that Fisher designed, which asks you questions about everything from feelings about following rules to your understanding of complex machinery and the length of your ring finger, relative to your index finger. Once you have a type, the site uses it to choose matches for you. You

don't necessarily always wind up with your own type. Chemistry.com's algorithms rely primarily on your stated preferences, but the various alleged compatibilities between this or that type are factored in. My wife took the test, and I was among her first ten suggested matches.

Fisher contends that dating online is a reversion to an ancient, even primal approach to pairing off. She conjures millions of years of human prehistory: small groups of hunter-gatherers wandering the savanna, and then congregating a few times a year at this or that watering hole. Amid the merriment and the information exchange, the adolescents develop eyes for one another, in view of their elders and peers. The groups likely know each other, from earlier gatherings or hunting parties. "In the ever present gossip circles," Fisher once wrote, "a young girl could easily collect data on a potential suitor's hunting skills, even on whether he was amusing, kind, smart."

It wasn't until the twentieth century that it became normal for young people to pair up with strangers, in real or relative anonymity. "Walking into a bar is totally artificial," Fisher told me. "We've come to believe that this is the way to court. But that couldn't be further from the truth. What's natural is knowing a few fundamental things about someone before you meet." Vetting has always occurred at many levels, ranging from the genealogical to the pheromonal. In her view, dating via the Internet enables, as she wrote, "the modern human brain to pursue more comfortably its ancestral mating dance."

I met Fisher for lunch one day on the Upper East Side, not far from her apartment/office, off Fifth Avenue. She's sixty-six, once-divorced, childless. She goes out pretty much every night she's not working, to plays, movies, concerts, and lectures. She's an explorer/negotiator, which means she's restless and open to adventure but also, of course, eager to

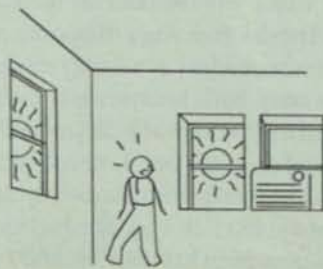
please others. She expressed happy surprise that Chemistry.com had suggested me—an explorer/negotiator, apparently—as a match for my wife, who is a director/explorer. Fisher told me that her current boyfriend has read the complete works of Shakespeare aloud to her in bed, as well as some Dickens and Ibsen.

She identified two big social trends that have led to a greater reliance on online dating: an aging population, and women around the world entering the workforce, marrying later, divorcing more, moving from place to place. "Our social and sexual patterns have changed more in the last fifty years than in the last ten thousand," she told me. "Our courtship rituals are rapidly changing, and we don't know what to do."

She was especially excited about some research she'd been doing with Lee Silver, a molecular biologist at Princeton University, who had been studying a hundred thousand test responses from Chemistry.com, in the hope of one day synching up such data with buccal-swab results. "We're all combinations, but we also all have distinct personalities, and we know that, damn it," Fisher said. "This is not dreaming. Up until recently, we've been looking only at the cultural basis of who we are." That said, she does not foresee, anytime soon, the development or commercial sale of, as she put it, "a vaccine against falling for assholes."

At the eHarmony relationship lab, I got to watch a couple undergo a one-year-anniversary session. They were not an eHarmony couple. They'd met while working on a film set. They had both failed to make a Hollywood living and now held jobs that they hated while they struggled to nourish what remained of their creative aspirations. He was tall and wiry, and had served in the military. She had a wary, melancholic air and was curled up in a chair, as though recoiling from the camera that she knew was embedded in the wall behind her husband.

Their participation was halting at first. The silliness of the tease exercise made them self-conscious. But soon they were squabbling about housework, and about the apportionment of their duties in a building they managed, and about the money he was making or not making, as he tried to launch a new company. She wanted to start a family but couldn't



justify doing so in their current financial situation. "I was expecting things to move along a little faster than they have," she said.

"I'm in my mid-thirties now, and I should be farther along somehow," he said. Each was frustrated by the faltering progress of the other. She wanted stability. He wanted support. Watching them go on like this, in a weary, embittered, and yet still affectionate and hopeful way, for more than an hour, I recalled Gonzaga saying that incompatibility can often be imperceptible until a couple is subjected to some kind of difficulty of the world's devising: problems involving health, money, children, or work.

"Let's talk about household management," she said. "I don't trust that you are taking your job seriously, so I have to do it."

"It's just a half hour a day."

"Just do the job and not be a complainer."

"Like I told you, I'm working odd jobs, I'm building a company that's going to make us a lot of money, whether you think it's a pie in the sky or not. It's too much to do while you go play yoga and go have lunch with your friends."

A few minutes later, it was his turn to pick a conflict topic. "I'll try not to take five of the seven minutes railing on you," he said. "My topic is moods. I resent how I get criticized for every little thing. I try to get you to back off, but you just won't let things go. You turn into this person who's different, whom I don't like very much."

"I admit it. I've told you I know it's an issue and I'm working on it."

"A part of me wants you to be happy more than I want myself to be happy and even more than you want me to be happy."

Gonzaga and Setrakian sat side by side, staring at the monitor. "They look so sad," Setrakian said.

"External stress, that's what kills you," Gonzaga said. There was a silence in the room and on the screen. "It's hard to figure out what to do with material as meaty as this."

"We can code the themes," Setrakian said. "And do a textual analysis: How do they use pronouns?"

It's senseless, at least in the absence of divine agency, to declare that any two people were made for each other, yet we say it all the time, to sustain our belief that it's sensible for them to pair



"How do we know it's not full of consultants?"

up. The conceit can turn the search for someone into a search for *that* someone, which is fated to end in futility or compromise, whether conducted on the Internet or in a ballroom. And yet people find each other, every which way, and often achieve something that they call happiness.

Look around a Starbucks and imagine that all the couples you see are Internet daters complying with the meet-first-for-coffee rule of thumb: here's another bland, neutral establishment webbed with unspoken expectation and disillusionment. One evening, I found myself in such a place with a thirty-eight-year-old elementary-school teacher who had spent more than ten years plying Match.com and Nerve.com, as well as the analogue markets, in search of someone with whom to spend the rest of her life. She'd met dozens of men. Her mother felt that she was being too picky. In December, she started corresponding online with a man a couple of years older than she. After a week and a half, they met for drinks, which turned into dinner and more. He was clever, handsome, and capable. In their e-mails, they'd agreed that they'd reached a time and

place in their lives to be less cautious and cool, in matters of the heart, so when, two days later, he sent a photograph of a caipirinha, the national cocktail of Brazil, where he'd gone for a few weeks on business, she found herself suggesting that she join him there. He made the arrangements. Her mother approved. She flew down to Rio the next week, and he came to the airport with a driver to meet her.

Months later, she savored the memory of that moment when he greeted her with a passionate hug, and the week and who knows what else lay before them. A swirl of anticipation, uncertainty, and desire converged into an instant of bliss. For that feeling alone—to say nothing of the chance to go to Brazil—she would do it all over again, even though, during the next ten days, with nothing but sex to stave off their corrosive exchanges over past and future frustrations, they came to despise each other. When they returned to New York, they split up, and went back online. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM/GO/ASK

Nick Paumgarten takes readers' questions.



■ BUSINESS

Blockbuster Drug

Bucks County's Mike Sofia and company's treatment cures 90% of hepatitis C patients. E1



■ LIVE LIFE LOVE

What's Hot on TV This Summer

"Orange Is the New Black" and "True Detective" are back. H11



■ SPORTS

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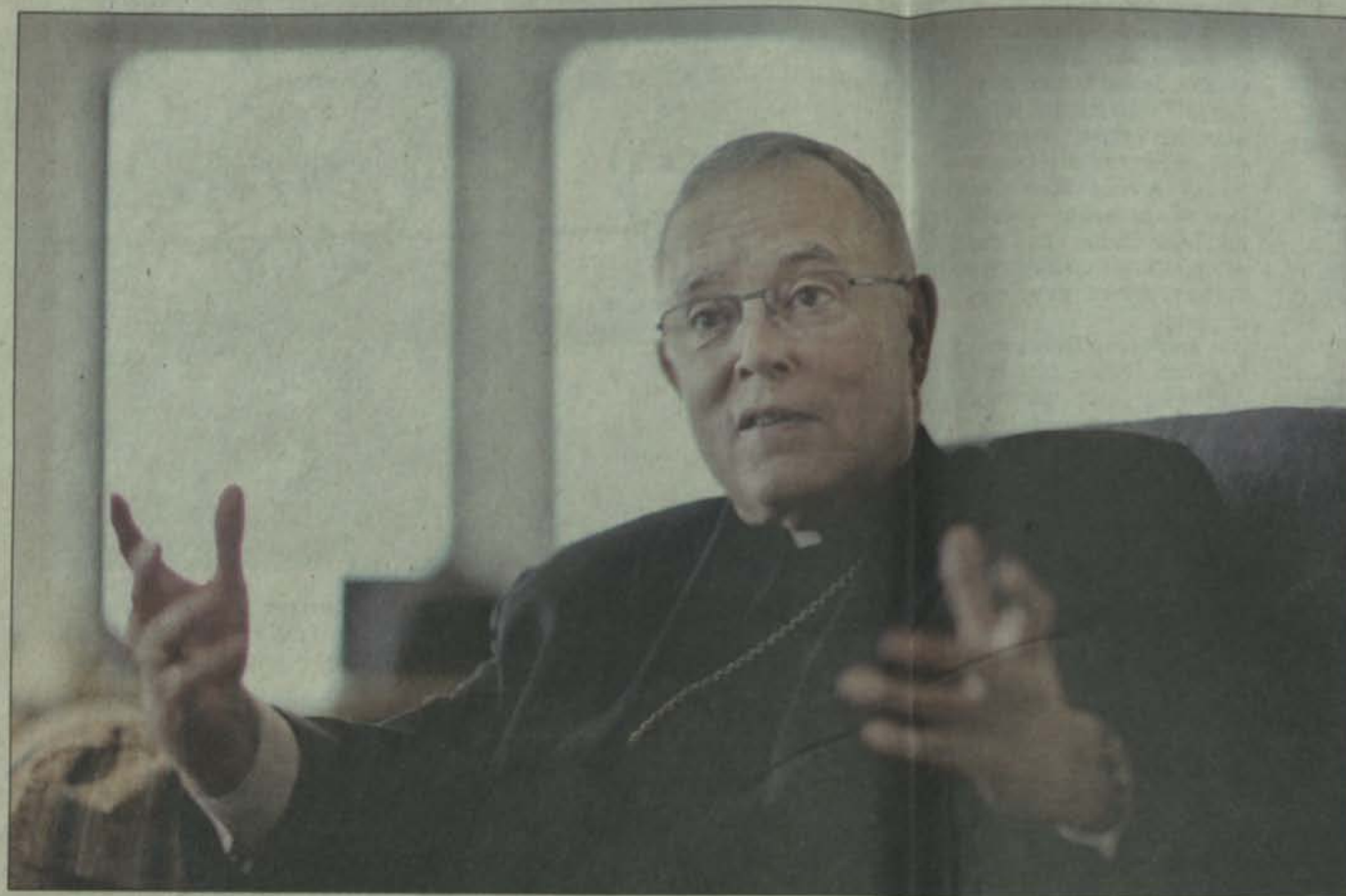
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THE
POPE ✂ 2015
VISIT TO PHILADELPHIA



Archbishop Charles J. Chaput acknowledges hoping for a measure of tranquility after four challenging years that have included planning for Pope Francis' visit. His time here, Chaput said, "has not been the typical life of a bishop." DAVID MAIALETTI / Staff Photographer

Nursing homes' fines may be payday

The Pa. Attorney General's Office has awarded contracts worth millions to law firms making campaign donations.

By Craig R. McCoy
and Angela Coulombis
INQUIRER STAFF WRITERS

Last year, the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office dropped subpoenas on dozens of nursing homes statewide, demanding facts about their staffing — an opening salvo in a probe that could force the homes to pay big fines.

The office says the process will improve conditions and pay off for the state's elderly.

Someone else could benefit, too — the Cohen, Milstein, Sellers & Toll law firm. The Washington firm stands to pocket up to \$21 million of the first \$100 million of any fines extracted by state prosecutors.

In fact, it was Cohen Milstein that dreamed up the initiative and sold it

CHAPUT'S

Pope Francis' visit
in September is just

CHALLENGES

By David O'Reilly
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

When Pope Francis' jet climbs above Philadelphia on the last Sunday of September and banks east for Rome, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput might allow himself a sigh of relief.

The World Meeting of Families — three hectic years in the planning — will be over at last.

The six-day international gathering, capped by Francis' visit, "keeps me awake at night," Chaput said in a recent

INSIDE

► Michael Smerconish: Pope Francis could have an impact as the U.S. chooses a president. **Currents, C1.**

► The Vatican archbishop in charge of overseeing the World Meeting of Families is under investigation. **A15.**

interview. The huge event, expected to draw as many as two million people, is the latest in a litany of challenges to confront him since his arrival in September 2011.

But Chaput also says it could reener-

the latest in a series of trying tests that have marked the archbishop's tenure.

gize, even "transform," Philadelphia and its Catholic community.

The church's 1993 World Youth Day did just that in Denver, he said, when Chaput was archbishop. A half-million young people poured into the city, and Pope John Paul II said a Mass at its close.

"There was an incredible transformation as a result" of that five-day event, Chaput said. He hopes Philadelphia receives the "same kind of gift" — a "moment of building confidence and enthusiasm for the local church" and national recognition.

See **CHAPUT** on A14

Odds long, O'Malley joins race

Saying new voices needed, ex-governor takes on Clinton.

By Thomas Fitzgerald
INQUIRER POLITICS WRITER

BALTIMORE — Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley launched his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination Saturday with a call for new leadership to rescue America's promise of opportunity for all.

"The American dream for so many seems to be hanging by a thread," O'Malley said at a rally in Federal Hill Park, with the skyline of the city he once led as mayor spread behind him.

"But the final thread that holds us just may be the strongest of all — it is the thread of generosity, compassion, and love that brings us together as one people," he said.

O'Malley, who also has absorbed criticism over his police policies as mayor after last month's riots, vowed to reform the criminal justice system.

In many cycles, O'Malley's resumé See **O'MALLEY** on A15



INSIDE

► Christie's travels hitting home with critics. **A4.**

Technology and dating in 1966. Meeting their matches, via early computer

By Michael Vitez
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER



Shelly and Larry Beaser, married 46 years in June.

CHARLES FOX / Staff

Shelly Bronstein took a bus and two subways every day from Broomall to Temple University. After classes, she worked two jobs, including one as elevator operator at a women's clothing store — hardly a prospect-rich environment. She dated, but rarely met guys outside her political science program.

So when she saw the coupon in the Temple News in 1965 for Operation Match — the nation's first big computer dating service — she mailed in her \$3, a lot of money in those days, hoping for fun and dates.

Over at the University of Pennsylvania, See **DATING** on A14



Anthony Hardy Williams: Kenney "never tripped." CLEM MURRAY / Staff

After the loss

Williams reflects on what went wrong.

By Claudia Vargas
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

There was no way around it. Democratic mayoral nominee Jim Kenney ran a better campaign than his closest rival, State Sen. Anthony Hardy Williams.

The pundits and politicians said it. Now, Williams himself is saying it.

"Jimmy had a better campaign," Williams said. "I'm not

going to parse words. ... He was a class act in how he conducted himself throughout the campaign."

In a wide-ranging postelection interview with The Inquirer, Williams said Kenney bested him in every way, from getting his message out to garnering key political support to avoiding mistakes.

See **WILLIAMS** on A15

INSIDE



**High 87,
Low 68**

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HEALTH

Sleep as Therapy

More researchers finding a link. **G1**

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Beau Biden Dead at 46

► The vice president's son suffered a stroke in 2010, succumbed to brain cancer. **B10.**



Chaput looks to pope's visit and beyond

CHAPUT from A1

"But we won't know until after the visit."

And once the Benjamin Franklin Parkway is swept clean, and the temporary altar at the foot of the Philadelphia Museum of Art is disassembled, Chaput acknowledges hoping he can finally enjoy the tranquility that has eluded him in his four years here.

Just last week, he hastened to distance the archdiocese from a Vatican official — whose office sponsors the World Meeting of Families — who is being investigated by Italian authorities over a real estate deal.

There is no evidence that Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia misappropriated World Meeting funds, but the investigation was yet another jolt for the oft-harried Chaput, who had to issue a statement saying the World Meeting was still on track.

"It has not been the typical life of a bishop," the 70-year-old archbishop said of his tenure here. He was seated in a chair in his 12th-floor office overlooking the great dome of the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul.

His nine years as bishop of Rapid City, S.D., and 14 as archbishop of Denver had not prepared him for what awaited him here. Neither had Cardinal Justin Rigali, his predecessor.

"I've had more chaos in the last four years than in all the time before that," he said, shaking his head slightly. But his manner was resigned, at times good-humored, as he spoke in concise sentences that bore traces of his native Kansas.

What he inherited here was a shrinking school system that could not pay its bills, a grossly underfunded employee pension system, a grand jury report alleging that dozens of active priests had acted indecently with minors, impending criminal trials

"I've had more chaos in the last four years than in all the time before that."

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput



DAVID MAIALETTI / Staff Photographer

former priests accused of child sex-abuse or cover-up, and an untold number of moribund parishes in need of merging.

Any one of these might have been enough to gray the head of a new archbishop.

Then, nine months into his new tenure, Pope Benedict XVI handed Chaput a staggering new challenge.

The archdiocese had been chosen, Benedict told him, to host the eighth triennial World Meeting of Families in September 2015.

Though he put on a brave face, the news made him "nervous" and "not very enthusiastic," Chaput acknowledged later.

In addition to appointing the staff and volunteers needed to organize the massive undertaking, and consulting with the Vatican to develop its program, his new assignment would require him to raise \$45 million. As of February, \$30 million had been raised, and "we have en-

the goal," archdiocesan spokesman Ken Gavin said last week.

Most of the money will be used, Chaput said, for "infrastructure, safety, security, and cleanup" for Francis' visit, and bringing in visitors from poor parts of the world.

Between 1.5 million and two million people are expected for the papal Mass, and about half that number for the Festival of Families the night before.

Chaput's early doubts that his troubled archdiocese would not be able to make a success of this "very complicated event" are long gone, he said, but the planning and fund-raising still deprive him of sleep.

"It's hard to imagine we can accomplish all the things we need by the end of September," he said. "But we have no choice."

By one measure, the World Meeting is already a success. With four months to go, 11,000 people have signed up for the

seems to have little control over Francis' penchant for straying off course and plunging into crowds.

In the meantime, the archdiocese waits. "I'm surprised we don't have the final schedule" for the pope, Chaput said.

He also does not know where the famously informal Francis might reside, "but I hope he stays at my residence," at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood.

The relatively modest apartments, where Chaput relocated after selling the 16-room cardinal's mansion in 2012, might appeal to Francis, who rejected the lavish residence in the papal palace for a plain apartment on the outskirts of Vatican City.

Chaput said he is sometimes asked if the tens of millions of dollars that will be spent on a modest four-day convention and the pope's brief appearances might be better used to serve the poor or other worthy causes.

He said that was a question for the major donors to answer. Some of those, he said, have been corporations "very interested in promoting Philadelphia as a vibrant, healthy community," but not likely to write large checks to further the mission of the Catholic Church.

And he does not regret the great cost of the World Meeting, he said, because "you can't estimate the amount of good" that might flow from it.

As an example, he said, several foreign lay Catholic communities were so impressed by the positive energy they saw in Denver that "they brought their movements to Colorado." The same might happen in Philadelphia, he said.

While he says he expects that the popular Francis will connect with the giant crowds, Chaput

in his public remarks, although he recently met with him in Rome to discuss the "issues we face" in the archdiocese.

Although there will "always be fires" that need putting out, Chaput said, once the World Meeting is behind him, he hopes to shift from the "draining" work of crisis management.

On his agenda: evangelization, and leading his flock toward a "new model of Christian community."

The latter is compelled in part, he said, by the rapidly declining supply of priests in Philadelphia and most other dioceses in the United States.

"We need to decelerate the church and emphasize lay leadership," he said. "We'll need fewer priests if everyone is doing his or her role."

The World Meeting, capped by the massive turnout to see Francis, could be the transformative moment that "energizes our people" and prepares them to engage in new ways in their parishes.

"World Youth Day gave the people of Denver confidence in their church and the value of the Gospel in the life of their community," he said.

Drawing from that, he has asked every parish to send delegates for the whole six days "and take what they've learned, and their enthusiasm, back to their parishes."

"We have to have follow-up to make it worth all the energy and commitment and money we've put into it," Chaput said. Otherwise, it's "just a flash in the pan."

And when it is over, the archbishop's newest challenge — one that he welcomes — will be to carry forward the World Meeting as "a moment that leads to a transformation of lives."

Pioneers of computer dating game still together

DATING from A1
Operation Match was the rage. Larry Beaser was far more serious than social, and had joined a fraternity with the high GPA but low babe appeal. He was intrigued by computers, so very new, and the logic of computer dating.

"If it didn't work out," he reasoned, "we could spend the evening figuring out how this machine could possibly have matched us."

Founded by two Harvard juniors 50 years ago, Operation Match became a national fad. More than a million college students filled out questionnaires between 1965 and 1968.

Gene Shalit, in a Valentine's Day cover story for Look magazine in 1966, wrote that mixers and traditional campus mating rituals were now a thing of the past: "Punch bowls are out, punch cards are in."

After you sent in your \$3 and coupon, you received a questionnaire, lengthy and detailed. Shelly, 19, a sophomore, and Larry, 20, a junior, both completed theirs in late 1965. They took their time, answering thoughtfully and honestly.

The questionnaire asked race, age, height, religion, social class, SAT score, grade average, hair and eye color, even family income — 1. Over \$25,000 ... 6. Under \$5,000.

You ranked your attractiveness, cleanliness, conformity, and affection for children on a scale of 1 to 5. You specified if you were liberal or conservative.

There were many questions about religion: "Do you believe in a God who answers prayer?" "Dating someone of my own religion is 1. unimportant ... 4. very important."

And of course, sex. "Is extensive sexual activity preparation for marriage, part of 'growing up'? 1. Yes ... 5. No."

Although they can't remember all their answers now — "not a clue," Larry says — both are sure they identified themselves as



Shelly and Larry Beaser at Franklin Field in spring 1967. They met in 1966 through a computer dating company. Courtesy Larry and Shelly Beaser

The Beasers will mark their 46th anniversary in June. A daughter met her husband in a similar way, on match.com. CHARLES FOX / Staff Photographer

Jewish and said their religion was important to them.

They also both recall saying folk music was a big interest. It was the '60s — Vietnam, civil rights, and protest songs. "The Times They Are a-Changin'."

Shelly got a list with 20 names in early 1966. She saved it. Larry was 10th.

Larry didn't save his list. Shelly was on it, he says, but not at the top.

As boys called in January and February, Shelly wrote notes on her list. By one name she penned, "21, prelaw, excellent," referring to the quality of their initial conversation.

Another boy got, "21, premed, very doubtful." She recalls he talked too much about himself.

Then there is one name with a giant X through it.

"His first question was, 'How did you answer the sex question?'" Shelly said, "and I decided I didn't want to go out with him."

By Larry's name she had scribbled, "20, excellent, political science."

Both well remember that first phone call.

Shelly lived with her parents. She was watching the news. There was a big story about the United Na-

tions, and Larry mentioned it. Shelly said she'd been watching, too, and expressed some opinion, and he seemed delighted, and she was delighted that he was delighted. In 1966, she said, women often were not taken very seriously.

"It was a significant call," Larry recalls. "It went very well. I decided to ask her out."

Larry was from Bethesda, Md. He had no car, no concept of the area. His roommate and best friend to this day, Mark Batshaw, lent him an old Rambler, but it was a foggy night in a faraway suburb, and Shelly was afraid he wouldn't make it.

He made it.

It was Friday, Feb. 12. They went to see a James Bond movie in King of Prussia, and then had pepperoni pizza with extra cheese — "which would kill us now," Shelly jokes.

There was a physical attraction, sure — as the literature for Operation Match said, "We provide the match, you provide the spark" — but what they most remember about the night was the rich conversation. Both were interested in serious things, war, peace, civil rights, saving

the world.

They dated all spring, but not exclusively.

"I was committed to go through my list because it was fun," Larry said. Shelly dated others on her list as well.

They took a break that summer when Larry returned to Bethesda, but resumed dating in the fall.

Operation Match followed an academic calendar. Students could fill out a new questionnaire in September and potentially get a whole new set of names.

Each secretly tried again.

"We each figured — without telling the other — that we had done so well, we could certainly do better," Larry said.

It soon became evident what each had done. His name was on her new list, and hers on his.

"It was hysterical," Shelly said. "We were laughing. It was meant to be."

Jeff C. Tarr was the Harvard student who founded Operation Match with a friend, Vaughan Morrill. They were enterprising undergrads looking for ways to meet girls.

Tarr recruited two others to help out, including his roommate, David L. Crump,

and Douglas H. Ginsburg, the future Supreme Court nominee, then a Cornell University dropout who later sold his share in the company to finish his degree work there.

They rented an early IBM computer the size of a classroom, paid \$100 an hour for processing time in the middle of the night.

They sold in 1968, and the buyer converted the technology to helping colleges match roommates. Computer dating vanished until the Internet and Match.com arrived in the mid-1990s.

Tarr honed his entrepreneurial and computer skills on Operation Match, later using both to do risk arbitrage on Wall Street. He's now worth more than half a billion dollars, according to Crump.

Larry Beaser graduated from Penn and went to Harvard Law School. Shelly followed him to Boston a year later, earning a master's in education at Tufts. They married in June 1969, and are about to celebrate their 46th anniversary.

He is a partner at Blank Rome, chairman of the board of the Philadelphia Foundation, and a former chancellor of the Philadel-

phia Bar Association. A career educator — both public schoolteacher and college professor — Shelly was honored in May for her life's work by the Senior-LAW Center.

They have loved each other and their lives together for nearly 50 years. After decades in the suburbs, they moved into Center City a few years ago.

Larry's Penn roommate and best man, Mark Batshaw, now physician-in-chief at Children's National Health System in Washington, says he knew right away the two were perfectly matched.

"Larry was middle-aged at 18," he quipped. "She brought out fun and love and exuberance in him, and while she was always very bright, he allowed her intellect to develop and flourish."

Batshaw, by the way, had no interest in Operation Match. He was a scientist, and didn't believe a computer could lead him to love, nor did it satisfy his notion of romance. He met his wife at a mixer arranged by two Jewish grandmothers and proposed on the first date. He will also be married 46 years this summer, and Larry was his best man.

Larry and Shelly have two children.

"They have been stable and frankly boring my whole life," said younger daughter Barb Beaser-Konschak, 35. "Boring, happy, stable. I guess they're a pretty good model for how to do it."

Older daughter Deborah Beaser, 37, met her husband, Karl Yeh, on Match.com, marking a second generation to find love courtesy of a computer.

Larry Beaser proudly holds up pictures of his grandchildren, Sasha and Devin.

"Two kids," he says, "who would not be but for the computer."

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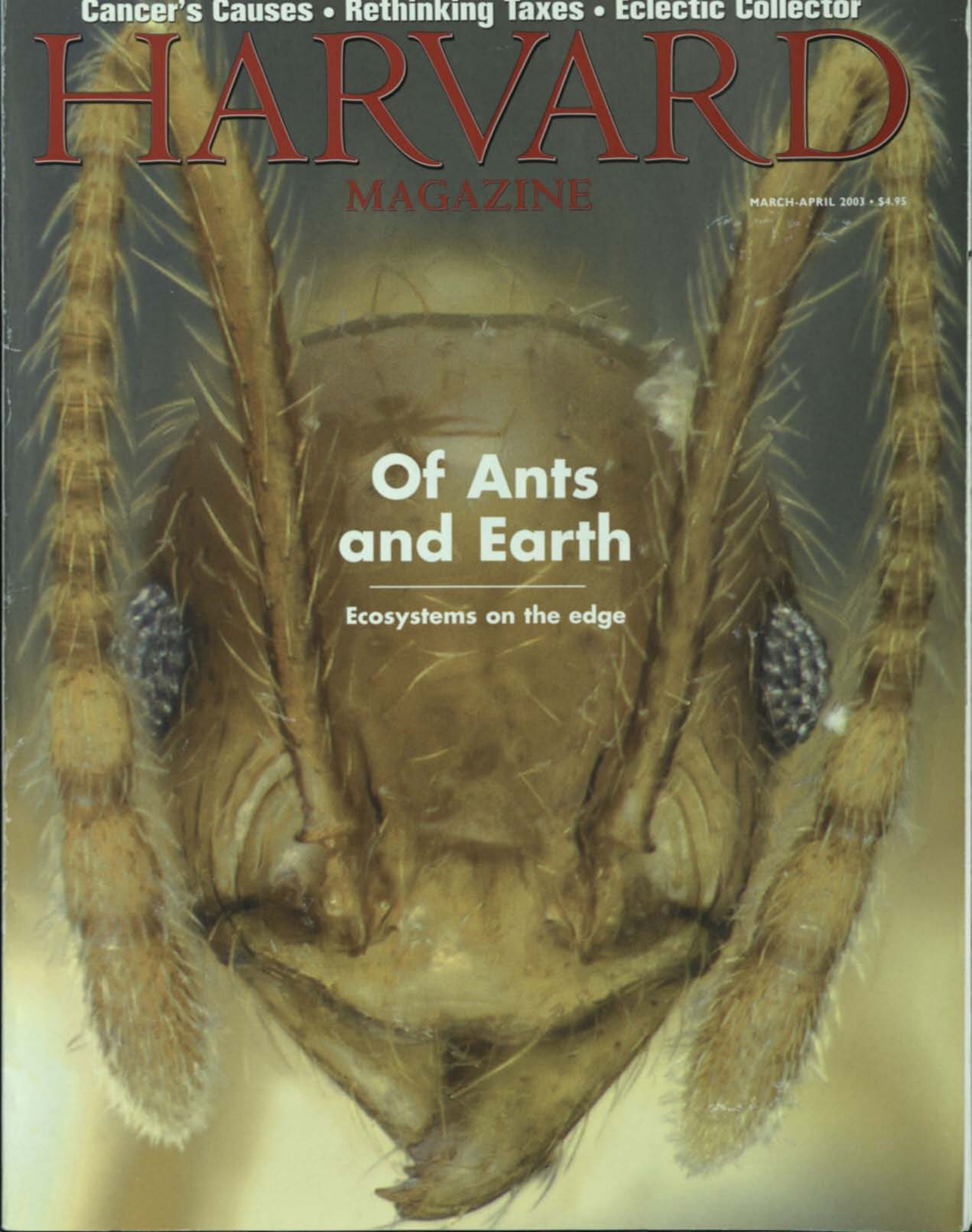
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Of Ants and Earth

Ecosystems on the edge



gardeners—but they connect with other people to the organizers of their programs, but not the singles population. On the other hand, “is a v

because it gives the single person a sense of control over the situation. It is no longer a mysterious

at least for Larry Nagel. Before he met up at Drip, he had dated people

he met through friends and family members. “But anything that can help you find the right person is an avenue worth exploring,” he figured—correctly, it turned out. Abby, the first and only woman he met at the café, is now his wife. 7

THE ORIGINALS

Matching them up

During a late-night bull session at Winthrop House in 1965, Harvard undergraduates Jeff C. Tarr '66 and Vaughan Morrill '66 dreamed up what was then a far-out notion: use a computer to arrange compatible dates. “The goal was not to make money, but to have some fun,” is how Tarr recalls it. “And to meet some attractive ladies.”

Operation Match was billed as a “social experiment.” Some European companies had successfully matched people for marriage, but using computers to manipulate intimate human relationships was in no way the norm. Some peers sneered at the idea; others deemed it simply silly. “I’m sure people thought we were crazy,” Tarr laughs. “We were.”

Aided by David L. Crump '66 and Douglas H. Ginsburg (a Cornell University dropout who went on to become a Harvard Law School professor and nominee for the Supreme Court), they drafted questionnaires for those looking for love. “What they know now is that opposites don’t attract, that attitudinal similarities attract, and physical appearance that is consistent with expectations attracts—we knew that then,” says Crump, today a law professor at the University of Houston. “But attraction is a very imperfect science. The questionnaires we wrote were scientific and whimsical—they were packaged as fun to fill out.” It cost respondents \$3 and a stamp to participate.

The group’s knowledge of computers was scant, Crump allows. Early on, pumping out the matches required a friend to build a program, for which they paid \$100. The data were transferred to punch cards, which were fed into a

rented computer the size of a small room on which the team was permitted to work between the hours of 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. on Sundays. It took six weeks to produce a match list. “People got a letter saying who they were matched to, with phone numbers, and they were very pleased,” Tarr says. “One woman at Vassar got over 100 matches. One of them was her roommate.”

The 1966 Valentine’s Day issue of *Look* magazine featured Operation Match, Tarr reports, after which he appeared as the



mystery guest on the CBS quiz show *To Tell The Truth* and pitched the “high-tech” dating system on television and radio talk shows. By chance, *Newsweek* had recently featured a UCLA coed, Vicki Albright, whom Operation Match flew to Cambridge as “Miss Match.” The smooth move not only generated valuable publicity, but increased “our own chances of landing a date with Miss Albright,” explains Tarr, who now runs an investment company, Junction Advisors, in Manhattan. (A fellow Winthropian won the date, but Tarr et al. earned enough money to continue operating.)

“We became one of the new cultural trends,” reports Crump. By the time they sold the company in 1968, Operation

Match had solicited more than a million respondents—a number of whom actually got married. “Just not us,” he adds. “Of course, statistically, if you match up a million people, marriages are likely to happen.” They also raised a lot of money for mere undergraduates. Eventually Operation Match (and its parent, Compatibility Research Inc.) were bought up and the technology used to match like-minded college roommates and as a gimmick to increase tourist and hotel traffic.

“I watch the computer-dating business with long glasses,” Crump says today, without regrets. “It’s a very large industry, I would guess a billion-dollar industry, that includes Match.com—which is the natural evolution of our company. If we’d had the Internet back then we would have used it. Operation Match was really the first system of its type that used technology and was inexpensive and used mass marketing.” Operation Match vitalized his “entrepreneurial genes,” says Tarr, who wrote his senior thesis on the business. The experience also aided his postcollegiate career in risk arbitrage, where, early on, most of his colleagues had no idea what a computer could do for consumers and clients.

Tarr notes that his son, Jeff Tarr Jr. '96, concentrated in computer science and that his daughter, aspiring actress Jennie Tarr '01, and her friends find on-line dating utterly normal. “They’ve gotten some good responses,” he says. “In our day, you had to go to a bar to meet people. But people are so much busier now, and dating through the computer is just much easier (and more efficient) than going on a blind date and spending a milquetoast evening.” His daughter, in fact, has been pondering the idea of throwing an “Operation Match” party for single friends. “Not to make money,” Tarr says, “but just to have some fun.” —NELL PORTER BROWN