



Looking for



He must be
somewhere:
Mr. Right is
not always
easy to find

Tony Stone

Dass man auf der Suche nach dem Traumprinzen bereit sein muss, ein paar Frösche zu küssen, weiß jeder. Was ist aber, wenn sich keine Wege aus dem Sumpf auftun? GINGER HENRY-KÜNZEL versuchte den Ausbruch. **medium US**



MR. RIGHT



A few years ago, I decided to reinvent myself by moving to a new city, finding a new job and buying a new apartment — in short, getting an entirely new life. It didn't take me long to discover that this was very similar to my decision 25 years earlier to jump out of an airplane at 3,000 feet with a parachute. You simply close your eyes, take a deep breath and jump — without ever looking back.

Needless to say, I survived both leaps into the unknown. Although you might think that skydiving is as scary as it gets, it's nothing in comparison to the anxiety you will feel should you ever decide to re-enter the singles scene.

When I first moved to Boston, I was happy to sit at home every Saturday night with a good book and a glass of wine. After a few months, however, I started thinking that if an intelligent, witty, good-looking man knocked on the door, he just might persuade me to go out to dinner. It didn't take me long to realize that this phantom guy was not sitting by his phone mustering courage to ask me out. I was actually going to have to make some effort to find members of the opposite sex.

The first path I went down was something I could do from the comfort and safety of my own living room — answering personal ads in the newspaper. You've seen these pages, haven't you? Column upon column of guys just waiting to meet Ms. Right. But have you ever looked closely at any of those ads?

Here's an example: "WM [which is "personals" talk for white male], 52, lives with three animals — my dog, my cat and my brother. I'm no animal, but my bite is worse than my bark. Let's howl together." No, I don't think so.

How about this one? "Catch me while I last. Handsome, athletic, intelligent. Seeking elegant and voluptuous SWF [single white female] who knows perfection when she sees it and wants me all to herself." Clearly far too humble for me!

Finally I saw one that looked as if it might be worth calling: "Nice easygoing guy. Loves dining out, traveling, the city and the country, long talks, quiet times and good books. Looking for that special someone who is passionate yet gentle and whose intellectual capital earns a high rate of interest." Hey! At least this guy sounds interesting, I thought. But, as luck would have it, just as I started to phone him, I noticed that I had somehow wandered into the column of "Men Looking for Men"!

Oh, now here's a live wire: "Handsome guy, six feet tall, home, car, financially independent. My bags are packed and I have my traveling boots on. Seeking woman who has some life left, and is not waiting to die, like some I've met. Age 83, but looks 79."

I showed this one to a colleague at work who was absolutely convinced that it must be her grandfather, looking to cheat on grandma!

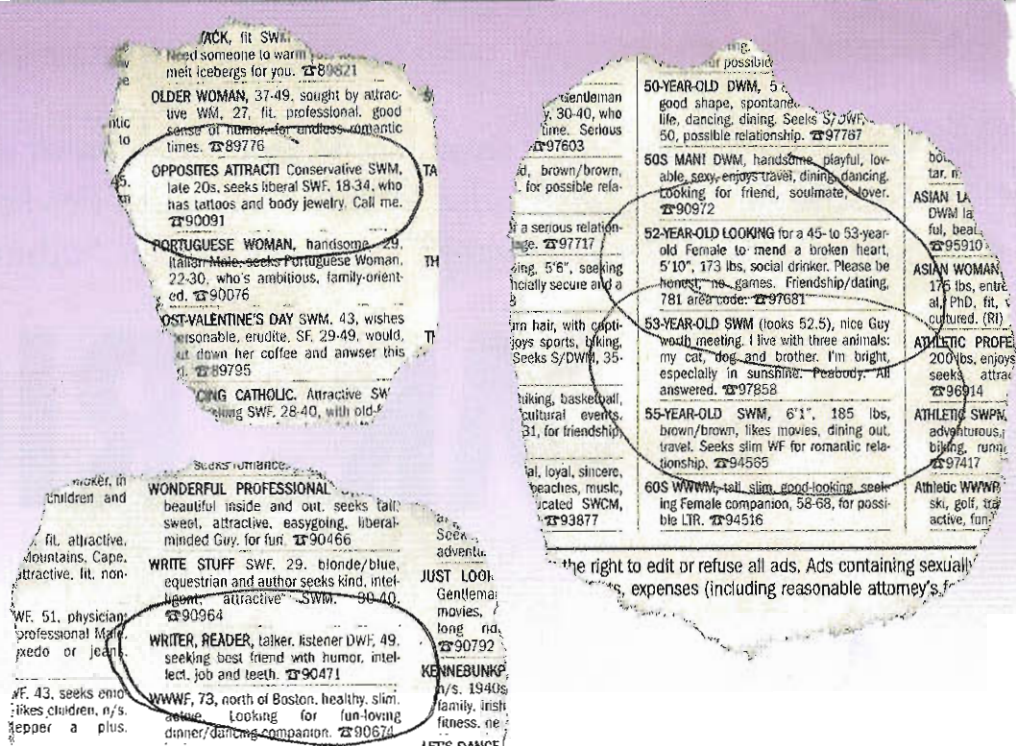
Seeing an ad in the paper for a singles club, I decided to call. The woman who answered the phone told me that a meeting was planned for the next week, and that it would be a potluck dinner. I should bring a dessert.

I arrived at the site of the meeting — the church beside the firehouse on the main street of the town in question. I parked my car and, with cake in hand, followed some others into the church. We all went downstairs into a meeting room where we were greeted and given name tags.

to reinvent oneself {,ri:ɪn'vent}	sich neu definieren, seinem Leben neuen Sinn geben
3,000 feet	etwa 1.000 m
parachute {ˈpærəʃa:ʊt}	Fallschirm
to survive sth.	etw. überleben
leap	Sprung
skydiving	Fallschirmspringen
as scary as it gets	so furchterregend wie es nur geht
anxiety {æŋ'zaiəti}	Angst
witty	geistreich
guy {gʌi} <i>ifml.</i>	Typ
to muster sth.	etw. aufbringen
personal ad	Bekannschafsanzeige
Ms. {mɪz}	see: pp. 32-33
bark	Bellen
voluptuous	mit weiblichen Formen
humble	bescheiden
easygoing	lässig
passionate	leidenschaftlich
interest	Zinsen
as luck would have it	wie der Zufall es wollte
live wire <i>ifml.</i>	Draht unter Hochspannung; hier: Energiebündel
six feet	1,83 m
to cheat on sb.	jmdn. betrügen
potluck dinner	Essen zu dem jeder Gast eine Speise mitbringt
firehouse <i>N. Am.</i>	Feuerwache
name tag	Nomensschildchen



Ginger Henry-Künzel: "There are columns upon columns of men just waiting to meet Ms. Right. But have you ever looked at those ads?"



"You're new, aren't you?" the man handing out name tags said to me. "Welcome! I see you've brought something to eat. That's great!" He seemed a bit surprised, actually. It was then that I noticed that I seemed to be the only one who had remembered that this was a potluck dinner. There was no other food in sight.

I sat down at a table and began chatting with some of the other guests. Suddenly, a man walked to the front of the room and began to speak. "Hello," he said. "My name is Mike, and I'm an alcoholic."

I looked around. I was in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Well, at least I hadn't brought a rum cake, I thought to myself. In any case, I needed to make my exit — not because I have anything against alcoholics, but simply because I was hungry and needed to get to that other meeting. There I hoped to find some food and — of secondary importance at this point — some singles.

I then discovered that there was another church on the other side of the firehouse. Again, I was greeted at the door by someone handing out name tags.

Because I was new, I was given a blue name tag. The old-timers all had red ones — and I do mean old-timers. As I looked around the room, I discovered that I was the youngest one there — by at least 20 years.

Harriet, a woman with a blue name tag, told me that she was newly single and very nervous. "They have such wonderful music here," she said as Harry the disc jockey played a Mel Tormé cassette. "I like it when you can understand the words to the songs," she added.

Noticing that Joe, a red-tagged old-timer, was walking toward us, I politely moved on to allow him to concentrate on Harriet, who was decidedly a better match for him. I found myself talking with two women — one with a blue tag and one with a red tag. Red was explaining to Blue, "It's very easy to minge. You simply walk up to anyone, and most of them will talk to you."

"Most?" I asked innocently.

"Well," she replied, "all of the men will definitely talk to you. And most of the women will, too."

"Most?" I asked again.

"Honey," she said, "you have to understand that some of the women are the jealous type. If they've had their eye on a guy for quite some time, they don't like it when new competition comes onto the field."

A picture flashed through my mind of a gang of senior ladies brawling over a silver-haired Romeo. My mother always said to me: "Pick your battles," and this was one battle that I was definitely not going to pick.

During dinner, I sat next to Jack, who turned out to be a collector. Aha, I thought. At least this could lead to some interesting conversations about art and antiques. He had recently moved east from Colorado and had had to put most of his collection in storage. He was hoping to find a larger place soon so that he could have it all shipped to him.

I pictured him looking for a perfect Victorian mansion in which to house his lovely antiques. Wrong! When we got down to the details, I discovered that he collects old cars. Not Bentleys or Model Ts, but junk cars, ones with no value. He collects them for the parts.

As dinner drew to a close and everyone began pushing the tables aside to make room for what looked like some very lively fox-trotting, I knew it was time to leave. "I hate to eat and run," I told them, "but I really must be getting home. I've got a lot of work to do on my computer."

I had already decided, you see, what the next avenue in my search for the phantom Mr. Right was going to be: www.match.com

One big advantage of looking for a virtual match is the fact that you have a lot more words in which to describe yourself. After answering a number of questions about eye and hair color, body type and height as well as my income, interests and gender preferences, I was ready to

write my profile. Since Christmas was coming, I wrote: "Dear Santa: I've been a good girl this year. OK, I colored outside the lines quite a bit, but I usually did manage to stay on the page. Shall I read between the lines for you? I'm a non-material girl who hates Madonna and Martha Stewart. My real job keeps me grounded and pays the bills. But it leaves me too little time even to start (let alone finish) writing a novel. Here's what I like: reading John Irving and other authors who make me laugh out loud, movies without Arnold Schwarzenegger, people who have opinions and can defend them, good friends, anyone who wants to move to Utopia. Here's what I don't like: most TV shows, shopping malls, housing developments, Boston drivers, techno music, people who don't know how to listen."

Click! In a second, my profile was posted, and I was ready to cybermingle with any or all of the 69 matches that the computer immediately picked out for me on the basis of my answers. Wow! That was easy. All I had to do was start sending e-mails to these prospects.

The first answer I opened had a photo with it. It's not that I place a lot of importance on appearances, but this guy looked like he could be my grandpa. No. I couldn't get interested.

Hmm, now here's one which might be a possibility. I'll e-mail him.

In all, I sent e-mails to eight guys that first day and waited for their response. Several who replied sounded completely boring: "Hi, my name is Jim and I'm a nice

person. I like to hold hands and hug. I go to work every day, and then I come home in the evening. After eating dinner, I watch TV and then go to bed. On the weekends, I usually watch a lot of TV or go hang out at the mall." Delete!

I began corresponding with Paul, who later sent me his real e-mail address to avoid having to communicate through our match.com aliases. But the first time I used that address, I got this reply: "Paul here. Delighted to read your note. However, there must be some misunderstanding. I am married and have not intentionally placed my name in a dating pool. After hearing about you, maybe I should be sorry I haven't. Last week, I ran a search for 'Suburbans,' and one of the items it returned was a single lady from suburban Chicago. And now your mail arrived. Isn't the Web amazing? I travel on business to Boston sometimes. Can I buy you dinner and apologize?" Delete!

One of my matches actually turned out to be a good one. Steve was witty and clever in his messages, we read the same books and seemed to have many of the same interests. We had been having a lively correspondence for several months when he suggested that he'd like to get together. How about meeting up in Houston, Texas? Strange, I thought, since we both live in the Boston area. At this point, I didn't need to be a rocket scientist to realize that good old cyberflirt Steve was a married man.

"Oh, did I forget to mention that?" he asked innocently when I told him I had figured out his act. Delete!

Ralph was another hot prospect. But as time passed, he began to pour out his heart. In fact, he was sharing things with me that I really didn't want to know. I felt like his cyberpsychiatrist. He liked the idea, he said, that he felt comfortable telling me anything because it was like talking to someone in outer space. Delete!

Of course, there were other horror stories — like the time I came across the profile of a guy in the Washington, D.C., area who turned out to be the boyfriend of one of my best friends. Delete!

One evening, as I was getting ready to boot up my computer, the phone rang. "Ginger! It's Aunt Sally. I've been trying to call you for ages, but your phone was busy."

"Right! I've been spending a lot of time on-line lately, looking for that perfect match," I replied.

"Well, that's exactly why I'm calling," she said. "My good friend Ruth's son just moved to Boston, and he's looking for someone to show him around. He'd be perfect for you. I gave him your number and told him to call you. Now stay off the computer so he can get through!"

Maybe this will be it, I thought. I haven't tried good old-fashioned matchmaking yet. ■

Ginger Henry-Künzel lives in Boston and — just like the U.S. Marines — is looking for a few good men.

"Hi, my name is Jim and I'm a nice person. I like to hold hands. I go to work every day and then I come home." Delete!

to chat	sich unterhalten
to make one's exit	verschwinden
old-timer <i>ifml.</i>	älterer Mensch; hier: alter Hase
match	Partie
to mingle	hier: in Kontakt kommen
innocently	in aller Unschuld
honey <i>{ˈhʌni} ifml.</i>	meine Liebe
jealous <i>{ˈdʒeɪləs}</i>	eifersüchtig
competition	Konkurrenz
to brawl over sb.	sich um jmdn. raufen
antiques	Antiquitäten
to put sth. in storage	etw. einlagern
to picture sth.	sich etw. vorstellen
mansion	Herrenhaus
junk car	Schrottauto
avenue	Weg
gender	Geschlecht
non-material	nicht materiell eingestellt
Martha Stewart	see pp. 32-33
to keep sb. grounded	jmdn. Rückhalt geben
let alone	geschweige denn
shopping mall <i>US</i>	Einkaufszentrum
housing development	Wohnsiedlung
prospect <i>{ˈprɒspɛkt}</i>	mögliche(r) Kandidat(in)
response	Antwort
boring	langweilig
to hug	sich umarmen
to hang out <i>ifml.</i>	herumhängen
to delete sth.	etw. löschen
alias <i>{ˈeɪliəs}</i>	Deckname
intentionally	absichtlich
dating pool	Kontaktstelle für Singles
to run a search for sth.	(im Internet) nach etw. suchen
Suburban <i>{səˈbʌrban}</i>	Markenname eines Geländewagens
[suburban]	vorstädtisch
to apologize <i>{əˈpɒlədʒaɪz}</i>	sich entschuldigen
rocket scientist	Raketenforscher(in)
to boot up one's computer	den Computer starten

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