

Life

Editor RITA DEMONTIS
rita.demontis@tor.sunpub.com
416-947-2247

TOMORROW
ONE DAY TO GO ...
Valentine's Day can test
a relationship, and
make a single feel lonely



Click on connect

More singles, especially the young, hook up the hi-tech way

Ah, Valentine's Day — the most romantic day of the year — filled with lovey-dovey couples. It's enough to drive unattached singles crazy.

But romance? What romance? There's precious little of it to be found in the world of today's active dating single.

Never mind the hearts and flowers, it's how do I get a date — fast?

Not for them the drawn-out introductions, blind dates and hopes for chance encounters, they want quick connections and instant personal information.

And they're increasingly using technology to do so.

But is technology in fact killing off all romance in the relationships game? I ask some experts in the field.

Online dating continues to be very popular with all ages with the fastest growing group of members over 40.

Lori Miller, spokesman for

Lavalife, the No. 1 dating website in Canada, says, despite changing attitudes to dating, people are still looking for a loving relationship with someone compatible.

"They still want to find a special person," she says, "but time is limited so they want a fast connection."

Miller says

Lavalife is constantly looking for ways for members to more effectively connect and offers online profiles, land or mobile phone connections and personal video sharing, the newest and most effective way, she says, to scrutinize someone.

Amber MacArthur is an attractive, single, 30-year-old from Toronto and co-host of *Call For Help*, a daily tech lifestyle show on G4techTV, a cable digital channel.

MacArthur says that although dating online is still growing, it's expanding into niche-oriented sites based on



Amber MacArthur hosts *Call for Help*, a tech lifestyle show. Below, Pamela Anderson promotes text messaging at Virgin Mobile press conference in Toronto recently.

interests, hobbies, pets, sports and so on.

"People nowadays want to be sure they meet others with the same tastes and interests," she says.

This is also true for young people who are increasingly connect-

ing via friendship or social networking sites such as Myspace.com and Friendster.com.

"It's where young people can make friends and communicate but is more comfortable and doesn't have the negative stigma or drawbacks of online dating."

"Technology is definitely changing the way we connect and date," confirms MacArthur (Ambermac.com).

Not so much for the 40-plus singles. Although they're gradually embracing the technology revolution, Gloria Macdonald of Perfect Partners, a personal relationship executive search company, says many still long for the dating style of yesteryear.

"The biggest

shift in the dating world is the increasing number of older singles, especially women," she says.

"Even though they're often divorced, they're still looking for a romantic relationship. Others may be women who've never married because they focussed on their careers."

But, despite most women being very much in control of their lives at that time of their lives, she says many still long for the old-fashioned "knight in shining armour" to "take care of them."

Yet many older men nowadays, Macdonald points out, have adapted to equality and like an independent woman who'll share everything, including costs.

"It can be a confusing situation," she says.

She also feels many older singles (of both sexes) have

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Hottest sex toy buy for singles (and couples) this Valentine's Day is the iBuzz, a music-activated vibrating iPod toy that works with any MP3 player or portable music device.

Just arrived on the Canadian market from the U.K. at Aren't We Naughty stores or online at Arentwenaughty.com, the musical orgasm machine (\$69.95) comes with a hand-held, vibrating plug-in "bullet" plus two spiky silicone "sleeves."

Don't have a MP3 player? The iBuzz allows you to explore seven orgasmic functions without it.

unrealistic expectations nowadays about finding the "perfect" partner.

"Women especially can be very 'picky,'" she says bluntly. "But the statistics show there are more women than men in these age groups so it's best to be realistic and flexible. Yet they all want 'instant chemistry.'"

So, although romantic ideals are still held by many singles, especially the older age group, all ages are increasingly relying on technology.

For them, Valentine's Day may end up being spent, not surrounded by hearts and flowers, but by their computer, cellphone, BlackBerry or even with their vibrating MP3 player.

For old-fashioned romance, click on Save.

valerie.gibson@tor.sunpub.com



Valerie Gibson

INTIMACIES

BE A TEXTPERT

According to Virgin Mobile, Canadians sent more than 700 million text messages in 2004, a 100% increase from the year before. Today, 6 million texts are sent daily in Canada. But we're still far behind Europe and the rest of the world with the use of texting, especially when it comes to

meeting other singles.

Virgin Mobile has produced a how-to book, *The Joy of Text: Your Guide to a More Satisfying Text Life*, because there are still

plenty of "text virgins."

Launched in Toronto by Canadian-born celebrity Pamela Anderson, *The Joy of Text* gives the

lowdown on how to use texting for fun and flirting.

They call it "textual intercourse."

Anderson, says she's an avid texter and "does it all the time."

The book is \$9.99 at Indigo/Chapters or free with 200 text messages in the Pleasure Pack available with a new Virgin-Mobile phone (February only).



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