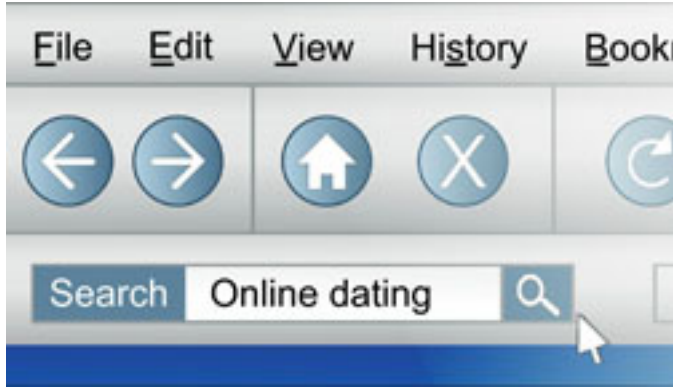


Published September 10th, 2014

No Match for This Crowd

By Nick Marnell



Online dating has been destigmatized and business is booming.

Match.com, an online dating site, purchased OKCupid, a rival, for \$50 million in 2011. Zoosk, an online dating app, filed for a \$100 million IPO in April. Tinder, a much less formal connection app, claims 10 million ephemeral matches per day.

According to a 2013 Pew Research Report, 59 percent of all Internet users agreed with the statement that "online dating is a good way to meet people," up from the 44 percent who said so in 2005. But the biggest stunner in the report: 3 percent of adults 50-64 years old met their partner online.

With a demographic sporting a 3 percent matchmaking success rate, this reporter decided to take his chances, and jump into the morass.

The first thing I did was search for pictures of

myself from five years ago to post in my profile.

But I was told that was not the way to go. To be as fair as the rest of the participants, I should use photos at least 10-15 years old.

I determined to not interact with any woman who used the word 'must' in her profile: "Must like dogs." "Must love to dance." Must move to the next candidate. A few other buzz words forced me to hit delete: "Generous." "Enjoys the finer things in life." Of course, once a woman of that ilk saw that I earned a newspaper reporter's salary, I was never in jeopardy of having her respond anyway.

So I clicked through the profiles, and every so often one struck me. I would write the lady a nice email about how much I enjoyed reading her profile and how well written it was. After about a half dozen non-responses, it dawned on me that the women were looking for a boyfriend, not an editor.

I wanted to keep it simple and meet someone from Lamorinda. In the category that I chose - women aged 50-63 - the site selected 11 women from Moraga, 11 from Orinda and 42 from Lafayette, which made me think about moving to Lafayette.

My first get together was with a teacher from Benicia. We met at a café and one of the first comments she made was that I looked just like my photos. Considering that I am the most non-photogenic person in Lamorinda, I wasn't sure how to take that. She appeared to be in shock; honest photos online are apparently a rare occurrence. Nothing developed with her; she was just looking for a "friend."

I went on a date with a professional woman from San Ramon who looked a bit like Cameron Diaz. We met at a café in Lafayette but a woman whom I knew came to our table and said hello and made a big fuss over me. My date was not impressed. Things did not work out with her either.

A few days later, I received an email from a woman in Lafayette who worked for the county. She commented that my profile sounded like it was written by a reporter. And she still wanted to get to know me. We exchanged emails and agreed to go out for a glass of wine. But I found out that even scheduled dates are like most other things on an online dating site: not quite as they appear.

When I wrote to confirm our plans, I received this message from her: "Oh, sorry, I'm taking off to Tahoe. Maybe we can get together when I return." Maybe not.

Frankly, navigating the online dating scene is work. The number of dead ends, the contacts with no photos, the hidden profiles - it's enough to make me head to my Moraga coffee shop and ask the woman whom I've had a crush on for months if she'd go to an Oakland A's game with me.

The chances that she says yes have got to be at least 3 percent.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA