

Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match

No, I'm not going to write about "Fiddler on the Roof" or small things used to start fires. I'm talking about the past, present and future dating world.

Now a very long time ago, or in other countries even today, you had arranged marriages. At some point in time, the girl's family would get in contact with the boy's family and the marriage would be set. When the dowry price was met, or a certain age was met, or some other condition. All well and good, but not always a happy match.

In another age, you had the major courtship ritual. You get introduced, meet social in groups for a time, and finally you ask permission to "court". Usually this was done in the house of the girl under full supervision of her family. Usually slow, but it must have worked, the human species survived.

I never did any of that. I didn't date much before I got married. I had 2 or 3 'girlfriends' in College. None before that. College dating (at least for me) was lots of hanging out in each other's dorm rooms. Maybe a dinner off campus every once in a blue moon – cash was tight. After College, I spent almost a year working. I had a few dates after college. My sisters were kind enough to set me up a few times. I would say, that after the 1st date, I had fun. I never did like that first date feeling. Then I finally got my own place. I had a small apartment warming when I finally got furniture for people to sit on. One of the people that came to that event was my future wife, – we just didn't know it at the time. About 1 month later we had our first date. I still remember what we did, even though I can't remember the name of the restaurant, if it was still there I could take you right to it. Unfortunately it is long gone. We went out to eat, to a

movie (Return of the Jedi) and stopped afterwards at a Dunkin' Donuts. In less than 1 year we were married. We liked the first date so much, we did the same thing on our wedding weekend. I went from someone who had very little dating experience to a married man in very little time, but it felt right. My feelings weren't too far off, since we spent 20 years together, and would still be together except for a beast called cancer.

On to now. Four years after my wife's death, I find I may be ready to date again. I'm not 100% convinced of this, but the feeling is that it is almost there. Now I'm quite sure that I could live the rest of my life with that almost there feeling. I hated the initial dates that much. I'm not sure I want to go through that routine again. However, it is what it is.

Now onto how dating is done today. Most of what I've heard is that you go "online" to find a date. I guess that is a possibility, but it doesn't seem right for me (more on that in a bit). I don't go to bars, so I don't think I'll ever find someone through that route. There are also people who go to church just to find a date. Hmm, on that one, something just doesn't seem right there... My big social events seem to revolve around a small little community theater I where I tend to hang out. Some of my closest friends were met there. But I know the people there, and I can't see myself dating anyone I've met so far. Not that they aren't nice people, but I know a connection when I feel it, and that hasn't been there. My other activities are mainly things I do by myself, so meeting anyone interested in my hobbies will be difficult at best.

That is unless... There is always that... Come on you can type it. Ok, that internet dating route. There are any number of dating sites popping up on the internet. It seems like there is a new one every week. Some you have to pay for, some are free. Some are free and pay, but you can only send messages if you pay. Some do "Scientific" personality profiles to get your perfect match. Others are like on line supermarkets for

dating. And there is probably everything in between and farther along on each side. I've seen add for dating a specific race, religion, occupation, location and there are plenty of other qualifiers. For some reason, none of this appeals to me. I get a little freaked out over the thought of putting anything out in a dating site. I'll blog, or visit boards for specific talking points, but a dating site? Am I just someones bit of data that goes through hundreds of personality profiles, or a slab of meat waiting to get checked out? Or worse, am I the shopper looking over those cuts of meat? It just seems like a foreign world to me, and I really don't want any part of it.

Now back to my title... I knew a matchmaker. Shortly after I was married, we lived near a lady who took it upon herself to find the perfect match for everyone. She knew people from all over the area and then some. She would make sure that certain people were introduced. And she wasn't above getting in there to push things together or pull them apart. Maybe that's what I need. A real live honest to goodness matchmaker. Do they still exist? But then again, not for me.

My best bet is to get a new place, have a house warming and see if lightning strikes twice. Or not. Maybe I'm not ready after all. I guess I won't really know that until I take that first step. For me, there are days when I still feel married to that lovely lady I met at my first place. There are days when I think she might be walking in the door. The next person I meet will have to be willing to take on those days. I don't think they will ever go away.