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Looking For Love


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News42 WIAT

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Looking for love is big business in the United States, with more than 100 million singles in this country. Today, there are more ways than ever, to find the right person.

Love seekers are turning to newspaper personals, professional matchmaking, video services or online dating. In fact, American singles are expected to spend more than \$300 million dollars on online dating memberships in 2006.

Online dating services have revolutionized the business of matchmaking. More and more people like 34 year old Birmingham resident Angie Sexton, are turning to the internet to find their soul mate.

"This was just a fantastic outlet for me to meet people and i could do it, schedule it on my own time," said Sexton.

There are more than 8 million members on Match.com. The site lets you post a picture and profile, then browse through a sea of singles.

The busy pharmacist was hesitant at first, "it seemed so desperate at the time," said Sexton.

"Most of the online sites are like a shopping mall ."

Scott Hazen, found his soul mate online

But after a six month subscription to Match.com, she changed her tune. Sexton met Michael Svitkovic, 38, after clicking on a link for a personality match. Svitcovic came up as a perfect match.

The two met for dinner after chatting online for a week. The pair married in June, 2005. A one month subscription to Match.com costs \$29.99 or six months for \$77.94.

Speed dating is growing in popularity. Cupid.com specializes in pre-dating, which gives pairs six minutes to figure out if they want to take it to the next level.

"Six minutes gives you plenty of time to exchange ideas find out if there's a common interest," said Lisa Lee with Cupid.com.

Singles divided-up in age groups during a recent Cupid.com event at the Fox and Hound Pub and Grille in Birmingham. Each person registered online, and showed up for six minute dates with at least ten different people. They were seated at tables for two.

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[Cupid.com](#)

[It's Just Lunch](#)

[Eharmony.com](#)

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Lee gave each person a special numbered nametag and scorecard. The guests rotated to their next date every time Lee rang her bell.

It's one way busy singles can meet a lot of people in a short amount of time. At the end of the event, daters turned in their scorecards. If the attraction was mutual, they were notified of the match by email. Cupid.com is \$29.95 a month. A pre-dating event is \$40.00, which includes one free-month online.

With today's busy working lives, there's little time to search for love on your own.

That's where the directors at "It's Just Lunch" in Homewood step in. They serve over 600 clients throughout Birmingham and Huntsville. Directors get to know clients during an hour long, one-on-one interview.

"We find out all about them, we find out about their professional life, their hobbies and interests, their family background, also the type of person they'd like to meet," said Millie Kay Drum.

The clients are then hand-matched.

"I think we're a great service because we actually get to know our clients personally, we're very hands on match makers," said Drum.

The directors do all the arranging, including picking the restaurant. Couples meet over lunch, drinks after work, or brunch. This business guarantees at least 14 dates during a one year membership, at a cost of \$1,500.

Tuscaloosa resident Scott Hazen found his soul mate on eHarmony.com.

The company was founded by best-selling author and clinical psychologist Dr. Neil Clark Warren.

"Most of the online sites are like a shopping mall," said Scott.

That's why he chose eHarmony.

On this site, pictures and profiles are not posted for open-access viewing. The website also uses a compatibility matching system and 436 questions, eventually narrowing the field to a highly-select group of singles.

"There are 29 dimensions of compatibility and you have to match like 27 or 28 before they'll even put you in contact with each other," said Dana Hazen.

The company also uses what they call guided communication, to help you break the ice. You can send a potential date 5 multiple-choice questions. After that, members are prompted to exchange more questions, including things you can't stand, and things you must have in a relationship.

Open communication and emailing happens next. The Hazens had 180 correspondences before they ever met in person. "It was just a blast too,"

said Dana, who got married to Scott just over a year after meeting him. Finding that special someone on eHarmony is \$59.95 for one month, \$173.70 for six months.

If these options don't work for you, try getting involved in organizations or activities you enjoy. By doing so, you can find like-minded people with similar interests.

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