

Wired to the World

— by Ralph Lee Scott

In keeping with the theme of this issue of *North Carolina Libraries*, "S*x in the Library," this edition of *Wired to the World* will cover a major free dating service available on the Internet. *American Singles* is a nationwide, nonprofit dating service run by Rich Gosse, who describes himself as "America's foremost authority on the Singles Lifestyle." Gosse, author of *How to Find a Lasting Relationship*, *The Singles Guide to America*, *A Good Man is Easy to Find*, and *The Divorce Book*, is a frequent guest on talk shows such as *Oprah Winfrey*, *Donahue*, and CNN. He also travels the lecture circuit. You can reach Mr. Gosse via e-mail at: 73125.1135@compuserve.com

American Singles can be accessed via MOSAIC or Netscape, at the URL: <http://www.apk.net/as/>. The *American Singles* Home Page contains links to five additional pages: Men Seeking Women; Women Seeking Men; a sneak preview at the *American Singles Picture Book*; instructions on how to respond to listings in *American Singles*, and an application for joining the *American Singles* nonprofit dating service. *American Singles* is a CNI (Coalition for Network Information) affiliate and displays its logo on its home page.

Joining *American Singles* is as easy as filling out an online registration form. The form requests the standard dating information: name, phone number, race, age, sex, occupation, education, children, height, weight, hair color, eye color; information about smoking, drinking, drug use; "three adjectives that describe me best are"; and type of relationship desired (dating, committed (I won't touch that one — WTW editor), and marriage). Similar information is requested about the person you are seeking: race; acceptable age range; minimum educational preference; smoking\drinking\drugs OK? Respondents also are asked to estimate how many miles away the person can live from them, and to describe the type of person they are seeking. Most information is provided on a voluntary basis by the applicant as desired. If you send in the form, you also are asked to certify that you are eighteen years old or older, single, and not currently in a "committed" (here is that word again!) relationship. *American Singles* is further authorized to release all information provided on the form, does not screen members, and assumes no liability regarding the dating of individuals. While the *American Singles* dating service is free, voluntary contributions from users of the service are accepted.

If you like, you can also send in a photograph and it will be included in a forthcoming *American Singles Picture Book*. An example of this picture directory can be seen by clicking on the "Sneak a peek" line on the *American Singles* Home Page.

Three sample entries with photographs of the singles are included on this page. At this point you can cut to the chase (so to speak) and go to either of two pages: Men Seeking Women, or Women Seeking Men. Each of these sections is organized by country, state, and then city. For example this week, there are two men in Arizona seeking women, the first listed is in Mesa, and the second is in Phoenix. Each gives his first name, race, age, occupation, the famous three adjectives that describe him best ("fun," "happy," "loyal" in the case of the Mesa guy), what he enjoys, and the type of relationship he is seeking. (No one is listed as: "dumb," "stupid," and "dull"; although one person lists himself as "mischievous" as a come on! Most are "stable," "loving," etc.) A typical entry follows: "Bobbi, Oakland, African-American, 59, Librarian, MA, 5'5/118, NS/ND, adventurous, genuine, serene, classy. Enjoys performing arts, read, walk. OPEN to D/O or C/R with SM, Black preferred, 50-65, HS+, NS/NA/ND, fit,stable, authentic, caring, kind, fin.secure; within 90 miles. W4954." Some international respondents are listed (this week Canada, Germany, and New Zealand), and this will no doubt grow as the number of Internet users increases. The person from New Zealand "enjoys hike" (sic!), and likes to travel and dance anywhere!

After you have made a selection from the list of people waiting to meet you in *American Singles*, there are three ways you can respond. One choice is by USMAIL MAIL to *American Singles*, 4 Highland, San Rafael, CA 94901. Using this method, you enclose a letter to the person using the code number giving in their listing. *American Singles* will forward the letter to the person unopened. A second way is through the Compuserve e-mail address: 73125.1135 which happens to be the address of Rich Gosse. A third way is through *Cupid's Switchboard*, which is a specialized telephone answering service with two methods of access. The first is a regular long distance toll charge call to 616-798-4887. Payment at this number is via major credit card. The second method of access to *Cupid's Switchboard* is through a 900 telephone number, 900-726-7136. The cost here is \$1.95 a minute and calls can run up to ten minutes (that's \$19.50 for those in the dumb and dumber category). In both cases *Cupid's Switchboard* will call the members you want to contact and give them your phone number. If they are available, they will either speak with you NOW, or call you back! (Oh, the wonders of this modern technology!)

While there are many other dating services, some very specialized, available on the Internet, *American Singles* claims to be the only *free* service currently available! Some others found on a recent Lycos search include: *The CyberStore*

Dating Service (<http://www.gate.net/marketplace/Dating-Service.html>); The Ulti-Mate Dating Service (<http://www.primenet.com/~jekagan/dating/>); The NETCENTER-DATING CENTER (<http://netcenter.com/cetcentr/dating/index.html>); and The Alternative Lifestyle Dating Service for Bis (http://www.cs.colorado.edu/homes/mcbryan/public_html/bb/715/10/summary.html). The Dating Center ad reads, alas, "Win a free trip to Mexico or Hawaii. Guide to the Best in the Nation. Find IT Faster - Interactive Yellow Pages! Females are admitted FREE! ...Please send pictures where the lighting is bright, such as an outdoor situation, with the sun behind the camera, so that ..."

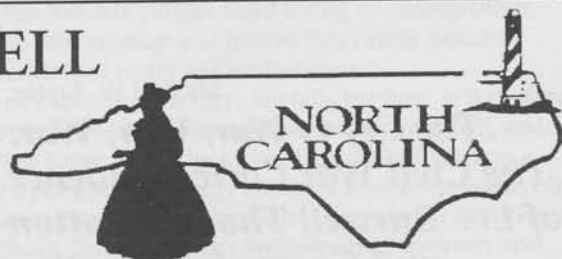
The author hopes that Wired to the World readers enjoyed reading about *American Singles* and the many other dating services available to library patrons with Internet access. Other articles in this "S*x in the Library" edition of *North Carolina Libraries* will help you deal with some of the access issues raised by unbridled patron Internet passion in the Library. And you thought all those people were looking at Internet library catalogs!

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 - Keyes Metcalf, *Planning Academic and Research Library Buildings* (New York: McGraw, 1965), 416.
 - Susan K. Martin, "The Care and Feeding of the MARC Format," *American Libraries* 10 (September 1970): 498.
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