



## A Publication of the Presbytery of West Virginia

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### Vol 3 Issue 2 ❖ February

#### First date ideas:

- Go on a hike.
- Stroll through the farmer's market.
- Cook a meal together.
- Take in some tunes at a club.
- Take a painting class.
- Volunteer!
- Bond at the museum.
- Go to a drive-in movie.
- Pet dogs at the shelter.
- Play ping pong
- Pick fruit at an orchard.
- Win prizes at a local fair.
- Take the pressure off at a 24-hour diner.
- Explore the outdoors in a kayak.
- Grab a camera and explore your local surroundings.
- Pop in a scary movie.
- Watch the sunset.
- Attend a sporting event and cheer on your favorite teams.
- Go for a scenic bike ride.
- Fawn over animals at the zoo.
- Pack up a delicious picnic.
- Make it a double date!
- Tackle your local trivia night.
- Explore a flea market.
- Get competitive in mini golf.
- Bake (and eat!) some chocolate chip cookies.
- Build a fire and toast some s'mores.
- Go out for breakfast.

### Top Dating Sites for Older Adults

Dating can be a real pain at any age. Trying to find a romantic partner in your social group can be hit or miss at best. It can be even more difficult for baby boomers who may not get out as much as a younger crowd, or who have a fixed social circle without potential matches. Technology has an answer.



"I CAN'T GO TO THE MOVIES WITH YOU, ELENORE. I'M STILL GROUNDED FOR SOMETHING I DID IN 1937!"

Dating app developers have taken note of the legions of older adults who want to date, and they've responded with sites that are just for those of a certain age. After all, older adults often have a clearer view of who they are and what they want, whether it be marriage, casual romance or a friend to share dinner with now and then. The spark of a new love interest can be just as bright at 70 as 17, and older adults are willing to use technology to help kindle the fire. In fact, there are so many dating apps for the baby boomer generation out there that it can be overwhelming trying to decide which one is right for you. Should you be on more than one app at a time to increase your chances? Is paying for more service the way to go, or is it just as good to use the freebie version? Is there really one site for people interested in marriage? All the questions can prevent you from joining at all. But if you don't dive in, you'll never find a pearl! As with most things in life, you'll learn as you go. But just in case you'd like a few pointers, we've gathered information about some popular sites to get you started on your journey. They're in no particular order, so browse sites that interest you to get a feel for them.

OurTime: A dating site for people over 50, OurTime makes matches for pen pals, travel buddies or other companions in addition to romantic relationships. The company has a free app where you can send emails and flirts, view profiles with photos, and see just who's been checking your profile. For more capability, try their paid service. One month is \$29.96, six months runs \$15 per month.

SilverSingles: The site promotes "a fresh take on 50+ dating" with no swiping or

emailing required. You'll start by taking a one-time, extensive personality test to start your dating profile. Based on your input, SilverSingles sends you three to seven potential matches every day. You can start online chatting and set up that first date right away. There is a free version, but doling out for more options is a bit pricey at \$57.95 per month for three months, \$44.95 per month for a six-month commitment, and \$31.95 per month for a year.

EliteSingles: Aimed at an "educated" crowd (finishing junior high doesn't count), EliteSingles boasts that 80% of members have a university degree. It's fast-growing, with about 381,000 new members every month. It advertizes "serious online dating" based on a like-minded match to find lasting love, with an international platform in 25 countries. There is a free version, but otherwise, we'll hope that education got you a decent salary, because it's not cheap. You'll pay \$62.95 per month for three months, \$44.95/month for a six-month commitment, and \$31.95 per month for a year.

Zoosk: What if the idea of marriage is a big question in your mind? Maybe your life partner passed away and you just want companionship, or the sting of your divorce made you gun-shy around white dresses and boutonnières. At Zoosk, you can start off with a casual relationship and keep it there or progress to something more serious. More than 35 million members of all ages are using the site's "behavioural matchmaking" technology to find someone. Part of the reason may be the affordable price: \$29.95 for a month, \$19.98 per month for three months, and \$12.49 per month for a year.

SeniorMatch: As it says on their website, "You don't have to be alone." The experts at match.com have built a site just for the over-50 crowd, and they've done a nice job. Right on the homepage they make it clear that whether you're looking for a travel buddy, activity partner, companionship, or a dating relationship, they've got you covered. It also claims to be the largest dating site for baby boomers and other older adults. There's a free version, and a paid subscription won't cost an arm and a leg: \$29.95 for a month, \$19.95 per month for three months, \$15.95 monthly for half a year or \$11.95 per month for a full year.

## Volunteering for Love

Leave it to folks in progressive Austin, TX, to come up with the first dating experiment to combine philanthropy with romance. Swoovy founders Brooke Waupsh and Jeff McMahon reached out to local nonprofits to assess interest in the app. Potential partners included animal rescues, community gardens, food banks and more. They figured that people who share a common interest in doing good might have a better chance of hitting it off. It can also be easier to chat when you're engaged in a common task than if you're facing each other over a cup of coffee. And if the date didn't go like you'd hoped, well, you still put in some time at community service. Everybody wins. Right now, the app is only available in Austin, but watch for it to roll out to other parts of the country.

## Tips for Your First Meeting

The vast majority of dating from an online introduction goes very well. However, it's smart to take a few precautions just in case. OurTime offers the following tips for your first dates:

- Always meet in public. Meet for the first time in a populated, public location — never in a private or remote location.
- Tell a friend. Inform a friend or family member of your plans, including when and where you're going. If you own a mobile phone, make sure you have it with you.
- Stay sober. Do not do anything that would impair your judgment and cause you to make a decision you could regret.
- Drive yourself to and from the first meeting. Just in case things don't work out, you need to be in control of your own ride — even if that means taking a taxi or Uber.

