

THE ECONOMIST & SUN/TRIBUNE

FAITH

Agency helps Jewish singles find faith partners

BY SHLOMIT KRIGER
Special to *The Liberal*

Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match.
But finding someone who fits the average seven-page criteria for an ideal mate is difficult. He or she can have the looks, the humour, the outrageous family that throws toga parties, but there's a catch here... he or she is not Jewish.

While Judaism does not forbid the marriage of interfaith couples, it is generally frowned upon.

That's where Jewish matchmakers can help subdue the butterflies.

Mali Wasserman has been matchmaking Jewish singles professionally for more than 10 years and operates her business from her Thornhill home. The business helps support her family of nine children — none of whom want her to set them up.

"I feel like I am helping God and doing a mitzvah (an obligation)," she said. "Matchmaking is like parting the Red Sea."

Clients tell Mrs. Wasserman what they want in a partner and she flips through her large binder full of names and photos of clients to find someone who she thinks could be 'the one'.

A date is arranged if both clients are up for it and they report back to her to say if they are interested in pursuing the relationship further. Costs vary between different matchmakers, but the typical amount is \$1,000.

Like all matchmakers, Mrs. Wasserman finds out everything she can about her eager clients, including their life goals, hobbies, personality, who their family members are and what they do for a living. This information stays confidential. She says she'll only work with those serious about finding someone to marry.

"I tell my clients to always give someone a second chance," she said. "If they are still not interested, then I find someone else for them to meet."



Mrs. Wasserman began her career in Israel while working as a gym teacher in a high school. Her students would ask her if she knew anyone she could set them

up with and she decided it could become a success for her. She now has clients from around the world and the phone bills add up to a business on their own.

She has made five successful matches so far this year. Most of her clients are 18 or 19 years old,

See TODAY'S, page 21.



RON CSILLAG

Standing up to PC Scrooges

At least one good thing has come of all this yuletide political correctness gone haywire over the past few weeks: Members of minority religions have come to the defence of Christians. What a nice twist.

The other side? All this PC woolly-headedness has betrayed intolerance toward Christians, who, after all, form the majority in this country.

Item: At Gap Inc., youthful employees were discouraged by their bosses from wishing shoppers a merry Christmas lest they offend non-Christians or non-believers. Callers to local radio talk shows, happily identifying themselves as Muslims, Hindus and non-Christians of all stripes, laced into the retailer, describing the directive as ludicrous and going out of their way to hearten their Christian neighbours by using the C-word as often as possible.

Amid all this mush, allow me to say that as a non-Christian, I don't mind being wished a Merry Christmas and I'm secure enough in my own traditions not to be threatened by it. I would even go so far as to say that maybe we're not saying Merry Christmas enough, for surely Christ's message of peace, love and goodwill is universal in appeal, or should be. After all, how many non-Christians, or even atheists, could possibly be offended by the greeting's inherent cheer or, for that matter, by a well-sung carol or a tastefully decorated home? Those with too much time on their hands, I'm guessing.

More dissonance is seen in commercial establishments (like the Gap) that exploit the holiday with employees in Santa Claus caps — all aimed at separating customers from more money.

In a free nation, it's particularly perturbing that Christmas is under fire. While it marks the birth of Jesus, it is also an amalgam of secular practices with which most Canadians have no problem.



INSIGHT INTO EYESIGHT

Happy Holidays, Happy New Year!

To all our loyal patients, we want to thank you very much for the privilege of taking care of you and your eyes over the past year.

We look forward to taking care of you and your loved ones and friends in 2003.

From Jan Evans, Eye Care Practice Manager on behalf of Dr. H. Walji, Andrea Jolliffe, Pre-testing assistant and Alex Duran, Dispensary Assistant, we send to our Patients and to the entire Community, Season's Greetings and Best wishes for a Healthy and Happy New Year!

DR. H. H. WALJI, OPTOMETRIST
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