

To Russia with video love

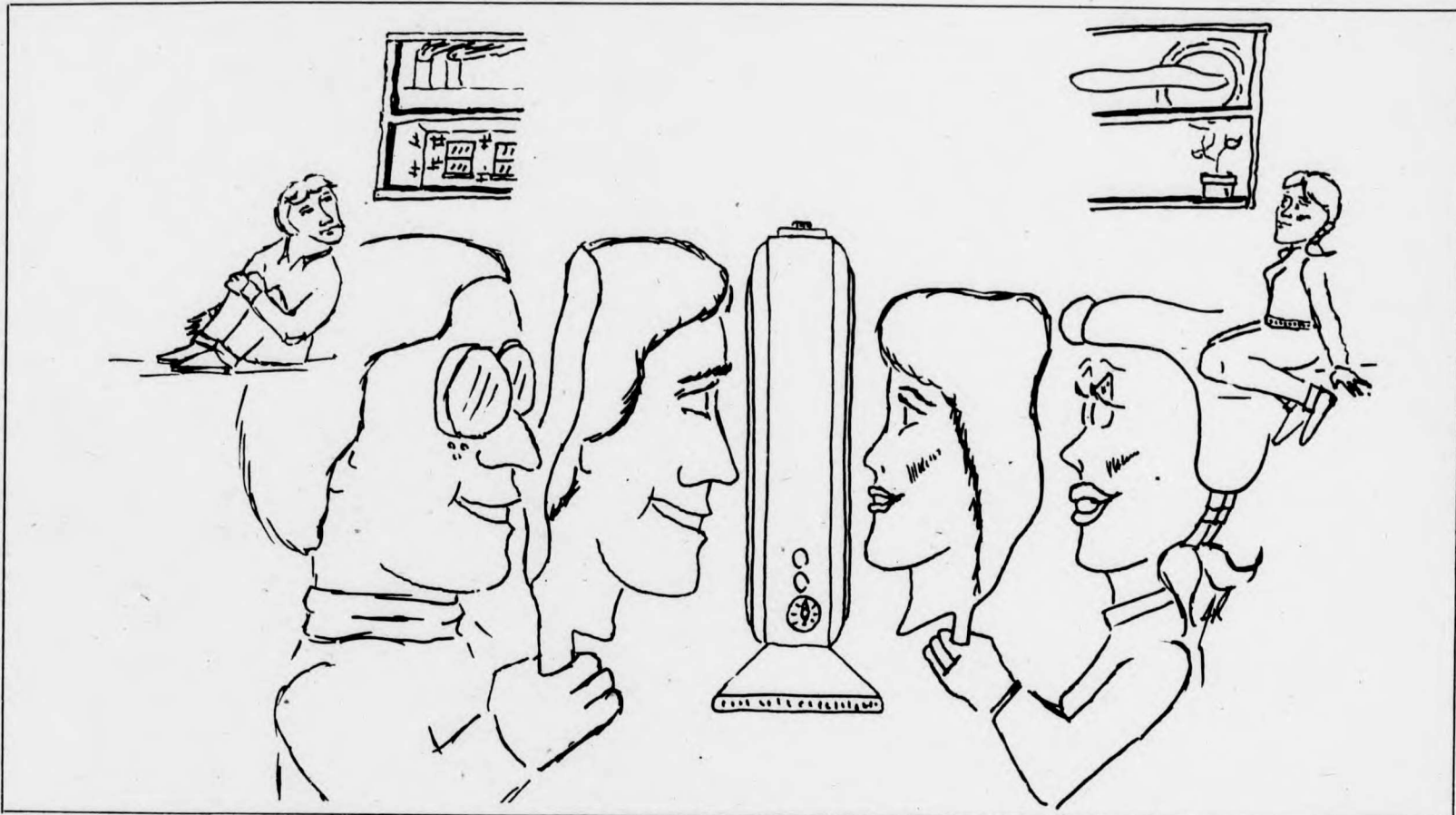
John Tittel

Computer dating...phone dating...blind dating...and now something entirely new on the Toronto scene...video dating.

"It's so much different, that it's fun" says Wayne Mastromatteo, owner of Moments in Time, Toronto's first video dating service. The 32-year-old entrepreneur got the idea of video dating from a similar agency in California called Great Expectations. "Video dating is very popular there (California) and has been in existence for about the last five years" comments Mastromatteo.

Instead of programming his or her dislikes, likes, eye colour, hair colour, height, hobbies and the like into a computer, the client is instructed to talk about all the various factors on camera. Mastromatteo himself interviews the clients in a relaxed living room atmosphere.

Once on video cassette, the client is catalogued on to a card filing system stating his/her basic characteristics. Mastro-



matteo says he will not take on married or common-law people

as clients, and warns that he thoroughly checks out the claim

of a would-be client. "I get a lot of calls from married men, but I tell

them my service is not what they're looking for."

"Depending on how talkative client is, he/she is put on video tape for five to ten minutes" says Mastromatteo. The client is asked if he drinks, smokes, what his tastes in music, theatre and restaurants are and the list goes on. Perhaps most important, the client is asked what kind of person he is and what kind of person he is seeking.

Mastromatteo, who is also a full time firefighter for the York borough fire department, claims that 70 percent of his clientele are professional people. The average age of clients is about 30 "but I do have a lot of people in the 20 to 25 age group" he adds. The oldest is a 58-year-old male engineer. Other clientele range from a 23-year-old Bell Canada operator to a 30-year-old television writer and lawyer who flashes his American Express card during his video interview.

The financial part of video dating?

"It's \$175 for a year and that includes 24 different selections" says Mastromatteo. "My motto is 'choose and choose back' and that way the first date is a mutual affair" he continues. In other words when a client goes for a viewing session and chooses another client, the chosen client must go through the same procedure and give approval of the chooser.

Mastromatteo maintains that what sets his business apart from other dating agencies, is that when his two clients go out on a first date they have a very good idea of what they're getting into. Mastromatteo says that video dating "lets the client get past the initial stuff of sizing up" and adds "you can view more men or women in one day that you could otherwise view in a whole year."

Right now, Moments in Time, located on Soudan Ave. at the corner of Mount Pleasant one block south of Eglinton, has only one competitor in Toronto. The Couple Company is at 53 St. Clair Ave. and the phone number is 923-9010. The number for Moments in Time is 485-6661.

Moments in Time offers a special deal for students that includes 10 viewing selections over a six-month period for \$95.

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