

Long Island Entertainment
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Long Island's Dating
by Bonnie D. Graham

We're All Born Single and Naked, But Then...

**Single Or Not Single?
That Is The Question**

Welcome to *Long Island's Dating*, the newest feature in L.I.'s favorite entertainment monthly. When the editors invited me to write a singles column, I felt eminently qualified. I've been hosting a weekly live radio talk show called *Long Island's Dating* (WGBB-AM1240, Fridays 6–7 p.m.) for five years – longer than most of my relationships. But enough about me.

Let's kick off this party by exploring what it means to be "single" in 2004. My single-minded purpose, you should pardon the expression, is to help you to determine if you're truly a *bonafide* card-carrying single and are thereby entitled to read this column each month. *What's up with this?*

When asked your marital status, you should be able to respond with a simple "Yes" or "No" without hesitation, fidgety feet, crossed arms, fleeting eyes, shifting weight or micro-burst facial signals that could betray an untruth, according to body language experts.

That said, we still see stages and shades, moods and mindsets, even days or mere hours of folks asserting their "singleness." Yes, we all know wannabe's who interpret "single" as a magical social opportunity label to be applied or removed as easily as lipstick during a hot date. And that's why the term gets "veh veh" (*Thank you, Steve Harvey*) murky and begs this question: if being single is so absolutely wonderful that everyone covets it, why is the matchmaking industry raking in millions from singles desperate to become "unsingle"?

Did you hear the one about the guy who walks into a bar and orders a beer? The bartender says, "That'll be four dollars." The customer pulls out a \$20 bill and the bartender replies, "I'm afraid I can't take that, sir." The man tenders a \$10 bill, which is also refused, then a \$5 bill. "What's going on here?" the guy asks, perplexed. Pointing to a neon sign, the bartender explains, "This is a singles bar." *Badabing. Truth in advertising.*

According to our favorite Uncle Sam, you are officially "single" for

taxpaying purposes if you are unmarried and do not qualify as Head of Household or Qualifying Widow(er) with Dependent Child. That automatically eliminates lots of legally unmarried persons from being considered “governmentally” single. *Next!*

Turning to Webster’s, we learn that “single” can be any of the following: not married; of or relating to celibacy; unaccompanied by others; unbroken, undivided; having no equal or like. *Listen up!* He’s saying you’re “definitively single” if you’re celibate (*Did Webster really want to go there?*); if you prefer cruising alone to hanging with friends (*this proves Webster was a party pooper*); if you’re not moping around singing *How Do You Mend A Broken Heart* or *Torn Between Two Lovers*; or if your personal ad isn’t another predictable me-too (*No, Virginia, we’re not all petite or fit, we don’t all love long walks on the beach and some of us do not have fascinating careers*).

Now let’s play the newest concept in reality shows, “Single for a Night Or Some Portion Thereof.” You’re eligible to be a contestant if: (a) You’re in a committed relationship where you’re both “allowed” to go out with your own friends to a bar, bowling, dinner or whatever, on a regular basis; (b) You’re “temporarily separated” and renting a basement studio six blocks from your spouse and kids while trying to “find yourself.” (*Audition hint: practice saying “I’m single” three times fast, then spin around, click your heels together like Toto’s Dorothy and you’ll land in Singlesville.*); (c) You and your spouse live apart permanently but don’t legally separate or divorce for the sake of your kids, your 401k and/or 75-year old parents, so you’re an “emotionally available single” who just can’t bring anyone home for Christmas dinner. *Vanna, who’s our first contestant?*

Of course, no singles overview is complete without referencing the Internet. Ah! So hundreds of free singles websites, so easy to upload your digital click-and-get-me photo, such a secret thrill to create a private email account, and so much time on your hands at work. The bottom line online is you can keystroke in and out of being single as often as Martha changes frying pans. *If you’re really single, please wiggle your mouse.*

Long Island’s Dating is hereby dedicated to the real, card-carrying singles among us; not the wannabe’s, pretenders, temps or wishful thinkers. You know who you are. If you don’t, you’ve got until next month to figure it out. Remember, being happy as a single is all about how you play your cards and who’s sitting across the table from you. We trust they’re single, too,