

# RELATIONSHIPS

By Mark Wolf

News Staff Writer

**T**om Shriver travels frequently in his job as a national sales manager for IES Electronics and hires someone to take care of his house and pets.

So, he figured, why not get someone to assist with his dating life?

Shriver said he never had trouble finding dates.

"I'm not a lonely heart," said Shriver, who describes himself as a triathlete, rock climber and professional skydiver and instructor.

He was interested in meeting women who are predisposed to his interests and was willing to pay someone to do the legwork.

Shriver signed up with Table for Two, an introduction service that pairs clients for first-name-only lunch or dinner dates after conducting a detailed interview and criminal background check on prospective members.

"I was interviewed as if she was a psychologist," said Shriver. "It cuts through the muck. We don't plan to fail but too many people fail to plan, and Table for Two does the planning for you."

The service was begun in Minneapolis in 1997 by Amy Rolando, a former television meteorologist, who was inspired to start the service when a friend asked her if she knew of any service that matched up people for lunch or dinner dates.

"Our lives are getting so much more isolated," said Rolando. "The number of hours everybody works makes people so exhausted. Some of them might have kids; they're busy with their own lives.

"People tell us they don't have problems getting a date, but they're here because their buddies are setting them up with attractive women but the substance isn't there. They want to meet somebody they can talk to after they've had a tough day on the trading floor. A lot of men are saying they're really wanting substance and not finding it on their own.

"Women are saying the same. A lot of them don't want to date people at



"You might consider a headhunter for a new job. So why not a 'hearhunter' to help you find a pleasant date?" Amy Rolando, owner of Table For Two

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TABLE FOR TWO HELPS PAIR UP  
BUSY PROFESSIONALS SHORT ON TIME

work, and that's where you spend the majority of your time."

Most of her clients, she said, had never used a dating service before.

That was the case with a Denver executive who said she "had to jump over a pretty high hurdle to sign up for this. There's a certain stigma attached to dating services. I didn't want to join a service where they have a video or a book where someone, maybe one of my investors, can walk in and see me."

Table for Two does not use videotapes or scrapbooks of clients. No client can get the full name or telephone number of another client until they have met. When the service identifies a

potential match, each client is called and given a detailed description of the other person. If each agrees, the service sets up a lunch or dinner, making the reservation under the first names only and arranging for separate checks.

Rolando said about 75 percent of the meetings result in exchange of phone numbers. She said the median age of clients is 44 and that 90 percent have four-year college degrees; 60 percent have advanced degrees. They pay about \$2,000 depending on options for 12 to 24 months of service.

"We don't use any type of computer service to do the matching," said Rolando. "It's off our notes, intuition and gut feeling, going through the files one by one. When we call (to talk about a prospective match), we ask them to take notes because we're going through all their background."

Kris Kenny, interviewer for the Denver office, says, "I love my job. The ability to bring such a needed service to so many people has been quite rewarding". The local office opened in March of 2000 and Kenny said the office has arranged about 50 dates over the past two weeks.

"We don't want to set-up somebody who's just looking for dates with somebody who's looking for a long-term commitment, even if they match up in every other way,"

she said.

The female executive, who spoke on condition she not be identified, said she joined because she didn't have time to meet people, and these guys definitely deliver. I'm meeting people with similar positions to mine."

And, she said, she is way over her initial hesitation about using a dating service.

"In retrospect, I was completely silly to be concerned about that," she said. "I'm doing something proactive with my life."

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