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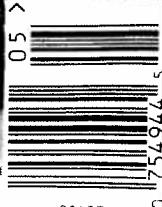
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THE MONTHS GO DOWN ON YOU, HIM AND EVERYTHING IN-BETWEEN

Extreme dating tactics

Writer Maryann Reid has gone to serious lengths to meet a man. Her latest move: asking every single person in her e-mail address book to fix her up. Insane? Or something you should try too?

66 Help a sister enhance her social life. If you know any single, professional men, ages 30-45, who live in the NYC area (or who are willing to travel), please contact me. And please forward this to at least two men. 99



BULLETIN BOARD: MATTHEW ZUCKER/JUPITERIMAGES.COM; MEN PHOTOS: CORBIS. SEE GO SHOPPING PAGE FOR ADDITIONAL CREDITS

I've always believed that if you ask, you shall receive—even if what you ask for is a man. Four years ago, my friend Gloria introduced me to St. Anthony, the thirteenth-century saint who'd supposedly sent her a husband. I bought a St. Anthony candle, lit it every Tuesday for nine weeks and prayed for a man. On the tenth week I met one. Three months later we were engaged—and we broke up four months after that. Despite that ill-fated relationship, when I realized I'd hit a dating dry spell, I knew it was time to put out another APB for a boyfriend. But this time, I went to mortals: I sent a "Hook me up!" e-mail (above) to my entire address book. Surprisingly, many of the guys who were forwarded to me liked how proactive I'd been. So far I've gone on 15 dates, sometimes two on one day, but my goal is 50. None of them have been right (yet), but I've figured out three new techniques for finding the one who is.

Pay attention to chemistry. Date #3 was with Samuel, a Harvard MBA. We had zero chemistry, but in the past I'd have seen him again because he was nice. (I once dated a



man because he opened doors for me, even though he drooled.) Now I'll look for a man who excites me, and having other dates lined up makes it easier to believe I'll find him.

Making the first move isn't desperate. Over mint tea, Ricardo, date #7, told me he never would have approached me at a bar because he's shy and guys are scared of rejection. I don't want to miss my soulmate by playing hard to get, so the next time I see a cute guy across the room, I'm buying him a drink.

Be honest about what you want. A lot of people I e-mailed told me that they hadn't known I was single. They said, "You always seemed so happy." So happy equals attached? Um, no. But in the future, when people ask how I'm doing, instead of automatically replying, "Everything is great," I'll say, "I'm really happy right now, but I'd love to meet a good man. Know anyone?" ☺

Maryann Reid is currently working on her sixth novel.

THE BODY MAKEOVER ISSUE!

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experiences every
man & woman
should have

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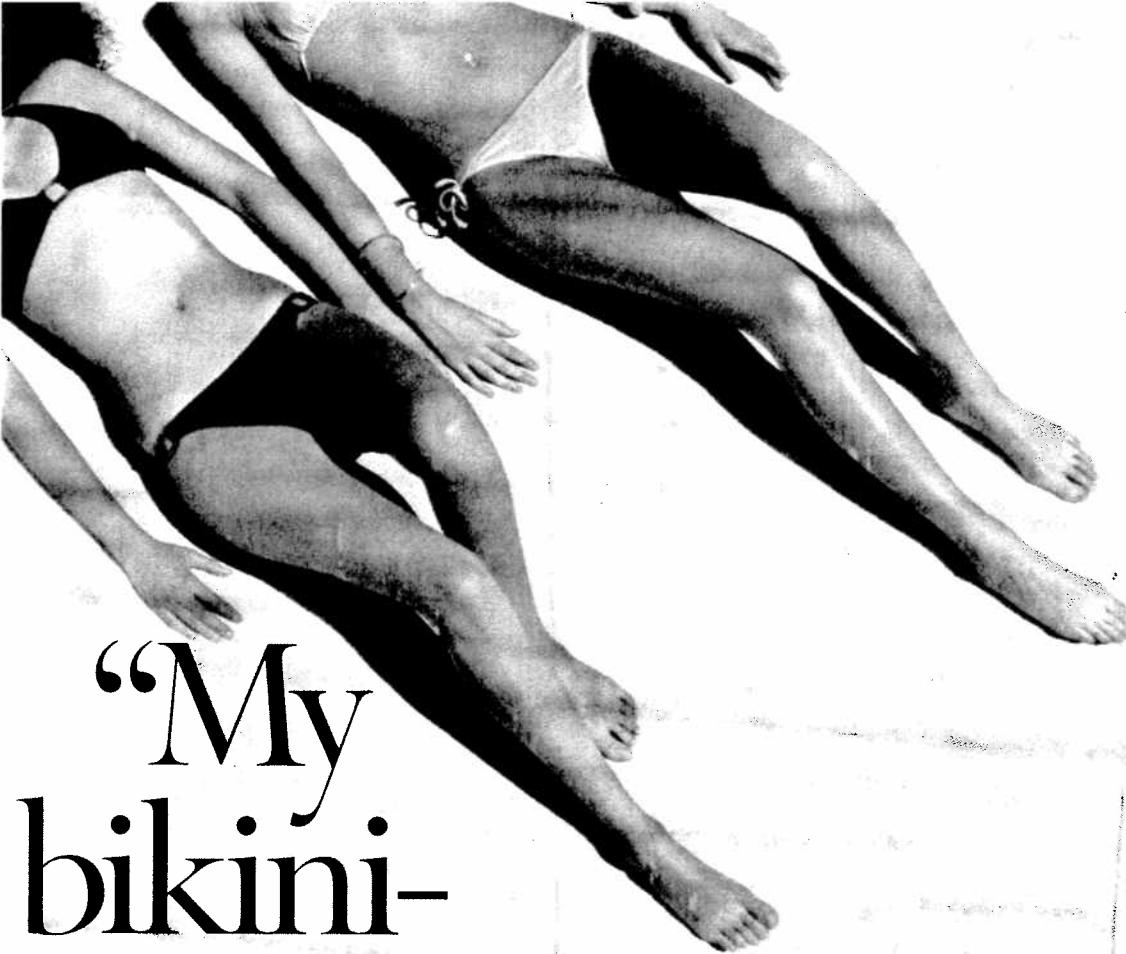
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05>

*Shaving,
waxing,
growing wild:
How you
handle your
hair down there
isn't just highly
personal—it
says a lot about
your sexuality.*

*Here, six
women bravely
reveal...*



“My bikini-line secret”

“I shave, with help from my guy”

A few summers ago I was out at a bar with my two sisters and an ex-boyfriend. Emboldened by several gin and tonics, my younger sister decided to broach a rather indelicate subject with him: “So, what are we going to do about the spiders that poke out of Emma’s bikini?” she asked, to my horror. My sisters are always teasing me, but this was too much. “I know!” said my ex, similarly emboldened. “What *can* we do?” I’d long resisted below-the-belt grooming; I was annoyed enough by how long it took to shave my legs. Besides, my best friend was as au naturel as I was, so I figured that pubic topiary was kind of like wearing Manolos—fine for those who could handle the pain and the expense, but not mandatory. With the three of them ganging up on me, though, I felt compelled to do *something*. Soon after, I shaved the outer edges. It was a disaster: itchy stubble and red bumps so bad that my boyfriend at the time actually started to miss the spiders. I gave up.

Then, a year ago, my fiancé and I were discussing Brazilian waxes. “Those are pretty rare, right?” I asked.

“Don’t most girls look kind of like me?” Turns out, not so much. “When I first saw you naked I was, uh, shocked,” he admitted. “I didn’t think they made them like that anymore, not since the seventies!” Now I was the one who was shocked; I couldn’t believe I was such an anachronism. “I’m not against taking a little off the sides and top,” I told him. “I’m just not into the upkeep.” So Rob said he’d help with his electric shaver, and I took him up on his offer (no rashes!). Now every few weeks, I put on a Jack Johnson CD, unroll a towel on our bed, lie back and relax. I love the intimacy of our little ritual and how pampering it is—kind of like how you feel at the hairdresser’s, only sexy too. And I don’t have to tip.

—EMMA JANE TAYLOR

“I go Brazilian, but it’s not easy”

It took me two years. After reading countless articles about Brazilian waxes, I finally got one. I had no idea how challenging it would be.

I wasn’t game to try waxing myself; if I go to a salon to get my hair styled, I figured, then I should go to one

FAVORITE QUICKIE: If you’re shaving, do one or two swipes per area at most; repeated ones cause irritation.

STOCKPHOTO

to get the most precious, sensitive area of my body denuded with hot wax. And I wanted to find a black-owned place that would cater to my special hair needs as a black woman—mine is extra thick and tightly curled down there. Maybe there would be a different wax for coarser hair, or a salon where I could commune with other black women getting it done.

After several days of calling spas run by black women in my neighborhood in Brooklyn and in Manhattan, too, I discovered that not one offered Brazilians. I asked my girlfriends for a recommendation. What I got: surprised looks and curt, short answers like, "Sorry, never wanted to get *that*," and "You better go ask 'Becky' because 'we' don't do that." ("Becky" is a code name for white women used frequently by black women.) I felt dirty or like a bedroom freak for wanting to go naked down low.

My theory: Brazilians strike my friends as "girly," a trait not typically associated with black women, who are raised to be strong, independent and tough—characteristics that have alienated some of our men. It surprised me to see my friends look down at my need to explore my femininity and curiosity.

After much frustration, I finally found a spa to do the deed called "Dashing Diva" (yes, it's in a mostly white neighborhood). Happy and hair-free, I felt like I'd been initiated into a secret club.

—MARYANN REID

"I'm a feminist, and I wax. So there!"

I was a wax virgin until the tender age of 30. On a business trip, a colleague and I had several hours to kill, and we were cruising a mall. She spotted a salon and said she needed a wax before an upcoming vacation. I figured, what the hell. Soon I was lying on my back with my skirt up over my waist, nervously giggling, afraid that it would hurt and a little embarrassed by the rather intimate position I was in. I shrieked when the waxer let 'er rip. Then I felt exhilarated by the clean, bare feeling. I was hooked.

More than having a birth-control stash or buying new underthings, my bikini line has become the true barometer of my love life. I wax when I'm in a hot relationship or when I'm hoping to be in one. For me, long hair there signifies too much time logged alone with the *Buffy* DVDs. I'm very moderate—just the edges, nothing that requires yoga positions—but as an outspoken feminist, I've had to defend even that amount of removal. I had a recent argument with one woman who claimed that waxing de facto translates to "hating your body" and that women do it only to please "piggish" men. She's fun.

I say that disliking one's errant hair is an equal-opportunity insecurity: Most men I know are pretty self-conscious about their back hair or the tufts that start springing from their ears and noses as they get older. I also think my desire to wax stems as much from my close readings of that feminist bible of sexual knowledge, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, as it does from any Pussy-eat Dolls influence. After all, not only does waxing get me in the head space to have sex, it actually *helps* sex. Less hair equals more contact with body parts that actually have nerve endings.

—JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER

For bikini-line grooming, think small: Noxzema Bikini Shaver (3 for \$3, at drugstores).

Glamour's guide to taking it off

A quick look at what's new in bikini-line grooming—whether you're baring a little or a lot

SHAVING

Cost: \$3 and up for a good pack of razors, plus refills.

Pros: You can't beat the convenience.

Cons: Stubble and nicks and bleeding, oh my!

Key tip: Use a one-blade razor, says New York City dermatologist Amy Wechsler, M.D. "Two or more blades may give a closer shave, but when coarse, curly bikini hair tries to push through skin, it can curl back in and become an ingrown."

WAXING

Cost: \$15 and up.

Pros: You're silky for about three weeks. And DIY is easier than ever, thanks to less-mess options like roll-on applicators.

Cons: Unsightly fuzz between sessions (you have to wait till hair is one-fourth-inch long to wax). And, ouch!

Key tip: Look for salons that do "sugaring," a procedure done with a paste typically made of sugar and honey. Devotees swear it's less painful because it's not as sticky.

DEPILATORY

Cost: About \$5 per bottle.

Pros: Cheap and simple. The latest come with plastic spatulas to wipe off goop and have pleasant scents like vanilla.

Cons: Hair grows back within three to four days. "And the chemicals can irritate skin," warns New York City cosmetologist Silver Cho. Do a patch test first.

Key tip: Skip shaving for at least three days before trying a depilatory; nicks only increase the odds of a bad reaction.

LASER

Cost: \$175-\$375 per session, depending on how much hair you want removed (package deals may cost less).

Pros: It's the most permanent hair removal around, and the pain—think rubber-band snaps—can decrease each time.

Cons: In general, laser's not as effective on blond hair. And dark-skinned women run the risk of overlightened or overdarkened patches.

Key tip: Don't do it immediately before or after your period starts, when skin is extra sensitive.

—ALIX LIGHT

DARRYL PATTERSON

"I laser it off"

I'm lying naked on a cold metal table as a technician beams lasers into my reproductive region. No, I'm not thinking about the potential long-term health consequences. Yes, I did sign a form waiving any right to sue if the chick in the lab coat singes my skin along with the hair I'm paying her to remove. And no, the four Advils I took an hour ago haven't done a thing for the searing pain.

What keeps me from running out the door is the same

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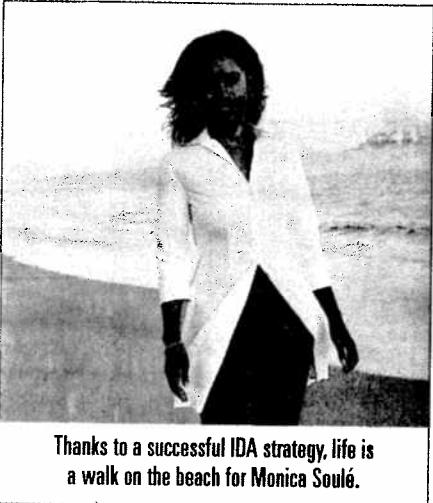
INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

An investor's starter kit

An IDA can help anyone begin saving regularly

Like many young professionals, Monica Soulé made a good salary and had a good eye for fashion. The Long Beach, California, resident lived a free spirited, shop-till-you-drop lifestyle that unfortunately didn't include much saving for her future. Luckily for

SAMMY DAVIS



Thanks to a successful IDA strategy, life is a walk on the beach for Monica Soulé.

her, she decided to make a change.

"One day I realized that if I continued at the rate that I was going, I wouldn't have a future for myself," says Soulé, a software trainer in the radio industry. "If I did ever get married, I wouldn't have anything to bring to the table and I would basically be a liability to any relationship that I was in."

To get on the right road to saving for her future, Soulé turned to Cory Chapman, president and CEO of the I.M.O.C. Group, a Los Angeles-based financial services firm. Chapman introduced Soulé to the Individual Development Account (IDA), an investment vehicle that encourages systematic saving and provides itemized statements that track spending habits.

"The IDA program is designed so a client can put money away into an account that usually yields a higher rate of return than a normal, regular checking or savings account," says Chapman. "On top of that, it gives them access to

brokerage accounts that allow them to invest in mutual funds, stocks, bonds, or money market accounts."

The entry point for an IDA can range from \$500 to \$10,000, depending on which financial institution you choose to open the account with. Soulé opened her account at I.M.O.C. four years ago with \$2,500 and monthly payments of \$250. After watching her money accumulate, she gradually increased her contributions to \$450 a month. Soulé proudly says that she has gone from no savings at all to \$20,000 since opening the IDA. Her account is invested mostly in mutual funds and has averaged a return of 14% a year.

Chapman says that an IDA should provide you with the following:

- A resource checking account linked to a money market account that provides a better rate of return than a regular savings account.
- Check writing privileges for paying bills.
- Itemized statements that track spending habits, capital gains, and dividends.
- A tax-coding feature that identifies potential deductions (crucial for the self-employed).
- An ATM or Visa card for the account.

The IDA's itemized statements were particularly helpful to Soulé, 30, because it let her see firsthand how her spending habits were depleting her savings. She says it really helped her change her spending tendencies. When she came to Chapman, she expressed that she wanted to save for a house and for her retirement. Now, she feels she is well on her way to reaching those goals. And another goal is on the horizon as well.

"I have finally met that special person in my life, and we have started talking about getting married," says Soulé with excitement. "I can't tell you what a feeling it is to actually have something to bring to the table and not have bills that I need a man to help me with."

—**MaryAnn Reid**

ASK B.E.

Books for beginners

Are there any books that I could purchase to help me understand the stock market and how it operates? I would like for this book to be easy enough for a sixth grader to understand.

—**O. Jackson**
Nashville, Tennessee

First, let me commend you for having the courage to actively seek help understanding the stock market. That's the first step to becoming a successful investor.

There are several books available for the novice investor. Any of these offerings can enhance your knowledge of the stock market, but you'll have to decide which book best suits the way you like to learn. We recommend *Investing for Dummies* by Eric Tyson (IDG Books Worldwide, \$19.99); *Getting Started in Stocks*, 3rd Edition by Alvin D. Hall (John Wiley & Sons Inc., \$19.95); and the *Black Enterprise Guide to Investing* by James A. Anderson (John Wiley & Sons Inc., \$19.95). Each of these books covers the basics of stocks and mutual funds.

I would also encourage you to read the financial pages of your local newspaper and pick up the *Wall Street Journal* or *Investor's Business Daily*. Start off slowly, but begin applying your book knowledge in the real world of investing, making sure you've grasped the concepts and principles presented in the books. You might also want to visit www.blackenterprise.com or www.fool.com (The Motley Fool) to pick up tips on investing. As you become more familiar with investing terms, your knowledge of investing should increase. In our November issue, we will cover this subject in "Investing 101," the first part of a series on investing.

—**Matthew S. Scott**

Mail your finance questions to Ask B.E., BLACK ENTERPRISE, 130 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011, or send an e-mail to scottm@blackenterprise.com.



Matthew S. Scott

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