

A Computer Operation

David Swimmer

THE FURIOUS debate was one of the few things that has ever out-played the juke box at the C-Club for pure sound.
"It works!"

"Are you kidding? That survey is a waste of time and money!"

"But it works!"

"Then there's only one way to find out, big mouth, and can you guess what that is?"

I had done it again. I was extolling the innovation of the new computerized dating system, about which I really knew precious little, and now I had talked myself into the position of parting with three whole dollars to prove my point.

The mailbox was under my constant surveillance until the form was returned. If a machine was going to pick women for me, then I wanted to meet them first. Practically every night of those three long weeks that I waited, I had terrible nightmares. I would casually ring the doorbell, flowers in hand, and then grin ecstatically at whatever pulled open the door. In those interminable weeks I dreamed I'd dated at least six werewolves, four gargoyles, a "girl" I actually was fixed up with once, and my kid sister. It was a trying time, indeed.

But I re-enacted the first part of the dream as I checked out my first "computer prospect." The doorbell rang, and I held my breath in anticipation as the product of the machine's choice answered the bell.

Shocked as I was, I have never seen a more beautiful creature. My heart started pounding like a runaway IBM machine; and it seemed almost as if she could tell it, for her steely-gray eyes lit up as I entered the room. She wore a dark, full-length gown that night, crossed with shimmering buttons. She stood still as a tender doe while, with some temerity, I walked over to shake her hand. Here was something truly undreamed of.

"How do you do," she finally sighed in a gorgeous alto, "I am very glad to meet you . . . to meet you . . . to meet you . . . to meet you . . ."