

THE BAY CITY TIMES

8-minute dating coming to Bay City

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Times Writer

Valentine's Day is fast approaching. Do you have a date? How about eight minutes?

Popular in larger cities like Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids, 8 Minute Dating makes its debut in Bay City on Monday, thanks to Liliانا Hintz, who co-owns Nino's Family Restaurant with husband, Ron, and Anna Olshove, event assistant for the restaurant.

The two women decided to bring 8 Minute Dating to the restaurant after hearing that a couple of female customers were heading to Grand Rapids to give this latest dating fad a try.

Then she read a story in The Bay City Times by copy editor Wendy Holmes, who took part in such an event in Ann Arbor last March. The story gave Hintz the information she needed to contact the company and get set up.

Hintz said the concept of helping people find the perfect mate matches Nino's romantic reputation - a number of proposals have happened at the Columbus Avenue eatery.

But the way to the altar has to start somewhere and on Monday night, the restaurant may nudge some along the way.

The idea of 8 Minute Dating is simple. A group of men and women, in this case 10 men, 10 women ages 40 to 55, gather at 6:30 p.m. at Nino's restaurant and start dating. Each date lasts eight minutes, and each participant gets the chance to chat with eight different people.

There are a few rules. Each person is required to register online at 8minuteDating.com, and follow the instructions. Some late registrations will be taken at the restaurant with a credit card only.

Once there, participants are given a number and a card to record the first name (only) and number of their dates. Participants then rotate tables.

They are also given a list of questions to help break the ice, such as hometowns how you like to spend your time.

Using the information card, participants check whether they would like a second date, a friendship or would like to get together for business purposes. The information is put into the computer. No contact information may be given out during the dates.

The computer then matches up those who checked the same categories. For instance, if two people checked friendship, the computer will give out the contact information. If one person checks friendship while the other checks second date, they will not be matched up.

Olshove suggests if someone finds someone they are really interested in, they should check all three boxes to give them a better chance to be matched. However, if that other someone doesn't check any boxes, the computer won't set up a match.

Besides the dating event scheduled for Monday, Hintz and Olshove have 8 Minute Dating events for

30- to 40-year-olds on Jan. 16, 45- to 55-year-olds meet Jan. 30 and 35- to 45-year-olds are invited to a cupid's party on Feb. 6.

The cost of Monday's event is \$35 and includes hors d'oeuvres. A cash bar is available as well.

If a participant fails to match up with someone, the next event is free.

Once the dating is over, those attending are welcome to stay for dancing.

Hintz says the most important rule is just relax and have fun with it.

"Be open to meeting the right person," she said. "You have more chances to find a date in eight minutes than you have going to a bar eight times."

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