

# Weekend POST

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2001



## PEOPLE

Jason Rouse's new television show *Comedy Now!* is raunchy, risqué and so bizarre you may wonder why you're falling off your chair with laughter.

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## HEALTH & BEAUTY

Goodbye, anorexia. Hello, six-pack. Today's fashionable body is flat with well-defined abs. So how many sit-ups will it take before you, too, can bare your belly?

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## FOOD & DRINK

On Valentine's Day, surprise your Perfect Partner with double-chocolate brownies, homemade chocolate truffles or creamy hot chocolate.

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## STYLE

Does she wear denim and Dockers? Or pearls and pooches? The perfect attire for *The Perfect Woman* is all in the eye of the smitten beholder.

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## TELEVISION

She lived a rollercoaster life of depression and drugs, but Carrie Fisher is having the last laugh with some very special women and a TV movie called *These Old Broads*.

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## KIDS

When David Armstrong plays tricks on his friends, they don't really mind. The 11-year-old is a magician who already has a few performances under his hat.

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What do men want?  
A partner who would never  
mess around with another guy.  
A wife who is a wonderful  
mom. A paragon who is happy,  
smart and well-educated.  
And if she looks like Sophia  
Loren, so much the better.

## THE PERFECT WOMAN

See Page 7



In front of the camera or behind the camera.  
A film that makes you look good.



Sunlight. Low Light. Fast Action. It's all you need to know about film.



**Brad Fraser**, playwright "The Perfect Woman is more glamorous than Catherine Zeta-Jones, spunkier than Julia Roberts and smarter (and less evil) than Hillary Clinton. She works to bring the Amazonian message of peace and harmony to humanity; she resorts to violence only as a last resort; she owns an invisible robot plane that flies at supersonic speeds. She is, of course, the one and only Wonder Woman — who exists in the only way The Perfect Woman can exist. In fiction."



**Stephen Grant**, divorce lawyer, McCarthy T. Trault

"These choices are a distant second because I can't afford to make my wife or daughter upset. I know this is more beauty-oriented and I have no idea if these women are smart, but my choices are a toss-up between European actresses Anouk Aimée and Irène Jacob."



KOBAL COLLECTION / PARAMOUNT



# THE PERFECT WOMAN

In the search for their one and only, men prefer women with a magical 0.7 waist-to-hip ratio. More important, she must be faithful, a great mother, smart, and have the emotional stability and intelligence not to let him get away with anything. Now that's gotta be love.

Cary Grant and Sophia Loren in the 1958 movie Houseboat

BY ANTONY ANDERSON

She is out there. And so we hunt — instinctively, consciously, casually, compulsively — on dance floors, in fast-food line-ups, at bank machines, in the dentist's chair and at funerals. Because we know she is out there. And she knows we are looking. She expects nothing less. My own wife-to-be has, at certain times in her life, been someone's Siren, someone's Perfect Woman. She tells me, with stark clarity, "The Perfect Woman has a ruthless understanding of the sexual economy. Intuitively or through experience, she understands that scarcity increases value. The Perfect Woman is unattainable, out of reach. She knows that men need to climb mountains. If The Perfect Woman were easy to get, she would be ordinary. She would be The Wife. The woman you wake up to every morning can never be perfect."

I remind her she will soon be The Wife and she replies, "Who wants to be on a pedestal her whole life? I'm tired of the chase. It's boring. I want a real connection. I want to be loved and accepted with all my flaws. I want to be truly seen, not just blindly admired."

Happily, we hunters eventually get fed up with blind admiration and chasing illusions. At different ages, moved by an infinite array of circumstances, we start to seek out a real flesh and blood woman who will adhere to the most important characteristics set out in the *Weekend Post/Compas Inc.* poll: be totally faithful to us while tucking the kids into bed, smile and laugh a lot, perhaps during an intelligent, knowledgeable chat about personal finances.

The search for our ideal woman is fused with our collective biological inheritance. U.S. psychologist David Buss, between 1984 and 1989, surveyed 10,000 people over six continents and 37 cultures, asking them what they wanted in their mates. His book, *Evolution of Desire*, sums up his findings thus: "Men worldwide want physically attractive, young and sexually loyal wives who will remain faithful until death ... [these qualities] are universal across cultures and are absent in none. They are deeply ingrained evolved psychological mechanisms that drive our mating decisions."

Brigitte Casper runs Speed Dating Toronto, a singles service that matches men and women by age. Casper confirms another truth about male desire: "They want a young girl once they get to 40, and they'll lie about their age. I'm checking their ID. I'm carding the older groups. The 40-plus guys insist on being in the 30 to 40 group. The girls don't want it. I tell the 40-plus guys, 'Sorry you have to be in the 40-plus group.' They reply, 'I'm 45 and I still want to have kids. You can't tell me who to date and I don't want to date a 45-year-old woman.' It's really a bit frustrating." Casper's husband James, who co-founded speed dating in New York, regards many modern men with dismay: "We are in the Seinfeldism era — not so good-looking guys are dating supermodels and we respect them. And all men make Seinfeld their hero: the bachelor who stays young continuously and makes a million dollars an episode. And that's why you have 45-year-old guys driving sports cars and not getting married."

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## What do men really want? Curves and comfort

Last week, as part of our investigation into what women look for in The Perfect Man, we presented some of the findings from the *Weekend Post/Compas Inc.* poll, which surveyed a cross-section of 400 Canadians about what they look for in the perfect partner.

This week, as our gaze shifts to The Perfect Woman, we offer further insights gleaned from that poll.

To recap, respondents were asked to rank 16 characteristics (faithfulness, money management, success on the job, physical attractiveness, etc.) on a 7-point scale. The numbers were crunched and a mean score was computed for each of the attributes we asked about. You'll find the ranking for both The Perfect Man and The Perfect Woman on Page 9.

The rankings give a good consensus snapshot of desirable qualities in a perfect mate. But they don't necessarily capture the No. 1 indispensable qualities men and women seek in each other.

To get a handle on that, after the Compas researchers had asked the respondents to rate each characteristic, they asked each person to single out the most and least essential characteristics in The Perfect Partner.

The winning attributes?

The top essential characteristics are faithfulness, good humour (the person smiles and laughs a lot) and a good education.

The least essential characteristics — according to both men and women — are shared ethnicity, shared religious views and (surprise) a good-looking body.

In its report, Compas observes, "If the power of religion is gauged by what Canadians seek in a perfect mate, then it appears as if religion has both won and lost. Canadians embrace the age-old verities inspired by religion while at the same time deeming religious belief, and ethnicity, to be less important than virtually all other possible characteristics in a prospective spouse."

Samples of this size are deemed accurate to within 5 percentage points 19 times out of 20. (In this poll, the margin of error is larger because francophones were over-sampled to permit an exploration of possible English-French differences, though no significant variances came to light.)

### CURVED ROAD AHEAD

Men were asked to rate on a 7-point scale whether their Perfect Woman had "well-proportioned curves," was "curvaceous and voluptuous" or had a "relatively straight body like a magazine model." The first group trumped the other two with a mean score of 4.9 (34% scoring 6-7) as compared with respective mean scores of 4.3 (23% scored 6-7) and 3.4 (7% scoring 6-7).



Sarah McLachlan-type	34%
Pamela Anderson-type	23%
Calista Flockhart-type	7%

### WAITTILL YOUR FATHER GETS HOME

We asked men and women whether they would rather their Perfect Partner be an excellent lover or an excellent parent. Though Canadians clearly value sex, they prefer by two to one an excellent parent over an excellent lover as a spouse. True to fashion, women are much more so inclined. They favour an excellent parent over an excellent lover by a ratio of three to one.

	Overall	Male	Female
Excellent parent	63%	53%	73%
Excellent lover	32	40	23
No opinion	5	7	4

### HONEY, HAVE YOU GOT A LIGHT?

We asked men and women whether they would prefer a partner with past sexual experience or someone who comes to the relationship with relatively little experience. In keeping with their greater conservatism, women have a slightly greater preference for a spouse with relatively little sexual experience.

Interestingly, non-smokers have a greater preference for a partner with relatively little sexual experience (49% among non-smokers versus 38% among smokers).

	Overall	Male	Female
Little sexual experience	45%	40%	49%
Past sexual experience	35	37	34
No opinion	20	23	17

### FACING THE FACTS

We asked respondents whether their Perfect Man or Perfect Woman would have an ordinary face and an extraordinary body or an extraordinary face and an ordinary body? Both men and women agree that they would much prefer a beautiful face to a beautiful body.

	Overall	Male	Female
Extraordinary face, ordinary body	57%	57%	57%
Ordinary face, extraordinary body	29	28	30
No opinion	14	15	13

### DEEP POCKETS OR PURSE?

While Canadian men adhere to centuries-old notions of a desirable height difference in couples, they reject to a considerable degree centuries-old notions of the male as the predominant engine of economic achievement.

On average, Canadians believe the man in the marriage ought to be responsible for earning 57.6% of the couple's joint income.

Men and women largely agree on this — except for a tiny vestige of historical male economic supremacy. Among men, the mean percent is 58.1%, versus 57.2% for women.

	Overall	Male	Female
How much should the man contribute to a couple's joint income?	57.6%	58.1%	57.2%



