

GINGER EMAS makes a date with success

College Football FLASHBACK

ACUPUNCTURE Does it really work?

Coastal cuisine without the drive



BY TOM SPIGOLON
■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE JACOBY

Ginger Emas recalls the range of emotions she went through as her 12-year marriage ended.

"I think I was lonely in my marriage — at times, not throughout the whole thing. But when it's not the right relationship I think people can feel lonely and I was certainly one of those toward the end."

Emas, a Dunwoody freelance writer, was a single mom in her mid-40s and was considering the next step in her personal life. "Certainly the ways that I felt were scared and relieved," she recalled. "The scary part I think sometimes is, not necessarily anything to do with men or dating, but your life now."

For about eight months, she worked on rediscovering herself — what she liked doing, catching up with old friends. Then she re-entered the dating scene — and found it had changed considerably since the 1980s and early 1990s.

Her often humorous experiences with it, and the experiences of dozens like her, are recounted in Emas' new book, "Back on Top: Fearless Dating After Divorce" (Globe Pequot Press).

The book was released earlier this year and is available at Barnes and Noble, Waldenbooks and A capella bookstores; and online from borders.com, amazon.com, tower.com, and barnesandnoble.com. Links to locations for purchase are on Emas' book Web site www.backontopthebook.com. She also recently created an online community for women "braving the dating world again": www.fearlessdatingafterdivorce.com.

She has been interviewed on local TV and radio shows nationwide. She has hosted book signings in St. Louis and Atlanta — including hosting a modernized version of the 1960s game show "The Dating Game" at one stop. More signings are planned this fall in Florida and Boston.

Emas, who is still single but involved in a serious relationship, went on 87 first dates over a two-year period — fewer than one a week and most for walks or coffee, she notes.

However, the book tells of her "fearless" pursuit of re-entering the dating world — engaging in such events as "lock and key parties" — which, despite their name, were merely another, fun way of meeting members of the opposite sex, she said.

In the parties, an even number of men and women participate.

Men are given keys, women given necklaces with locks attached, and men must ask if the keys fit the locks. If they do match, the winning couple can win door prizes — as well as meet each other.

She also tells about her now two-year foray into the relatively new world of online dating — recent estimates are about 40 million people are dating online — and gives advice on how to do it right and wrong.

Emas interviewed more than 100 people — most of them women — for the book.

She also puts her own spin on various aspects of her post-divorce adventure, and includes often-humorous anecdotes from others' experiences and her own.

"They're laughing at my expense," she said.

For example, her first date on one dating Web site promised he could dance. The fact he could not dance was one she learned

the hard way when, on his lead, they hit the floor in front of numerous others at a formal affair.

She said one of her purposes in writing the book was providing a little humor to women while giving them some facts and advice for their new life.

There is no time frame for dating again after divorce, though Emas said experts generally recommend at least one year before dating "seriously."

"During that year is a good time to put that energy into yourself," Emas said. "You're a different 'you' by yourself."

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