

**TOP TV TONIGHT**



**'Modern Family'**

ABC, 9 p.m.

"Our Children, Ourselves": Alex's dedication to learning makes Claire and Phil question themselves; Gloria tries to make new friends; Mitch runs into an ex-girlfriend while out with Cam.

**'Top Chef'**

Bravo, 10 p.m.

"We're Gonna Need a Bigger Boat": The chefs must fish for their own ingredients.

**BOOK REVIEW**

**Dating for science: A memoir about modern dating**

By **Andrea Shiell**

Special to *The Washington Examiner*

If Nietzsche was right, and "hell is other people," then the world of modern dating can seem like a weird game show hosted by some mad social scientist from a studio in hell. At least that's how single people on bad dates can feel when they are either bored or baffled by the person sitting across the table from them.

Local writer Rachel Machacek, 37, begins her book, "The Science of Single: One Woman's Grand Experiment in Modern Dating, Creating Chemistry, and Finding Love," with one such dreary dating tale about a man who spent most of his night with her yawning and avoiding conversation before literally running away from her at the end of the night.

"It was kind of a last straw," she admitted, going on to explain that her frustrations with being single had built up after a few failed relationships, and the "running man" had literally been her first date since deciding to dip once again into the D.C. dating pool.

Whether driven by inspiration or desperation, Machacek decided to explore the world of dating in detail for her first book, which hit bookstores Jan. 4, and chronicles a year in which she literally dated for science, going out with more than 60 men, all found using various means, including online dating and matchmaking sites, singles and speed-dating events, and even self-help books.

More than proving any hypothesis, Machacek threw herself into exploring some of today's more pressing dating questions: Are matchmaking sites (which do the matching for you as opposed to letting you choose potential partners) better than personals sites? Does speed dating actually work? Would you recognize your very own Prince Charming if you met him in a chat room?

"I also did volunteering with a singles group and I had friends set me up on blind dates ... and I also signed up with a dating coach," she said, "all to find out if any combination of these efforts could really start a successful romance.

Machacek manages to capture her search for companionship and the spirit of the local singles scene with rare insight and an eye for those random-yet-rich details that put the reader in her shoes as she ambles about D.C. singles events and the weird world of online courtship (where you're never quite sure if the profile matches the person), trying to see if her forays into all our modern meet-up mediums could land her in a loving relationship.

All throughout this funny saga is



COURTESY PHOTO

Author Rachel Machacek's book chronicles a year in which she literally dated for science, going out with more than 60 men, all found using various means, including online dating and matchmaking sites, singles and speed-dating events, and even self-help books.

the strain of inevitable failure, however, since finding someone could prove problematic as long as she's just dating for science — even if it's in a decidedly unscientific way. But would she end her experiment — and her book deal as well — to be faithful to a newfound love? Or would she press on for more answers to her unresolved questions? And could this experiment sabotage what may

be its most rewarding outcome — a relationship?

She may never have been quite sure how to answer these questions during her experiment, which didn't end with her skipping down the aisle with her very own Prince Charming. But Machacek said her experience writing the book helped her revise her own expectations about romance, and it ultimately

**READ THIS**

**'The Science of Single: One Woman's Grand Experiment in Modern Dating, Creating Chemistry, and Finding Love'**

» Author: Rachel Machacek  
 » Publisher: Penguin Books  
 » Price: \$15



made dating more fun for her. It also gave her some more great questions to write about, which, along with her humorously relatable dating anecdotes, makes for a great read.

**TELEVISION**

**'Castle,' 'Cougar Town' among 6 ABC renewals**

**PASADENA, CALIF.** — Fans of "Castle," "Cougar Town" and four other ABC TV series can rest easy: The network says the shows will be coming back next season.

"Grey's Anatomy," "The Middle," "Modern Family" and "Private Practice" are the other shows given an early pickup for another year, ABC announced Monday.

But the fates of "Desperate Housewives," "Brothers & Sisters" and "Detroit 1-8-7" remain unsettled, ABC Entertainment Group President Paul Lee told the Television Critics Association.

He lauded the three series' quality but signaled that ratings are the issue as he decides on their return for the 2011-12 season.

It's premature to discuss new shows being developed for next year, Lee said, although he mentioned a series from ABC mainstay Shonda Rhimes. Rhimes is the executive producer of ABC's "Grey's Anatomy," "Private Practice" and the midseason entry "Off the Map."

Rhimes told critics the series is about a D.C. "professional fixer," and is inspired by a real-life crisis management consultant, Judy Smith, who shepherds people through difficulties. Monica Lewinsky has been among her clients.

Lee, who came to the network after heading ABC Family and has been on the job five months, said he views the ABC brand as combining "smart with heart," offering shows that are "culturally defining, smart, big-tent aspirational television." — AP

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