

# Dating success may relate to symmetry, not savvy

By BRIAN VASTAG  
Special to The Battalion

In a laboratory version of "The Dating Game," Dr. Jeffrey Simpson is finding that how heterosexual men go after a date depends on how symmetrical they are.

"The more symmetrical men are more aggressive, bolder," Simpson, a psychology professor at Texas A&M University, said.

"They will tell the woman that they are the right man to date, and even put down their competitor."

Conversely, men who have less symmetry are "more accommodating to the woman."

"They tend to use tactics like looking for common interests. They aren't such hard sells."

Simpson starts each round of the dating lab test by measuring

the right-left symmetry of a group of men.

Using ankle and knuckle width, finger length, and even earlobe size, he comes up with a single "symmetry index" for each subject.

Then he pits a man with a high index against one with a low index.

The unwitting subjects think they are competing for a real date with an attractive woman. Simpson said this ensures that their real dating styles emerge.

Since Simpson has only run the test with heterosexual men, it is unknown if other men and women have similar symmetry-dating tactics differences.

So why does symmetry matter? "The symmetrical men are more confident. They have had more dating success and report having had more sexual partners,"

Simpson said. Symmetrical men may be more confident and have more dating

**"The symmetrical men are more confident."**

Dr. Jeffrey Simpson  
psychology professor

success because they are perceived as more attractive. Research by University of New Mexico psychologist Steve Gangestad and others supports this idea.

According to Gangestad's studies, symmetrical people are perceived as more attractive than their less symmetrical counterparts.

There are two possible reasons for this, Gangestad said.

One is that symmetrical objects including faces, take less time and effort to perceive. So looking at a symmetrical face really is easier on the eyes. Or at least the brain.

The other possible explanation has evolutionary roots.

"In the ancestral world, where disease killed 30-50 percent of people, it was important to mate with someone who was resistant to disease," Gangestad said.

Since healthier people are more symmetrical than those with a history of disease, Gangestad said, finding a symmetrical mate meant

having healthier children.

Healthier children meant a better chance for survival of the species. Survival of the species is the goal of evolution.

So the preference for symmetry — which meant healthier children and a better chance for survival — may have been hard-wired into people over thousands of generations.

Gangestad said that more research is needed before either theory becomes accepted.

As for Simpson's research, do not start measuring yourself yet, men: it's the relative differences in symmetry that count.

You would have to compare yourself to a lot of men who are about the same age to know where you fall on the symmetry-dating tactics scale.

# Wolves run wild with remarkable recovery

IRON RIVER, Mich. (AP) — For centuries the gray wolf thrived in the forests of the Upper Great Lakes, revered by aboriginal tribes as spiritual kin.

Then came European settlers, whose cultural heritage abounded with fairy tales depicting wolves as evil.

Enraged by attacks on livestock, encouraged by government bounties, they nearly drove the wolf to extinction. By 1973, only six were believed to remain in Michigan's north woods.

Now the wolf is making what biologists consider a remarkably strong recovery, thanks to migration and strict protection laws. Equally pleasing to scientists, many residents are welcoming the creature back to an area where once it was routinely shot on sight.

"It's really an incredible story," said Jim Hammill, wildlife biologist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. "They were almost hunted and hounded

out of existence, and now they've come back of their own accord. And people are allowing them to survive."

A 1990 survey and public meetings three years later showed overwhelming support for the return of the gray wolf, also known as the Eastern timber wolf, the department says.

Some farmers worry that wolves will pursue calves and lambs if cold winters decimate the population of their favorite prey — whitetail deer.

"If they start harming my animals, I intend to do something about it whether I have the DNR's permission or not," Chippewa County cattle farmer Bruce Berkompas said.

Aware of such concerns, DNR director K.L. Cool in December approved a wolf recovery plan developed by a team of state and federal wildlife officials. Among other things, it promises quick investigations of suspected livestock kills.

# Man uncovers mammoth jaw

LAKE JACKSON (AP) — Amateur artifact hunter Brian Miles says he watches the ground whenever he walks anywhere. You never know when you will find an arrowhead or an ancient sea shell ...

Or the jawbone of a 10,000-year-old woolly mammoth.

That was the fossilized jackpot that Miles, 36, and his dad stumbled upon during a hunt near Bay City last Saturday.

Remains of woolly mammoths — giant prehistoric mammals the size of elephants that roamed the earth after the dinosaurs — are not uncommon in southeastern Texas, said John Temple, director of volunteers at the Museum of Natural Science in Houston.

"You don't find them every day, but you do find them," Temple said.

But the jawbone represents "the find of a lifetime" for Miles, whose eyes still glow like a lottery winner's as he describes himself and his father spotting artifact as it lay in a muddy creekbed, just uncovered by recent rains.

"I guess I'd always dreamed of finding a tooth with some bone around it," Miles said. He added, "Something so large and intact, it's not something you find every day."

Miles' father, Brad, said he and his son spent two hours digging up the dirt around the jawbone. They used a garden trowel and a pocket knife because they had not expected to find something so large, he added.

Brad Miles also said that his son — for whom arti-

fact hunting has been somewhere between a hobby and an addiction since age 9 — "had to dig for a while and then stand off and look at it."

When they finally got it out, they broke the jaw in half so they could lug the 80-90 pounds of wet, muddy, deteriorating bone back to the car, which was parked a mile and a half away.

"As you picked it up, you could feel the bones were soft and eroding away," Brad Miles said.

His son added, "It was like carrying a baby."

A few years back, Brian Miles also found several pieces of fossilized bone and pieced them into a woolly mammoth's leg bone. He said he got interested in artifacts as a kid when he began collecting arrowheads.

He and his father have become so dedicated, in fact, that they braved mud and snakes on Saturday to see what washed up after the rains.

Ren Miles, Brian Miles' wife, said she understands her husband's pastime, though she doesn't necessarily share it.

"I don't like to sit out there for too long, and I don't like the snakes," she said. "But it is really neat when you find things."

Brian Miles explained the attraction this way — "You're finding something that's been there for thousands of years that's never been touched," he said. "You're seeing it for the first time and it's in perfect condition. You sit there and wonder, what was this guy like?"

## BRIEF

### Scientists 'hairless'

WASHINGTON (AP) — have discovered a gene a rare and extreme form a finding they say could to better remedies hereditary baldness.

Researchers found appropriately named the studying a Pakistani for generations by an of alopecia universalis, born without eyelashes, quickly lose the hair head and never grow

It's a far cry from mon male pattern sends millions of men growth drugs or toupees

Because the hairless, it provides a understanding hair grow lead researcher Angela Columbia University, said.

### Botanists journey for

WASHINGTON (AP) — have successfully hunt for the gene that in plants, a finding that applications ranging from manufacturing to better

Cellulose is the plant cells and the abundant biopolymer vast: Cellulose is an etary fiber; it helps withstand wear and the very thin paper of strong enough for heat

But for all the industrial cellulose, nobody knew make it.

Now, Richard Williams leagues at Australian university report in Friday the journal Science called RSW1 synthase zyme responsible for production.

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In order to receive an application, you MUST attend either informational. Doors will close at 5:35 p.m. No exceptions will be made at that time. If you foresee a problem, please contact Lindsay Harris or Rick Hall at the Muster desk, 862-1191, by February 4.

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