

# Getting the upper hand at the matrimonial 'controls'

By Paul Joly  
NC News Service

Marriage would be easy if you didn't have to live together. Not that I want to talk anybody out of getting married. It's the best idea my wife and I ever had, even though it took us eight years to make up our minds.

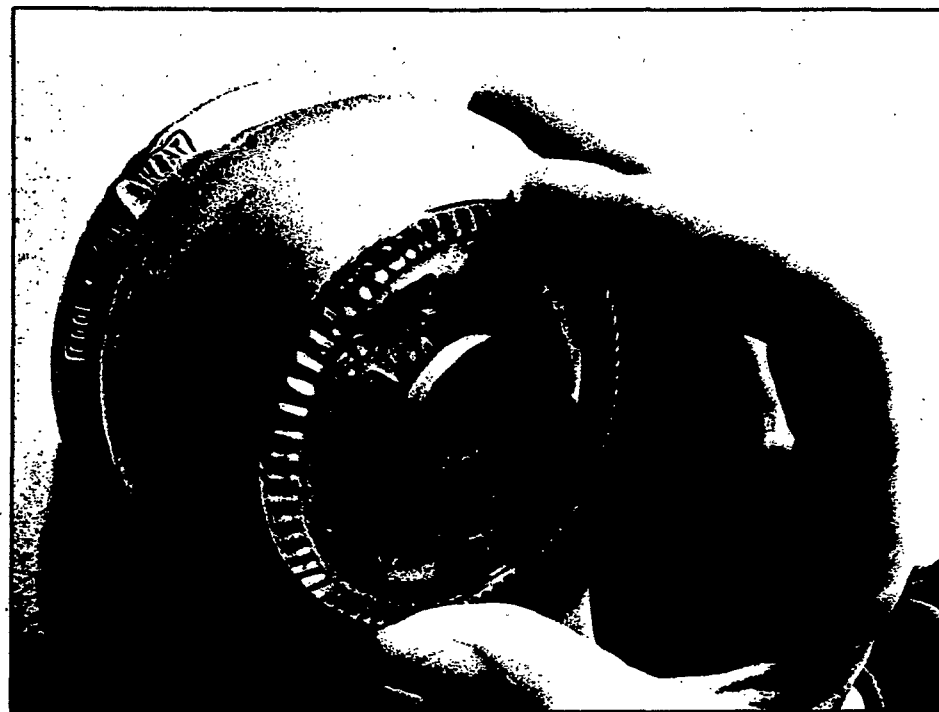
Everybody knows marriages don't last like they used to. I'm not a psychologist, but I know why. Today's marriages are hit by the double whammy of thermostatic incompatibility and remote dementia.

Thermostatic incompatibility can put a quick chill on marital bliss. The most visible sign is a worn furnace control. In cold weather, she sets the thermostat at 75; he comes home and knocks it down to 65. In the summer, she puts the air conditioner at 65; he cranks it up to 75. It becomes a lifelong battle of wrists.

He can't understand why she wants to be cold in summer and hot in winter. From her view, she shouldn't have to shiver and sweat just so Mr. Metermiser can have the lowest utility bill on the block.

Previous generations of couples have somehow managed to live with thermostatic incompatibility. For today's couple, the escalating phenomenon of remote dementia compounds the struggle.

Put a remote-controlled television in a household already strained by thermostatic



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incompatibility and the prospects for a happy marriage become dismal.

Any real man who gets his fingers on a remote-control channel changer knows in-

stinctively how to use it. Women don't. The proper way to use a TV remote is to watch five programs at once by flipping from channel to channel every 30 seconds. A good

percentage of females become irrationally hostile whenever their husbands take over the the controls. These women suffer from remote dementia.

All the other problems seem trivial next to thermostatic incompatibility and remote dementia.

His mall-ophobia (fear of shopping) and her buying compulsion are nothing in comparison. Yes, his flannel fixation is embarrassing, when he wears the same shirt around the house for so long that even the dog starts to make funny faces.

That's nothing, he says, compared to her coupon frenzy. The brightly colored paper scraps are everywhere. He says at least they'll be ready if the Mets ever show up on their street expecting a ticker tape parade.

He makes fun of her annoying habits, and she laughs at all the stupid things he does. I've heard that prayer keeps a lot of couples together, but humor also works wonders.

Getting married is the most serious decision you make, but you can't take love very seriously. Remember to laugh at the most inappropriate moments of your life. It's the best way to keep each other off-guard, and you'll also find it works to get rid of boring house guests.

Yes, marriage would be easy if you didn't have to live together, but then there would be no challenge.

## Love lights

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United States. The total number of years represented by the collected proclamations exceeded the one million mark that year.

The 1985 theme, "Two Gather as One," represented the unity of married couples, their families, their faith communities and the world at large. That year, a search for the nation's longest-married couple was conducted in parishes and cities throughout the United States. Mr. and Mrs. Hong Yen Wong of New York City qualified, with 81 years of shared marital bliss between them.

In 1986, the celebration's theme was "Reflections of Love" — both married love and God's love. "Love Lights the World" was the event's 1987 theme.

"We will continue to seek greater support from our Church, both on a national and diocesan level," said members of the national movement's planning committee. "We will continue to romance Congress with the hope of eventually receiving a national proclamation, and we will continue to look to the media ... for support as we persistently and patiently continue our efforts to make World Marriage Day as publicly significant and accepted as Mother's Day and Father's Day."

Coordinators for the 1987 Rochester observance of World Marriage Day were Rick and Jo Ann Scheffer.

## Marriage rite

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have so many choices within the ceremony, Father Mull observes. How much each couple uses the options, he says, "depends on how much encouragement they receive in pre-Cana."

"A good majority" of couples chooses at least some of the options, he adds, while a minority selects them all.

With proper guidance, couples may even write parts of their ceremonies, says Father Mull. He mentions couples that have written their own communion meditations and/or conclusions of the service. Often, couples will also rewrite the Prayer of the Faithful to make it more personal, he adds.

Father Mull notes there are certain parts of the ceremony that must be included to ensure validity. In conclusion, however, the important thing for engaged couples to be aware of is that they do have a number of options that will make their own wedding ceremony special and memorable.

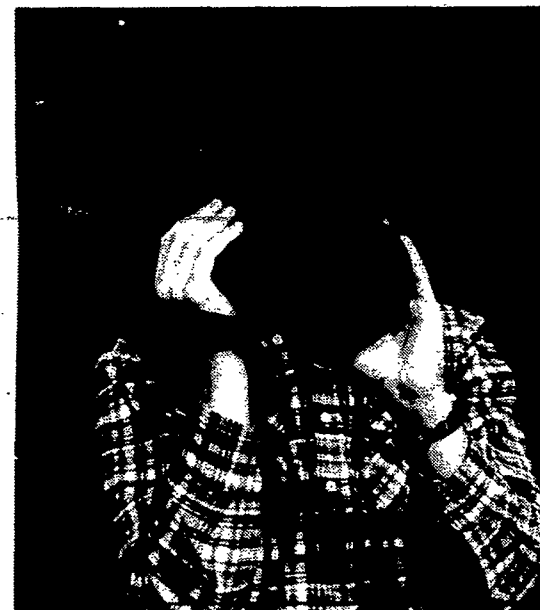


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