

A singular outlook

B EING a singleton, as Bridget Jones refers to her unmarried friends, isn't always as sublime as it might be.

Especially during this time of year. You think you've survived another solo New Year's Eve only to realize that Valentine's Day is looming and you have to somehow get through that, too.

Then, there are the serious issues that unmarried people face, like having to foot more than their share of health-care costs. And, of course, there's societal pressure. *What's a nice gal like you still doing single? Are you being too picky?* Even though half of all Americans these days may be divorced, widowed or single, being unhitched past a certain age still conjures up images of spinsterhood or worse.

Enter the new Web site singleedition.com. Unlike most other Internet sites that cater to singles, this one isn't so much about finding that special someone as it is about embracing life as it is. So, instead of offering up profiles of potential suitors, there's information about single-sized servings of Green Giant frozen vegetables (wish I'd known about *that* when I was single) and post-divorce survival tips for men. In other words, this is a site that doesn't look at being uncoupled as a situation that needs to be remedied, but one that should be celebrated.

"I think there are more assumptions about single people. There's less respect," said Sherri Langburt, 35, who launched singleedition.com on Dec. 1. "You're more validated if you're divorced than if you're 42 and never married. Look at all the corporate events where you're invited with a spouse."

Ironically, Langburt married five months ago, but she's quick to point out that "I was single for most of my adult life."

Although she strug-

gled with the concept early on, eventually Langburt mastered the art of single living, even traveling the world by herself. (Once, she said, she couldn't get table-service dining in Spain because the waitstaff assumed she was a prostitute.) She also became comfortable attending parties and other events solo.

"It doesn't have to be forever. But if it's for now, at least live it positively," Langburt said. "Travel by yourself. Take courses by yourself . . . Pursue your passion. Start a business. Buy a home."

The timing couldn't be better for a site such as Single Edition. According to an analysis by the *New York Times* last year, the number of married households in America has declined and the majority of households are now headed by single people. The paper reported that in 2005, a little less than half — 49.7 percent — of the nation's 111.1 million households were headed by married people.

"Being single is not something that has to be fixed," said Melissa Galt, who bristles at those who bemoan her single status. "It's a choice. If I'd wanted, I could be married with six kids. If someone wants to be married that badly, they can find someone to marry them."

"I'm 44 and I've been single for as many years," said Galt, an interior decorator who calls herself a "lifestyle diva" (www.melissagalt.com).

"There's no sense in waiting for somebody else to complete you or make you happy." ★

Have you peeped a hot trend that hasn't been reported? E-mail heyjen@phillynews.com and let me know what you know.



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Sherri Langburt (above) launched singleedition.com