



INSIDE TODAY: The truth about onions is nothing to cry about ■ Wife will never measure up ■ Sunday puzzles ■ Wedding and engagement announcements

## People watching in Atlanta is a big-league deal

We spent a long weekend in Atlanta, and let me tell you there's some great people-watching to be had there. It's a game we've played for years and there are several different ways to play it.

One version is the married vs. dating game. For some reason, you can just look at a couple and pretty much figure out if they're dating or married and usually for how long.

At restaurants, you can spot first dates right way. There's usually that awkwardness as both parties use their menus like shields to hide behind. Just as easy to pick out are the newly married or seriously dating. They're the ones who are oblivious to everyone around them except each other.

Then there are the longtime couples who don't have to keep the conversation going every second while they enjoy their food.

At the mall, the game becomes spotting the Most Miserable Guy. His slumped shoulders and face say it all: "I'd so much rather be home watching ESPN than being here right now."

Christmas Eve takes the fun to a whole new level with the search for the Most Clueless Guy. You know, the one who waited until the last minute to get anything for his wife or girlfriend.

A guy's true colors really come through as the clock ticks down to Christmas morning. It's the ones with cell phones glued to their ears that you have to worry the most about. You can just imagine those conversations: "But I couldn't find it. I looked everywhere.



**WILL MACDONALD**  
Columnist

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### GOOD TO KNOW

#### Making better marriages

A marriage enrichment conference takes place 4 to 5:30 p.m. Aug. 27 at New Hope Baptist Church, 2024 Red-bud Drive in Gastonia.

Leaders will be the Rev. Clay and Jane Turner, who have worked together doing "preventive maintenance" work in marriage enrichment for more than 35 years.

Cost is \$10/couple. Details: Call the church office, (704) 864-6759.

TOPIC

#### Fit to be fried (or broiled)

Oh, my, these shows are back tonight:

"Celebrity Fit Club" (9 p.m. VH1). More fat celebrities struggle to walk away from the free buffet.

"Flavor of Love" (10 p.m. VH1). Flav didn't find true love on his reality show last season so he's back in the game

TELEVISION

#### That was the week that was

Entertainment highlights during the week of Aug. 6-12:

1948: Allen Funt's "Candid Camera" made its TV debut on ABC with the title "Candid Microphone," which was also the name of a radio program produced by Funt.

1963: Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello's first movie together, "Beach Party," was released.

1970: "Soul Train" made its debut on a Chicago TV station.

FLASHBACKS

#### Two good to be true

Famous pairs born in same year:

1. Daryl Hall and John Oates (1949)

2. Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend (1945)

3. Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones share a Sept. 25 birthday, 25 years apart

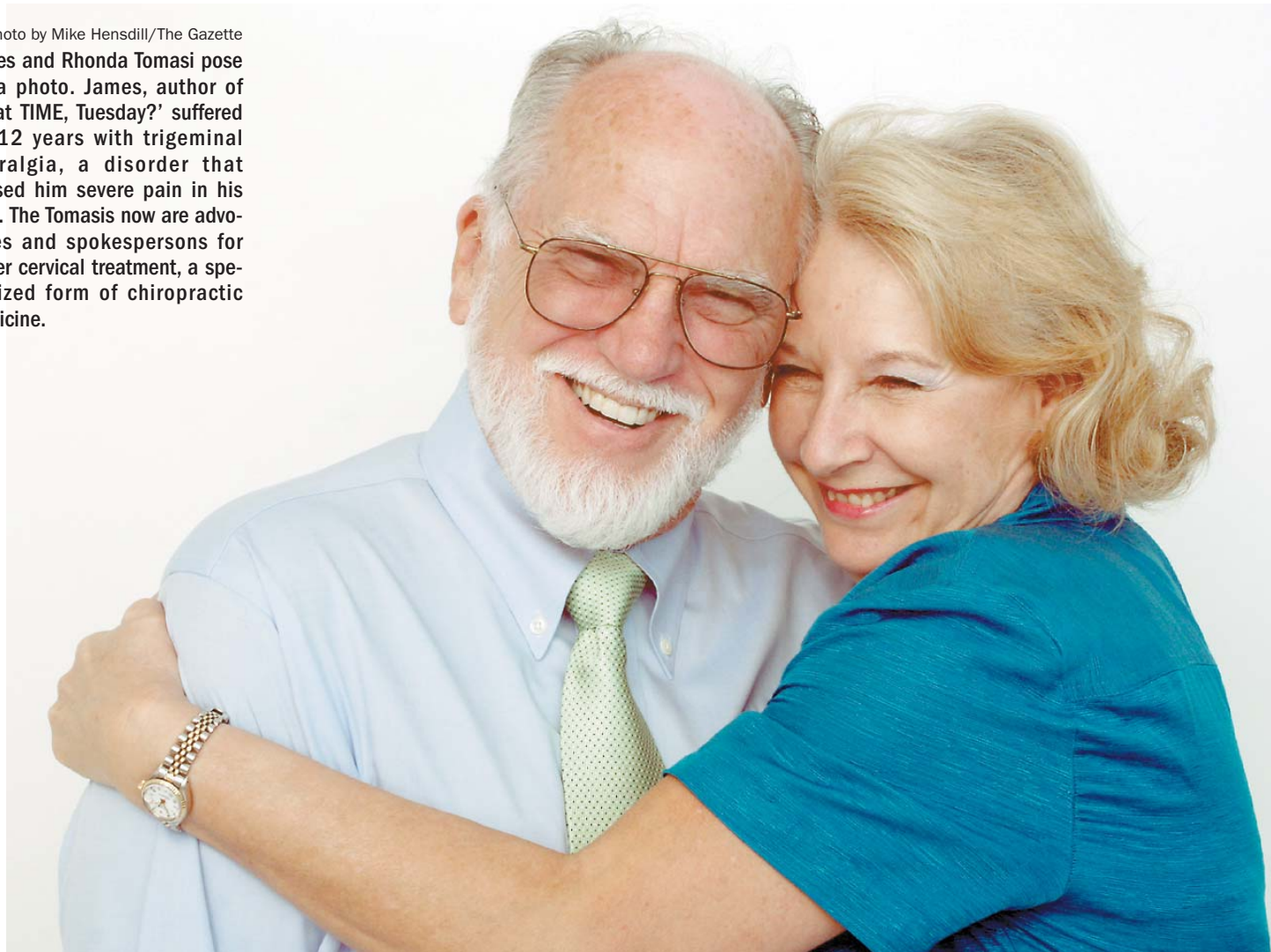
Source: World Features Syndicate

PEOPLE



**HALL AND OATES**

Photo by Mike Hensdill/The Gazette  
James and Rhonda Tomasi pose for a photo. James, author of 'What TIME, Tuesday?' suffered for 12 years with trigeminal neuralgia, a disorder that caused him severe pain in his face. The Tomasis now are advocates and spokespersons for upper cervical treatment, a specialized form of chiropractic medicine.



# Taming 'the beast'

## Upper cervical treatment helps man with debilitating disorder

BY JENNIFER KELLAR ERWIN  
Gazette Staff Reporter

James Tomasi is a happy, healthy, 68-year-old man who loves life almost as much as he loves spending time with his wife, Rhonda. The two travel the world, and both have smiles wide enough to give the Grand Canyon a run for its money.

Their genuine happiness and infectious laughter fill a room seconds before they enter it.

But they remember what life used to be like.

They remember "The Beast."

### THE DISEASE

Rhonda Tomasi left her home one Friday morning in 1997 to get groceries. James was in the second-floor master bedroom when she spoke to him:

"James, the house is barren. We need food. I'll be right back. Don't do anything stupid."

James was huddled underneath blankets on the bed.

No, I won't, he thought. Not until Tuesday, anyway.

It was a decision that James had struggled with for years. In 1986, he began suffering with a disease called trigeminal neuralgia, a disorder of the trigeminal nerve, which is the fifth and largest cranial nerve. The disorder produces excruciating, lightning strikes of facial pain, typically near the nose, lips, eyes or ears.

To many of its sufferers, it's called the "suicide disease."

The condition began after James had a root canal, and the dentist had to work for hours to remove a root that had been wrapped around James' tooth.

Sharp pains — James describes them as "spikes" — that were almost unbearable



there was nothing they could do and he'd have to live with the pain. Acupuncture provided no relief. Chinese medicinal remedies gave no cure.

"The saddest thing is that no one can see it but you," Tomasi said. "No one has an inkling as to what's happening on the inside of your head. It's not like a soft-tissue wound. That's something you can identify with. To a 'normal' person, I looked the same — except for my eyes. People who know you best know the pain behind your eyes."

But there was one thing he could do to stop the pain.

### FOILED PLAN

James chose a time and a day — 5 p.m. Tuesday — to end his suffering. He knew on that day, at that hour, his wife would be out of the house with their youngest son for an after-school soccer practice.

The pistol was housed in the bedside table.

As Rhonda drove to the grocery store, she heard an announcement on a Christian radio station out of Tulsa, Okla. It was as though the woman's voice was speaking directly to her:

"Are you in pain so severe that you can't bear it anymore? Are you depressed? Have you been told you'll have to learn to live with it?"

The 800-number was announced. Rhonda frantically searched her car to find a pencil and a piece of paper. She wasn't sure what upper cervical care was, but she believed the treatment the announcer spoke of could help her husband.

When she arrived home, she bound up the stairs to tell James what she'd heard. He wasn't optimistic.

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### INFO BOX

► For more information about upper cervical treatment, call Upper Cervical Health Centers of America at (704) 588-5560. The office is located at 2550 W. Arrowood Road in Charlotte.



Photo courtesy of James Tomasi

James Tomasi, left, tours around the world as a spokesman for upper cervical chiropractic care. Tomasi believes this type of treatment cured him from his battle with trigeminal neuralgia.

**Looking Ahead**  
Things to watch for in the coming week

**MONDAY**  
"American Chopper" (10 p.m. Discovery). Bill Murray builds a chopper  
Mount Holly plans lake patrols after drownings, 1B

**TUESDAY**  
Student gets close-up view of medicine, in Health & Fitness  
Vans Warped Tour, Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre

**WEDNESDAY**  
Coffee filters not just for java. In Food  
What do blondes and potato salad have in common? In Food

**THURSDAY**  
The Spontanes, downtown Gastonia, 7 p.m.  
Getting kids motivated for school, in Family

**FRIDAY**  
The Wiggles coming to Charlotte, in Break  
'Zoom' starring Tim Allen and Chevy Chase opens

**SATURDAY**  
'Mad TV' (11 p.m. Fox). ABC's 'Grey's Anatomy' gets picked on  
1500s-era Bible on display at Gaston County Museum, in Faith