

# Two games of chance: Poker and romance

By **TERESE KARMEL**  
Chronicle Features Editor

Randall Klitz has played poker for many many years. He has also dated around for equally as many years.

So as frequently occurs in the creative mind, he started seeing similarities in the two activities, some light-hearted but overall a fair comparison.

The two experiences have come together in "The Winner's Guide to Dating: What I Learned about Love and Sex from Playing Texas Hold 'em," a small, tidy little paperback with cartoon-like illustrations by Muriel Alvarez.

Alvarez, Klitz' girlfriend, was in some ways the inspiration behind the book, meant to be tongue-in-cheek with some (not many) serious overtones.

The 63-page 6-inch by 6-inch book is divided into five sections, "Advice for Beginners," "Basic Strategy," "Tips for Women," "Avoiding Pitfalls and Using Advanced Strategies" and "Winning the Game," in which poker terms and strategies are used to give advice on how to achieve successful courtships. "I've been playing poker and dating for a long time. I started to see the wacky similarities." In other words, the phrases, such as "You must raise the stakes or the game goes on too long" or "Never sit at a table when tired or intoxicated" have double meanings.

Klitz, who grew up in Storrs (in a musical family of three brothers and a sister), met Alvarez on a street corner in New York's East Village, where they live, when her dog tugged and tugged and even-

tually pulled her towards him. "I chatted her up and asked her for her phone number. She gave me her e-mail — she's good looking so she gave me her 'guys hit on me' address — and I wrote her a clever e-mail that caught her attention. She replied and one thing led to another," he said.

"Once I met Muriel and discovered she had illustrating talents, that's when it came together for me and the pen to paper."

So although his dating years may be over for now, his poker playing career is still going strong. He started playing when he was an undergraduate at Connecticut College in the early 1980s, finishing up in 1982. "I got my feet wet there," he said but it wasn't long before he was at Foxwoods Resort and Casino playing in Texas Hold 'Em tournaments in New York underground clubs and doing well in them.

He still plays poker in New York clubs and has what he called a "pretty good track record." Klitz is also a musician and for years has played bass in orchestras for Broadway musicals. He also writes music. His family band was called Vox Populi and featured his brothers Shawn, Kevin and Jeff.

He graduated from E.O. Smith High School in 1978 where he played on state championship soccer tournaments. He and his brothers, all musicians, have been in family bands and continued on their own.

His parents still live in Storrs, which brings him back frequently. "I loved growing up in Storrs," he



Randall Klitz

said. "I always have a good time coming back."

For a real good time, though, pick up "The Winner's Guide to Dating."

Some samples:

In the "Advice for Beginners" chapter, men are advised to "try to appear like a 'high roller' — even if you're not." The accompanying illustration shows three well dressed people at a cocktail party in one panel, the guy in a smoking jacket, and in the second panel, the real guy, driving away in a junk car, still dressed to the nines.

Also in this section is the advice, in effect, to play it cool on the first date or in poker terms to avoid going "all-in" with gifts of flowers and candy.

Under the heading "Tips for Women," females are told they don't have to play every "hand." The accompanying illustrations include one panel in which an angry woman is watching (and listening) while her male companion slurps and smacks' his way through a meal at a restaurant. The second panel has her

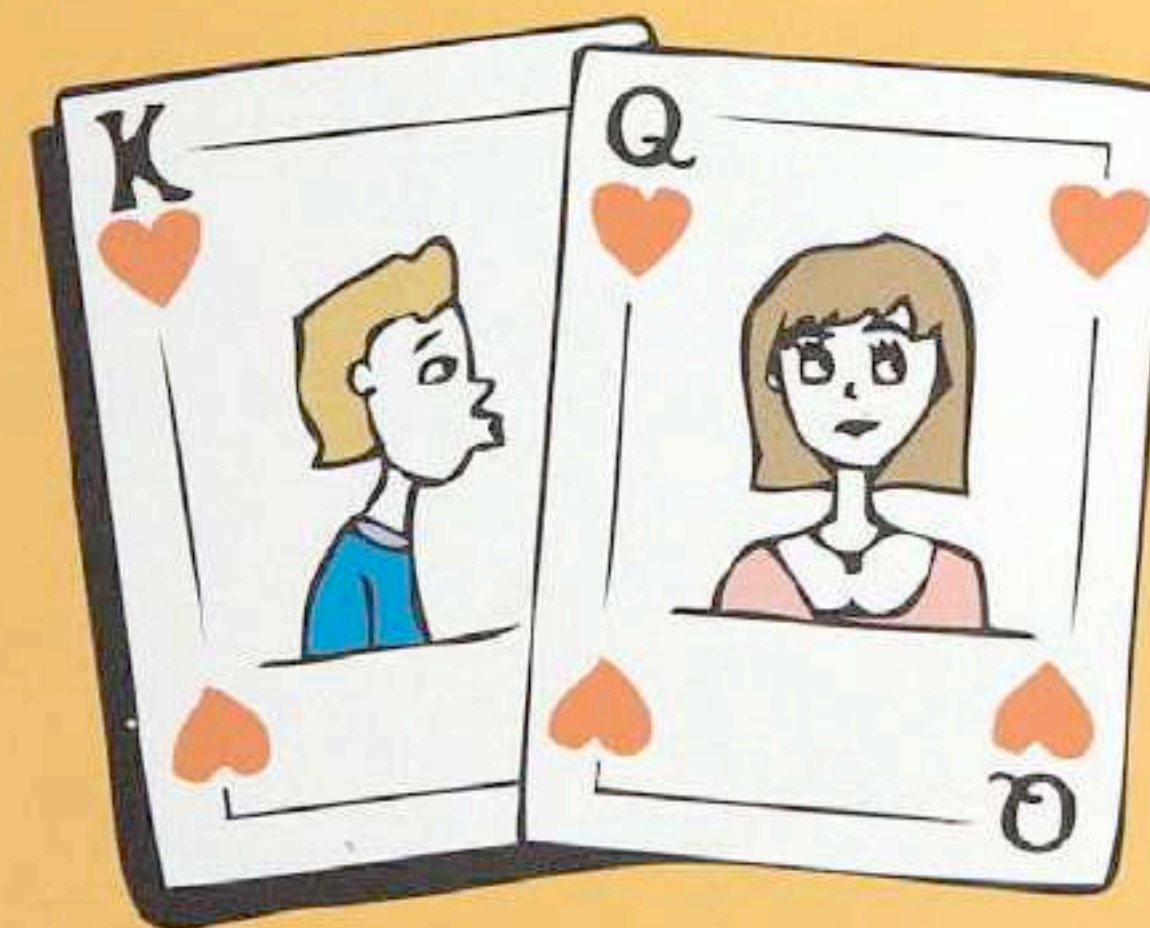
climbing out of the window of the ladies room.

In the "Winning the Game" chapter, men are advised to be persistent and patient if they want to reach the final table, which in poker is the championship round. The illustrations have a couple in bed on the fourth date.

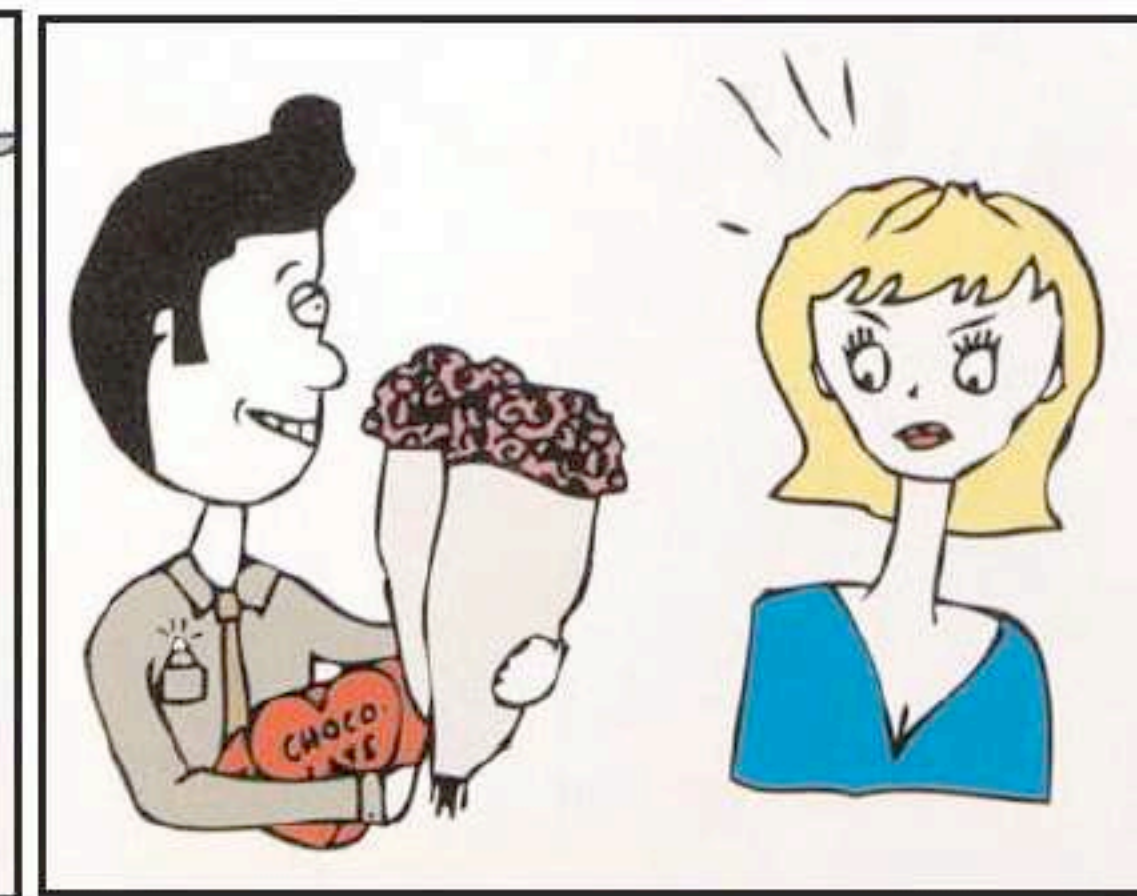
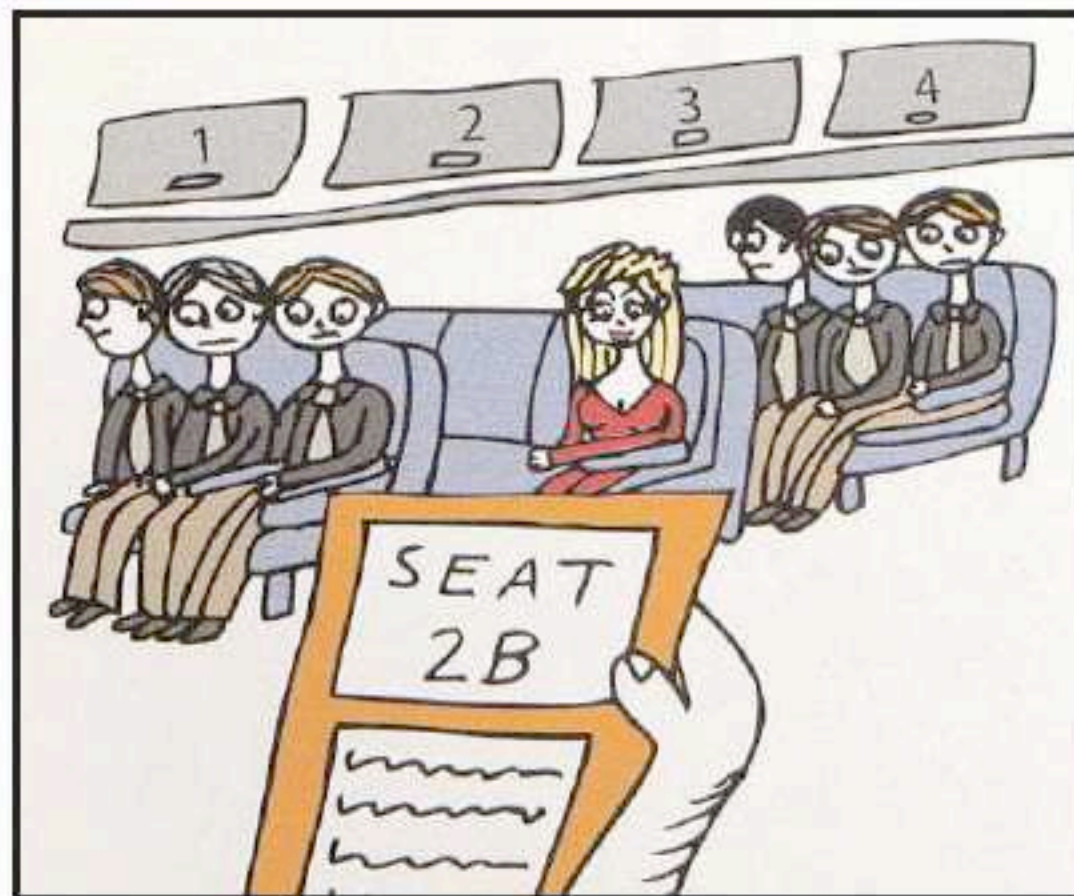
Klitz said it took a lot of work to synthesize the text and the illustrations. "We didn't always agree," he said of his professional relationship with Alvarez. "But we got through it."

Persistence and patience — and now a book for their efforts. It costs \$9.95 and is available at the UConn Co-op and the Connecticut College bookstore or by writing [sales@winnersguide-todating.com](mailto:sales@winnersguide-todating.com).

## The Winner's Guide to Dating



(What I Learned about Love and Sex from Playing Texas Hold 'em)



Roxanne Pandolfi photos

TOP: The cover of Storrs native Randall Klitz' humor book, "The Winner's Guide to Dating." ABOVE: Samples of two pieces of advice in the book: Left: 'Sometimes you're just lucky;' Right: Never go 'all-in' on the first round.