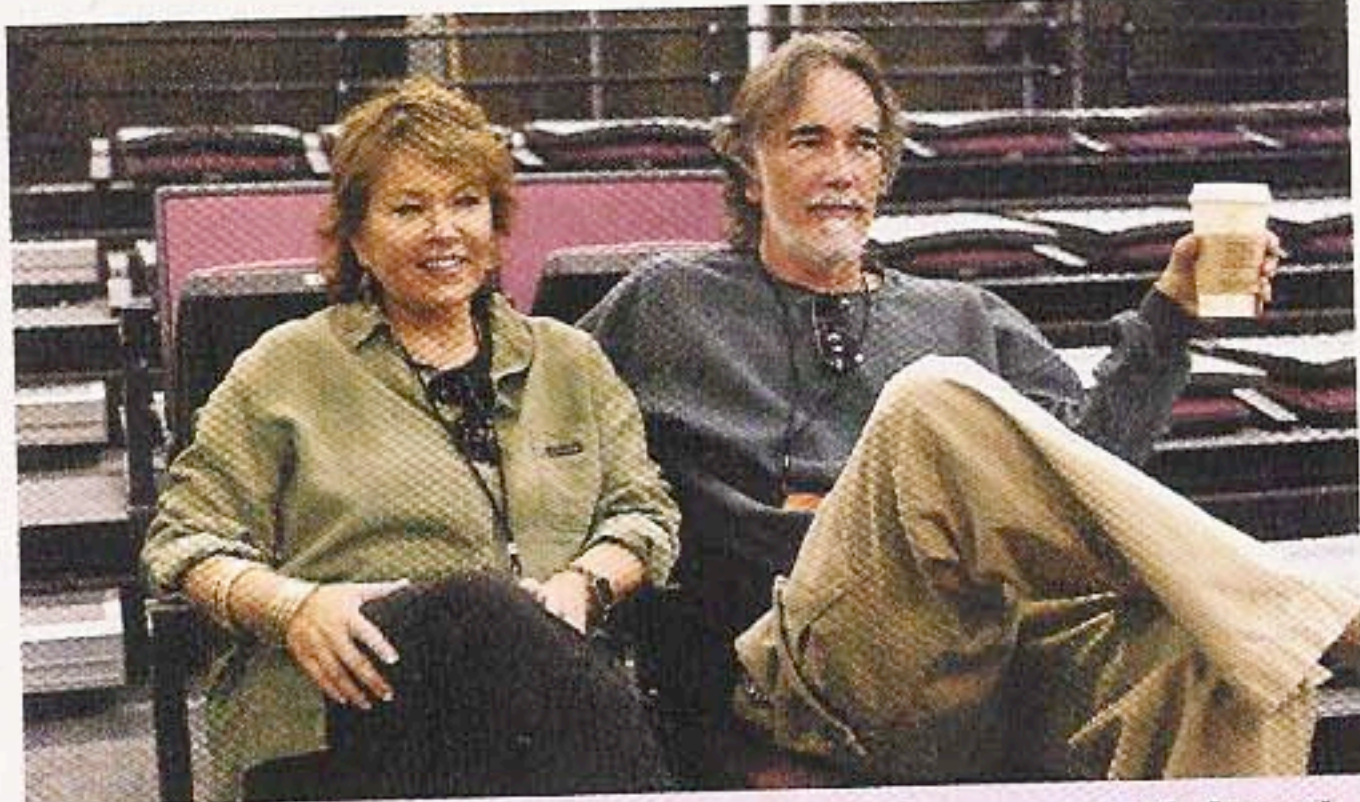




The New Roseanne

"I feel sexy," says Barr, who shed 80 lbs. after gastric bypass surgery in 1998. Plastic surgery (nose job, breast reduction, tummy tuck and face-lift) completed the transformation from her old self (left, in '89). Down to 160 lbs., she says she eats up to 10 small meals a day, a diet that includes doughnuts, "the greatest invention other than the space program."



"It's freaky that it's so perfect," Barr says of romance with Argent.

instead of going, 'that motherf----- owes me money.'"

The change has thrilled family and friends, who distinctly recall Barr's penchant for abruptly firing staff from her hit sitcom *Roseanne*. "She's mellow, but she's kept her edge," says comic pal Louie Anderson. She is also letting go of old grudges: These days her first husband, Bill Pentland, works as her handyman, and his wife, Becky, who married Pentland in 2000, is Barr's personal assistant. "I like to see what people do when I introduce her," says Barr with a laugh.

Still, notes *Real Roseanne* producer R.J. Cutler, "some days she's more successful at it than others. The days she's successful are very pleasant; the other days, you find the best way to get through. Doughnuts play a huge role."

So does her new boyfriend, musician Johnny Argent. The Tucson-based Argent, 54, began posting messages in an open forum on Barr's Web site in late 2001. They spoke for a year and finally began dating in January. "She turns into a 16-year-old kid when she talks about him," says Becky Pentland. Indeed, Barr gushes, "I never had a

boyfriend or husband that thought I was really cute. I'm definitely in love. This is mature, it's not crazy."

Not so her three previous marriages. "As soon as I'd hate them, I'd marry them," says Barr, who divorced Pentland, 52, in 1990 after a 16-year marriage. She immediately wed Tom Arnold ("It was all crazy—I don't know why I thought it was okay") before splitting in 1994. A year later she married her bodyguard Ben Thomas. Their union produced son Buck, now 8, but Barr and Thomas "weren't a good match," she says, and they divorced in '02. In contrast, her relationship with Argent "is about two individuals who respect each other," says her son Jake Pentland, now a producer on *Domestic Goddess*, "whereas [with Arnold and Thomas], it was 'What can you do for me?'"

Barr (who has three kids with Pentland: Jessica, 28, Jenny, 27, and Jake, 25) might enjoy romance more at middle age, but raising Buck is a different matter. "We're not meant to be parents when we're 50," she says. "I can't go chasing after him like I did my other ones. I go, 'Let's watch cartoons,' so I can just lay there."

But she's put herself back into action, doing a few comedy gigs to hone her first stand-up act in 10 years. And if the career moves don't pan out, no matter. "I got great kids, a great boyfriend, and I'm gorgeous and thin," she says. "I can't do no better."

- Jason Lynch
- Monica Rizzo in Los Angeles



Barr's extended family (clockwise from left: grandson Ethan, daughter Jenny, son-in-law Jeff, assistant Becky, son Jake and ex-hubby Bill) "is bizarrely funny," says Jake.