WRAP IT BEFORE YOU TAP IT

Roses are red, violets are blue, but beware the rashes, blisters and itches that may follow you.

MINERO MAGAZINE INSIDE
we asked,
you answered

POLL RESULTS
Has the construction on and around campus affected your commute?

53% Yes
47% No

47% No

Happy Valentine's Day, Siri! I love you. I'm incapable of love. Can we get back to work now?

Stupid cupid

BY ALEJANDRO ALBA
The Prospector

Dear Cupid, I'm afraid that the 14th day in February is an ignominious holiday due to the fact that many people don't even know who St. Valentine is. A holiday, after all, should be a day when you celebrate a special someone, or a special event. But for people in the 21st century, a holiday means gifts and more gifts. Oh, and getting drunk and laid as well. Either way, I'd like to let you know that you are just as significant on this day as the bunny is on Easter.

Where do you even come in, and why? I know you are the Roman god of erotic love, the equivalent to the Greek god Eros and the son of Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. Many will agree, but what does a chubby little kid in diapers with a bow and arrow have to do with St. Valentine? Well, nothing. People simply liked the idea that you are the god of desire. Therefore, they began using your image for the "holiday," shooting your bow to supposedly inspire romantic love. Well, I haven't received any inspirations yet so I should put an arrow through your heart just for not being important, and for not striking both my crush and I with your stupid arrows.

So you see Chubsters, you go around making people want to be with someone on this ordinary day, creating false hopes and depressing nights. Due to you neglecting your duties of making people not fall in love, I can't even know who you are. I'm afraid that with the lead-headed arrow that goes flying around with his twinkie-winkle loose, and to me, that me, you're just a little perverse butterball that goes flying around with his twinkie-winkle loose, and to me, that will bring disturbance.

Regardless of my issues with you, an unreal character that is much referenced, it is important to remember that being alone on Valentine's Day is just as being alone on any other day of the year. There is no need to treat it any different or feel any different. Exasperated me.

Valentine's Day worth it?

47% No

I never break.

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Hot or not? Do looks matter in American politics?

By Adam Martínez

The 2012 presidential elections are right around the corner and candidates are campaigning hard to woo the hearts of voters. In an era where media and technology dominates electoral politics, it is widely believed that a candidate’s sex appeal affects his or her chances of being elected. So come November, the candidates will be campaigning hard to woo male voters.

Political scientists at MIT recently conducted a study showing that people around the world are heavily influenced by appearance in voting for a politician. So do looks really matter? “Looks have always mattered in political elections, regardless of where they are held,” said Gregory Rocha, associate professor of political science.

Research has shown that physically attractive politicians seem to outperform their peers. The same can be said about good-looking people in other professions, who get paid an average of 12 to 14 percent more than their unattractive co-workers. “Political elections are pretty much a beauty contest and you have to show you have to do is look nice and look presentable,” said Monica Molinar, senior history major.

“Looks have always mattered in elections, regardless of where they are held,” said Gregory Rocha, associate professor of political science. “Usually, people don’t care what a man looks like, but when Hillary Clinton was running for president the media always focused on what she was wearing and what she looked like,” said Monica Molina, senior history major.

Political analysts believe the GOP is embracing an array of female politicians in hopes of attracting more male voters. “What is true is that not very good-looking people don’t do well,” Payan said. “If you’re not blessed with good looks, you have to do something more to sell yourself, elections essentially being a marketing campaign.”

Physical appearance, competence, verbal skills and a charming personality are all important in elections, especially when the differences on political issues and ideology between candidates is small. “Being well-dressed and groomed is obviously crucial, but so does knowing who the audience is,” Rocha said. “Regardless, if one looks is just one part of a pretty complicated set of considerations made by voters and includes the candidate’s record, the ad campaign, contacts made on behalf of the candidate and so forth.”

Senior history major Stefanie Morales hopes voters would see beyond good looks and a smile and make thoughtful decisions on election day. “I don’t think sex appeal should matter, but I’m sure it does to some people,” Morales said. “Why should we care how someone looks, it has nothing to do with how they will perform.”

Adam Martínez may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.
Esto tan peligroso tema ha sido motivo para largas horas de plática entre amigos y parejas, porque nadie ha logrado llevar a una conclusión y por lo visto no estamos cerca. El hecho de que exista una amistad entre personas del sexo opuesto es casi un mito. Hombres y mujeres que han llevado una relación de amistad de mucho tiempo y que nunca se han visto comprometidos en un aspecto sexual son algo de admirarse, pero la mayoría sabemos que eso es algo tan común como los cometas, sólo para cada setenta años. Por definición, amistad es confianza y afecto desinteresado entre las personas involucradas, aquí la palabra clave es “desinteresado” lo cual no siempre se logra. Sinceramente, creo que la verdadera amistad entre hombres y mujeres es un mito. Hombres y mujeres que no se percaten de que están involucrados en alguna confusión entre amigos y “algo más”. Por más que se diga que hombres y mujeres somos iguales, eso no es ni siquiera posible. Desde nuestra biología, hasta la manera de pensar hombres y mujeres difieren en la manera de percibir las relaciones. Cuando una mujer piensa: “él es más que un amigo, no me gusta, pero es tuyo, lo quieren mucho” los hombres pensamos: “...es mi amiga pero no le diría que no si me pidiera pasara una noche con ella...” Y es por esto que a lo largo de la relación habrá un momento en el que alguna de las dos partes ceda. Eulcidéscalco ha escrito que la verdadera amistad con amigos y “amigos con derechos” es muy frágil, la confianza, confusión y afecto son cosas que nos pueden confundir y distraer. Hecho de que alguien nos gusta realmente. El hombre puede llevar una amistad con una mujer de manera fácil siempre cuando esa amiga no nos guste o no nos de pie. Pequeños: así los hombres somos como aquellos terroristas en potencia esperando el momento correcto para lanzar su ataque encubierto, y la mujer aquella víctima inocente de las intenciones del hombre, aunque muchas veces la mujer también toma el rol de “terrorista” y ataca. Existen muchos ejemplos a nuestro alrededor de esto, empezando desde nuestro círculo social más cercano. Hollywood Hollywood con películas como “When Harry met Sally” (1989), “No strings attached” (2001) y “Love and other drugs” (2010), en las que se refleja que el sexo es el presente en las relaciones que comienzan como amistad. Retener que no se soy un pesimista que no ve la remota posibilidad de una relación de verdadera amistad entre un hombre y una mujer. Claramente, la amistad es algo que se está desvirtuando en un concepto en el que el sexo es el fin y donde el hombre da afecto y confusión para recibir sexo y la mujer da sexo para recibir afecto y confusión. No intente ponerle fin a la discusión, puesto que hay muchas puntos de vista, pero en mi opinión, la verdadera amistad entre hombres y mujeres es algo muy difícil de alcanzar y más si no se tiene claro la importancia del desinterés en la amistad. **Mystical Palace** 4048 Hondo Pass • (915) 755-3303 Incense · Novelties · Candles Books · Oils · Stones St. Valentine’s Love Kit Now Available 10% OFF COUPON **St. Valentine’s Love Kit** Comes in a beautiful image of the giant cock. For sale in the store and on the Internet. We have a wide selection of sex toys, including dildos and vibrators. We also carry a variety of lubricants and condoms. We accept PayPal, credit cards, and cash. **STUDENT GIFT CAMPAIGN** 2012 **alumni.utep.edu/studentgift** **SPONSORED** **WANTED ELECTION COMMISSIONERS** Job Duties • Enforce all regulations related to election • Plan candidate debates • Conduct hearings • Impose sanctions if necessary • Must be able to meet at least once a week Requirements • A minimum of 2.5 GPA • At least 9 undergraduate credit hours or 6 graduate credit hours *Receive a stipend for your work!* Applications must be submitted to the SGA office 304 Union East Building by 12 noon on Thursday, February 16. For more information, call 747-5584. For application, go to: www.utep.edu/sga
The spread of STDs such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, HIV and AIDS has long been a fearful issue for students at many universities, including UTEP. “University students are at a higher risk for transmitting STDs because they are just discovering their sexuality,” said Valerie Farrington, nurse practitioner at the Student Health Center. “Mommy and daddy aren’t around; it’s very common to go away to college and start experimenting with many things, sexuality is one of them. There are so many opportunities around, it’s hard to deny the chocolate. It’s too bad because the STD rate is the highest with this age group.”

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 300,000 cases of gonorrhea were reported in 2010. Cases of chlamydia have increased in the past 20 years, as 1.3 million people were diagnosed with the disease the same year. Twenty-five percent of people having sex are between the ages of 18 and 26. Of that age group, nearly half have been infected and have seen the greatest rise in sexually transmitted diseases. In 2010 alone, 509,341 gonorrhea and 1,307,893 chlamydia infections and cases were reported in that age group.

With numbers ranging in the millions, the CDC and many other sources recommend one vital product to help prevent the spread of any kind of STD: condoms.

Students believe that the reason for the rise is simple: people don’t use condoms.

“I think condoms are effective in trying to prevent STDs and pregnancies,” said Brian Acuna, freshman microbiology major. “If you’re going to engage in sexual activity, you always have to keep in account the STDs that go around and you have to be careful and protect yourself!”

Despite this advice, the numbers keep rising and the battle of how to handle it rages on.

Across the Atlantic Ocean in Sweden, gonorrhea and chlamydia are on the rise, as well. In order to combat the spread of these diseases, an organization named LAFA devised a campaign that played off the use of condoms and a type of branding that many people who are college aged could relate to. Condom08, or Kondom08, is an iPhone/Android phone app with a built-in social network that, when used correctly, is able to monitor sex and allow the user to publish their results. Although it was an attempt to promote safe sex practices, some students and teachers feel that it wouldn’t be met with a positive reaction in the US.

“I think it could kind of be a double-edged sword,” Acuna said. “It can help prevent and educate, but it could also backfire on people. I’m sure you can find a way for that kind of app to work, but if you change things around a little bit to change people’s identities and still promote safe sex, it may work.”

The group handed out 100,000 condoms to people in Stockholm that branded a QR scan code on the label, which, when scanned, would allow the owner of the phone a chance to download and join a site called The Sex Profile. That person could publish their results and browse other results. This inspired posters to be placed around Stockholm that matched some of the results.

Aurorin Layky, associate professor of anthropology, said she hoped that the person who uses the site uses the condom as well. “In the end, the app is merely a gimmick. “It’s cute and if it gets more people to use condoms. That’s great, of course. But I must confess, I also found it a little sad. I mean, if there’s one time you wish someone would turn off their phone,” Layky said. “I bet most people who use it just use it a couple times for the novelty and then forget about it. I mean, you wouldn’t want your partner interrupting the intimacy every time to go to the app, would you? Much more of a buzz kill than putting on a condom.”

The biggest issue for Josh Calderon, sophomore accounting major, is not about remembering when to wrap it, but rather being safe and being educated in order to prevent the spread of STDs.

“It’s more about being tested,” Calderon said. “I think some people go around doing the things they do without knowing sometimes and their partner, unfortunately, gets infected as well. And when they do find out, it’s too late. I think practicing safe sex would help that a lot.”

On Valentine’s Day, the choice between having sex or not becomes a big question for students and Farrington has one answer for those uncertain if they want to add sex to the festivities. “The most important thing we have to do is number one, change our attitude about STDs,” Farrington said. “We should be able to talk about them openly with the lights on, and insist that if we’re getting hot and heavy with a potential partner who we want to have sex with, we think about all the things we’re getting into. It’s more about being tested.”

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Congratulations to Belinda M. for winning The Prospector’s Design Your Valentine’s Card Contest!

Players make relationships work, even during a season

BY FRANKIE RODRIGUEZ
The Prospector

Finding the time to maintain a relationship as an athlete might not be easy, but some of the UTEP men's basketball players gave details about their relationship, what it takes to balance out things and some Valentine’s surprises.

“I have been with this girl almost a month now and I like her a lot. It is a good relationship,” freshman guard Tim Jacobs said. “She is from Las Cruces and that is where I am from. I have known her since high school.”

Jacobs, who graduated from Oñate last year, explained how for some players who shy away from the thought of a relationship might be better off, but in his case, it keeps him content.

“Having a girl keeps me happy so I keep her there to be with,” Jacobs said. “I mean groupies are always there but you should not want to stick around with groupies because if you fail then they are going to leave you.”

Junior guard Tyler Tafoya gave the scoop on his girlfriend and the surprise that awaits her on Valentine’s Day. Tafoya said he is currently dating sophomore first baseman/pitcher Laura Ramos from the UTEP softball team.

“We have been together for a year and four months now. I met her here on campus,” Tafoya said. “I am planning to surprise her with a necklace I bought her, some chocolates and some Edible Arrangements (fruit bouquet) so it is going to be a good day for her.”

Tafoya said some relationships can be negative on players, too.

“I mean, not to say anything bad about girls, but they can always be a distraction,” Tafoya said. “It has been good with us because we manage our time really well.”

Sophomore forward Kevin Perry explains how relationships as an athlete are all about priorities. Perry is also a tight end on the UTEP football team.

“It is hard at first, but a relationship will benefit you because it allows you to stay focused as far as athletics and school,” Perry said. “It could get in the way if you don’t understand what comes first all the time, and my girlfriend understands that so it makes it easy.”

Perry said he plans to keep Valentine’s simple.

“I have been with my girl for one year now. I met her New Year’s Eve at a restaurant, and I had to put the moves on her,” Perry said. “I am probably going to take her out maybe go to a movie, dinner and maybe just hang out after and enjoy the rest of the night together.”

Senior forward Gabriel McCulley believes women can be a hassle for an athlete but considers himself fortunate to have a long-term relationship with his girlfriend.

“It is tough because women are not easy to deal with sometimes. They get a little overprotective sometimes or insecure, and being an athlete, it is never easy to deal with women and your sport at the same time,” McCulley said.

As an athlete, the attention they constantly receive can cause some division in the relationship.

Senior forward Gabriel McCulley (center) has been in a relationship with his girlfriend for more than four years. This is his fifth season with UTEP.

...and as I gazed upon him inspecting his nostrils, his aroma wafting in the air, I then realized that I was in love.
What has been the worst gift you’ve received on Valentine’s Day?

Photos by Candie Herrera, Greg Castillo and Audrey Russell

CRISTALLE OLIVAS
Freshman nursing major
“The worst I have gotten for Valentine’s Day was a promise ring from a guy that I had never talked to before.”

DAVID SAUCEDO
Freshman finance major
“Stuffed animals I would say would not be the worst gift, but not the best gift, especially for a guy.”

KIMBERLY DUVERMOIS
Freshman biology major
“I personally have never gotten a bad gift on Valentine’s Day. I appreciate the thought that goes into each gift and that’s all that matters to me.”

ROBERT MELENDEZ
Senior psychology major
“I’ve never received a bad gift for Valentine’s Day, but I imagine the worst gift would be a girlfriend.”

ABIGAIL VARGAS
Sophomore criminal justice major
“Flowers seem to be a common given gift on Valentine’s Day, but one year instead of getting fresh flowers I received artificial flowers that were dirty.”

VICTOR ARREDONDO
Freshman general studies major
“The worst gift I’ve ever been given for Valentine’s was finding out my girlfriend was cheating on me.”

LEA TELLES
Sophomore graphic design major
“I’m pretty grateful for any gifts. I don’t think I’ve ever received a bad gift.”

RICARDO MORAN
Freshman education major
“Melted Hershey’s Kisses.”

EMY LOYA
Freshman criminal justice major
“The worst gift would be no gift at all. It’s all about giving.”

LEO RODRIGUEZ
Freshman engineering major
“A small bag of M&M’s, the 99 cent kind. And a stuffed puppy that looked like it was from Dollar Tree. Needless to say, there were no more dates with that person.”

CONSUELO MARTINEZ
Freshman education major
“The worst gift ever has to be a pink teddy bear. The thing was that I found out the guy I was dating had given the same bear to his ex the year before. I am not into sloppy seconds.”

MARTIN LOPEZ
Sophomore studio art, major
“The worst gift is not getting one.”

DALIA PINON
Sophomore business major
“Just a card.”

MARIANA CARBAJAL
Sophomore pre-med major
“Just a single rose and just a little piece of chocolate, not even a full-size candy bar.”

MONIVA RIVAS
Sophomore sociology major
“I’ve never received a bad gift, but I imagine the worst gift I could receive is a life-sized teddy bear.”
Lonely hearts find other ways to celebrate Valentine’s Day

BY AMBER WATTS
The Prospector

As couples buy each other tokens of affection and plan a romantic evening, for some, the holiday is an ominous cloud of broken past relationships, “single-awareness” and the boredom that will be potentially ensuing. While many students have dates for Valentine’s Day this year, many do not. These single students though, are not being torn apart by the idea of being alone. Instead, they have planned out ways to keep themselves busy and enjoy the weekend.

“Celebrate with your friends, watch movies. It doesn’t matter if you’ve got a guy, you’ve always got your girls,” said Zaira Inigaz, sophomore education major, who plans on staying low-key at home for the holiday or heading out with her friends for a movie. Inigaz said she has celebrated Valentine’s Day before but tries to avoid all the commotion that surrounds it, such as the people that make huge and extravagant plans for the holiday.

“You know, when you have somebody, I think it’s a good thing, but I think it should be like that every day. There shouldn’t just be one day where you get your girlfriend or boyfriend stuff. It should be like that every day,” Inigaz said.

James Wood, psychology professor, said there are no negative side effects to being alone on Valentine’s Day for students, except for maybe the reasons they are alone in the first place. For instance, recently breaking up may just bring up feelings of sadness, but for most people, it doesn’t really affect them that much.

“If you have other friends that are not romantic friends, then it’s okay to spend time with them,” Wood said. “Try to find other people that don’t have a date on that day and do things with them, or just do something you enjoy. Just make it a point to do something you enjoy if it’s bothering you.”

Wood said that social support helps a lot with things that would bother people and helps them feel fine about not having a partner at that time. Jackie Armijo, junior multimedia journalism major, supports the idea that Valentine’s Day really isn’t just about big expensive gifts or feeling sad about being alone, but rather celebrates the love of the people around you.

“As of now, I’m not really doing anything (for Valentine’s Day) because I’m single right now, so me and my friends are just thinking up stuff like what could we do,” Armijo said. “We can’t just be depressed on Valentine’s Day so we sort of started a Single Awareness Day, so it’s basically saying you can be proud of that because there are other things to do.”

Armijo’s Valentine’s Day festivities consist of hanging out with her friends, going out to eat, dressing up nice and watching chick flicks with lots of good food. Armijo said that it’s a girls-night-out but with a purpose that says “hey, it’s alright to be single and it’s not the end of the world because you’re not getting a huge rock or unnecessarily large teddy bear.”

“I mean honestly, I do see myself as a hopeless romantic so (making extravagant Valentine’s Day plans) is not such a bad thing to me, but I do see people being a little over-the-top about it and it kind of irks me.” Armijo said.

Armijo’s advice to other single students is to remember the people around you and to take advantage of the holiday to show appreciation to them.

“Use simple things, it doesn’t have to be over-the-top because that’s not what love is about,” Armijo said. “There are different forms of love, I mean it doesn’t necessarily have to be in a relationship, it could be showing your love to your family, showing your love to your friends, like there’s different ways just show them how much you appreciate them on that day and remind them of that.”

Amber Watts may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

MOVIES TO WATCH ALONE on Valentine’s Day

“500 Days of Summer” (2009)
This film was built to dismantle Valentine’s Day myths. Joseph Gordon-Levitt plays “the romantic and Zooey Deschanel “the realist.” Both hold an unlabeled relationship that, unfortunately for Gordon-Levitt, doesn’t endear. So, accordingly he moans and moeps at discovering that love is not that idealized fairy tale. It is a refreshingly honest romantic comedy with a killer soundtrack that charmingly propels the idea that love may just be lurking around the corner. The other corner, the one that comes after bitter disappointment, binge drinking and heart-break.

“Titanic” (1997)
Poor boy meets rich girl. They fall in love in a ship. Ship sinks. Celine Dion, play us out.

“We’ve all seen this film and whether we like it or not, it remains one of the greatest ill-fated love stories of our time. But greatest of all, Jack freezes to death at the end (I’ll never let go, Jack)” Cue tears (which only reassures us that single life on land is far safer, less heart-breaking and much warmer. Also, the film is three-and-a-half hours long. By the time it is finished, Valentine’s Day will be a thing of the past and you’ll be in need of some sleep. And if all else fails, you can always rewatch any “30 Rock” episode. Liz Lemon is without a doubt the greatest and most inspiring single woman on the planet.” Bluhgh.

“Bill Cunningham New York” (2010)
Bill Cunningham, into his eighties, takes being single to a whole new level. The documentary follows the legendary New York street photographer as he captures street apparel and charmingly leaves a mark among fashion higher-ups and friends. In this endearing documentary, he reveals that he’s never held a romantic relationship, he only loves fashion. So fret not being single, it only leaves room to document your passion and make friends with Anna Wintour.

The Prospector’s top because that’s not what love is about. And if all else fails, you can always rewatch any “30 Rock” episode. Liz Lemon is without a doubt the greatest and most inspiring single woman on the planet.” Bluhgh.

“30 Rock” episode. Liz Lemon is without a doubt the greatest and most inspiring single woman on the planet.” Bluhgh.
Exchange petals for pixels

BY JERRY ALDAZ
The Prospector

With Valentine’s underway, a day for shameless signs of affection, one ought to avoid the predictability of sappy love songs, diabetes-inducing chocolates and dust-collecting bears. These tech gifts highlight a partner’s sense of exploration, creation and recreation - long after the rose petals have withered.

PS3 Headset ($100)

If your soul mate owns a PlayStation 3 and is prone to engage in prolonged gaming sessions, Sony’s official headset will make their heart beat the beat. Sony’s peripheral features 7.1 virtual surround sound, measurable audio levels and a seven-hour battery life. On-screen updates display headset information and the portable USB transmitter syncs the device within seconds. Comfortable ear pads and simple controls allow gamers to focus on their delicate weapon aiming, medieval-creature slaying or potato-chip eating.

Oloclip ($70)

In capturing timeless memories, oloclip’s iPhone 4 peripheral dramatically enhances mobile photography. As the wide-angle lens produces shapely heights details in close-up shots. Tightly packed in a removable attachment, the oloclip snugly rests on the phone’s outer edge, right above the camera. The three lenses are accessible through a simple rotation of the peripheral.

Apogee Jam Guitar Adapter ($100)

For passionate ballads between iLovers, Apogee’s guitar adapter transforms into an inexpensive and clutter-free recording studio for pen-pushing musicians. From recording spontaneous inspiration on the iPad, to perfecting chord transitions on the iMac, the compact adapter enables an electric guitar to work in unison with Apple’s GarageBand. Once connected, musicians have the added flexibility of alternating through GarageBand’s virtual amps in order to find the desired sound. Unfortunately, for window-based composers, Apogee’s current rig is designed to function solely with Apple products.

Wacom Inking ($199)

Sketching the images of love, Wacom’s Inking system combines a digital pen and clip receiver to digitalize drawings, notes and incomprehensible doodles from any notebook. It can store hundreds of images on its 2GB internal memory, track image progression through a “layering” function, detect ink colors through interchangeable cartridges and effortlessly organize files through proprietary software. These digitalized creations can be distributed online or modified through image-editing software such as Adobe Photoshop.

Orbotix Sphere ($130)

If Valentine’s is a solo celebration, Orbotix’s Sphere simplistic concept is welcomed distraction. A Blue-tooth apparatus for mobile devices, this spherical gadget is fitted with a laser, gyroscope, accelerometer, and can be stereo like an RC car or travel pre-designed routes. Internal LEDs can diversify the power glow, and the one-hour battery life provides adequate rolling pleasure. Available for both Android and iOS devices, the Sphere can be paired with apps such as Sphero, SpheroDrive and Draw ‘N Drive.

In case you didn’t know, tech gifts may be searched at prospector@utep.edu

The history of Valentine's: Where is the love?

What’s love got to do with it?

By Rebecca Guerrero
The Prospector

Once a year, the majority of the world turns red. Stores are filled with happily colored streamers and chocolate is consumed by the pound. As Feb. 14 rapidly approaches, frantic people dash into the nearest store to spend increasing amounts of money on tokens that prove their undying affection for that special someone.

“Valentine’s is a day that girls use as an excuse to get stuff,” said Valerie Rocha, freshman art major. “They get mad when they don’t get what they want, but have no problem not giving anything. It has expensive, corny things that most people will go on it, and then never look at again. It should be spent, not buying pointless things, but by being together.”

“People from different countries, it might seem like insanity, but the truth is that the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Great Britain, France and Australia have all fallen under the Hallmark spell of Valentine’s Day, and the fever seems to grow every year. It may have occurred to some, as they stand in line at Walgreens clutching that bear that sings Stevie Wonder’s ‘Isn’t She Lovely,’” to wonder why it is that they’re forced to prove their affection for the special people in their lives every February.

“Valentine’s is a corporate holiday, so guys can make up for their mistakes,” said Jonathan Bye, junior mathematics major. “That’s what the people in charge should treat her like royalty, he might as well be single 364 other days.”

Contrary to popular belief, the origins of Valentine’s Day have less to do with St. Valentine himself, and more to do with the Christianization of all pagan holidays. According to history.com, it is true that the name came from St. Valentine, a man whose life was shrouded in mystery. One legend claims he was a Catholic priest famed for marrying young lovers in secret under the nose of an oppressive regime that forbade their marriage. Yet, St. Valentine’s contribution was mainly to offer up his name, whether he knew it or not, to Christianity as a front for the elimination of the pagan gods held Lupercalia.

The Christian church may have decided to place Valentine’s feast directly on top of Lupercalia, which was traditionally celebrated on Feb. 15, in an effort to wipe it out. Lupercalia was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman God of agriculture. Roman priests would sacrifice a goat for fertility and a dog for purification. They would then strip the goat’s hide, dip it into the sacrificial blood and take to the streets, gently slipping between men and crop fields, with the goat’s bade.

Lupercalia was outlawed by the Catholic Church, and the Valentine’s Day we know today is more closely related to the way it was celebrated much later, during the middle ages. The modern-day version of the holiday comes with candies, candy hearts, endless amounts of pressure and some levels of exclusion for those who find themselves without a special someone on the 14th.

“As much as people tend to think Valentine’s Day is too commercialized,” said Darlene Perdue, junior organizational and corporate communication major. “It’s too easy to buy or create these magnificent gift ideas for a loved one. I am the type of person who loves to give gifts, especially handcrafted gifts just to see the person’s excitement.”

In our day and age, when one mentions Valentine’s Day, it’s likely to evoke images of flowers and chocolates. Any company that specializes in either of these goods is sure to see business increase during this time of year. According to history.com, an estimated 110 million roses will be sold and delivered within a three-day-time period this year and the majority of those will be red roses. On average, the Valentine gift giver will spend about $75 on their gift, with the most popular gifts being chocolates, food, wine, and flowers.

“I love the idea of taking a day to celebrate the ones you love most in your life, but do roses and chocolates really symbolize love?” said Samantha Wells, sophomore pre-business major.

“Think of the holiday has become too commercial. I don’t need you to spend money on me to show me how much you care.”

The pressure not to drop the ball when it comes to this holiday seems to come from every direction nowadays. Television commercials for everything things on top-of-the-line jewelry stores to department stores spread dire warnings not to forget loved ones.

The reaction to this kind of marketing among students is very mixed.

“I do think that Valentine’s has become more corporate in that now there are many more advertisements on things you can buy that are very expensive, instead of things that would make the other person be thankful for what they have received,” said Michael Vasquez, sophomore civil engineering major. “After all, it is the thought that counts.”

With all of these factors surrounding Valentine’s Day, it can be easy to forget why people go through all the trouble in the first place. Yet, there are still those who retain hope for the holiday and who think that celebrating your loved ones will be worth the effort.

“Personally, I love it,” said Tiffany Hannah, sophomore criminal justice major. “Yes, it’s cheesy and sucks that it’s just this one day, but that’s what makes it exciting. If you gave flowers every day then it wouldn’t be special, it’d be just another ordinary day. So however cheesy it may be, I happen to enjoy Valentine’s Day and all of the cute little things that come with it.”

Rebecca Guerrero may be reached at prospector@utep.edu

Photos special to The Prospector
Junior punter Ian Campbell has built his reputation on the football field as one of the nation’s top punters. Campbell finished fourth in the FBS last season averaging just over 46 yards per punt. This spring, with the extra time off before football season and practices commencing, he’s hoping to kick Cupid straight into his girlfriend’s heart.

Q: What’s the most unusual present you’ve given on Valentine’s?
A: I don’t like going all out. I guess my high school girl was kind of different. I made her go on a somewhat of a treasure hunt to get her gift. It was just an iPod and some other stuff that she needed. It’s just taking the extra time to think about making her go through her day doing something different.

Q: What’s a good amount of money to spend on Valentine’s Day?
A: It depends how much you can afford. I don’t think it amounts to how much you spend, but how much love you put into it. Maybe $50 or $60.

Q: Do you mind how much money your significant other spends on you?
A: No. I don’t care at all how much my girlfriend spends on me. She doesn’t have to spend anything.

Daniel Ornelas may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

Kickstart his heart
Player punts his way into love

By Daniel Ornelas
The Prospector

BASKETBALL from page 6

"Being an athlete, you get a lot of attention from just people in general and sometimes women can get jealous making the guy run from that," McCulley said. "I have been with my girl for four years, going on five, and I have been blessed in a situation where my girlfriend is alright."

McCulley has no big plans for Valentine’s just yet.

"I am going to give her a real big kiss. A real good kiss and tell her happy Valentine’s," McCulley said jokingly. "I might take her out and give her a box of chocolates. I don’t know yet."

Frankie Rodriguez may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

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Brain Zone

Brain Zone

The Prospector
February 14, 2012
Conference-USA, Mountain West join forces in all sports

By William Vega
The Prospector

Conference-USA and the Mountain West Conference announced Feb. 13 that the two have agreed to create a new intercollegiate association, which will begin in 2013-14.

“We think that the institutions that we would be partnering with in the Mountain West are institutions that we’ve always had a great deal of respect for,” UTEP President Diana Natalicio said. “They’re major state universities, we like those institutions, we like the people who run them and I think they offer us great opportunities for competitive experiences for our students.”

Presidents from the 16 remaining schools from both conferences agreed to begin the new conference in all sports. Those 16 schools were UTEP, East Carolina, Marshall, Rice, Tulsa, Southern Miss, Tulane and UAB from C-USA. Air Force, Colorado State, Fresno State, Hawaii, Nevada, UNLV, New Mexico and Wyoming were the other eight from the Mountain West. Fresno State, Nevada and Hawaii are scheduled to join the conference in 2013. Hawaii will be a football-only participant, playing its other sports in the Western Athletic Conference.

According to the release, the new conference “will likely include” a “membership of 18-24 universities; national scope from the Atlantic Seaboard to Hawaii (in football); championship football game format that includes semi-final matches; regular season scheduling in divisions; mechanisms to emphasize and improve academic standards and fiscal responsibility.”

C-USA lost Houston, SMU and UCF to the Big East in December 2011 and Memphis announced that they would join in February 2012. Boise State, who joined the Mountain West in 2011 and San Diego State also joined the Big East in December 2011 and TCU will join the Big 12. All seven teams will join their new conferences in 2013.

“Both conferences have lost members, Mountain West and Conference-USA, and this creates an entirely new environment…,” Natalicio said. “The stability issue is important. Frankly, it’s very wearing on everybody. Coaches and certainly me and others to have to adjust to new conference composition. That instability has hurt intercollegiate athletics a lot.”

William Vega may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

Paulette Wingo to speak at UTEP

Author Paulette Wingo, a UTEP Gold Nugget Award recipient in 2009 for the College of Education, will speak as part of UTEP’s Black History Month events at 1:30 p.m. Feb. 16 at Liberal Arts Building, room 318. His autobiography is called “The Person Behind the Passion: An Autobiography.”
Happy Valentine's Day!

To Diego G.
From Crystal L.
I love you with all my heart, babe! Forever & always!

To Shari
When you love someone you have to be willing to put your pride on the line and say I am in love with you.

To A.J. Ramirez
On faith. If you're with me you're my valentine.

To Kris
My heart is red but my veins are blue and my brain is full of thoughts with you.

To Grady
From Marva
My heart aches but my love is here and my love is filled with you.

To Maria
To my Valentine.

To Humby
From Your Loving Husband
My life has been a long journey into your arms.

To J.B.
Every day you make me so happy & I love you!