

The Plaid



February 2023

Volume 66, Issue 3

The Zen Lounge

**Staff Writer,
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Have you been dealing with stress or anxiety? Are you going through a tough period in your life? Do you want to take a breather and get away from it? Upland High School has now implemented the perfect solution to all of these problems. The Wellness Zen Lounge is a place in Upland High School, where students can go when they feel that they are under a lot of pressure and need to catch a break from their worries or anxieties. It is located in building L, otherwise called the cafeteria.

The Lounge contains a variety of fidget toys for students to use. Fidget toys help individuals with anxiety because they tend to fidget more. So, by using one of these gadgets it is an outlet. They can help calm a person's nerves and provide a distraction in

an overstimulating environment. Maya Duson said, "As of late, we've been seeing lots of students coming into The Wellness Zen Lounge due to grief or a loss of a loved one that may be affecting their everyday lives."

Kristen Dixon said, "On a daily



basis (as of now), the Wellness Zen Lounge has an average of up to fifteen or twenty students that come in for a short ten-minute break or as they call it, a

"Brain break."

The wellness Zen Lounge is available at any given point in the day. Students can drop in whenever they would like during



school, between the hours of 8:30 am to 3:30 pm, on normal days, or 8:30am to 2:40 pm on shortened

days. Even if a student is in the middle of an exam or a test, the student can ask the teacher if the student can walk down to the Wellness Zen Lounge

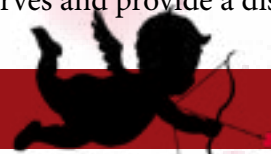
and recharge.

Walk-ins are allowed, although students can also schedule an appointment to be guaranteed a time slot. Here is a step-by-step

process of how to schedule a ten-minute brain break: 1. Pick up a flier near the Zen Lounge. 2. Scan the QR code. 3. Click on a time slot. 4. Press the confirm button. 5. Fill out

first name, last name and email address. 6. Press schedule event. Students will be greeted by UHS staff members, Kristen Dixon and Maya Duson. A 10-minute timer is set and students are obligated to return to class after the time is up on the timer.

UHS cares very much about the well-being of its students. If anyone is having a difficult time, a student does not need to be afraid to admit it and take care of himself.



Valentine's Day Grams On Stage Again



**Editor-In-Chief,
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Staff Writer,
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Nothing can tug on heartstrings more than the melody of love and the stories that they can resurrect. As Valentine's season comes to a bloom, our choir prepares to present their loveliest tunes. From picking out songs and practicing them, to preparing cozy teddy bears and stuffed animals, choir works to shower their performances with love. Students in choir work together as quickly and efficiently as possible, to prepare and present their best performance to Highlanders this Valentine's Day.

Madrigal member, junior Kevin Gewaid said, "What the singers do is prepare by making up our chorale groups for Valentine's Day grams, and we meet up, practice our songs, then choose out the song we all think would match the vibe for what the students will enjoy."

The times of grams can mean pulling together the various choirs to continually harp on each other's abilities and potential. Chorale member, sophomore Alina Mary said, "I'm in chorale, so it's one of the bigger choirs, and we begin

putting together our little songs as well. We also have guitarists on the team that help perform with us sometimes." Choir always pushes for excellence in their job of preparing for Valentine's Day grams and Highlanders should have high expectations for their performances. It is one of the events the chorale, themselves, take over and orchestrate. Chorale teacher, Estrada said, "It's a little different from other events because they do it for the most part on their own, getting into their groups and more, it's one of the few times, I'm not in control."

It's safe to say that choir has done a great job at bringing the passion and love for singing back this year, as the previous year was a difficult time. Gewaid said, "I would say the first struggle was bringing it back last year with Covid because when trying to bring it back, we weren't allowed to sing indoors or do a lot of things. So, last year, all we did was find people and hand them out and even then, we couldn't find people to give the grams out to, as half of them were out sick due to Covid. So, it made it much more difficult and I feel like this year, coming back it's going to be much harder to

pass out the grams just because it was harder to pass them out years prior."

Even in the midst of rocky times, Valentine's Day grams have always stayed true to their core ability to make people feel special. It has traveled among the roads of many Highlanders memories as it originated from the current choir teacher himself. Estrada said, "I have been here for 19 years. Therefore, the grams have too. As I did it at my old school and thought to bring it here too."

Carrying unforgettable energy throughout the years it has been at Upland, Valentine's Day Grams are woven through many generations and classes. Gewaid said, "It's been something going on for a long time. I have a sibling who went to Upland years prior and they also had Valentine's Day's Grams. Overall, I feel like it's a tradition for choir to uphold, as well as our time to interact with students more than we usually do."

Not only can they show love, but grams also allow for fun and laughter between siblings, friends and classmates on campus, as they appreciate and show jest with each other. Continuing Gewaid said, "A funny story about the grams is

that my sister actually decided to buy my brother one and pretend to be his secret admirer to trick him. He was left going around campus wondering who it was from, as she had planned everything down to the detail, leaving him clueless."

As a source of love, singing can transcend and go beyond many levels of affection, it can create fonder memories etched into our minds for a lifetime. Emphasized by Estrada, organizing the grams allows for the traditional card, stuffed animal, or present to feel grander to that original moment. Mary said, "It adds more of a meaning. It takes the song and adds way more to it." The performative gesture highlighted how music, itself, was special and in turn, makes everyone and anyone feel special in their most beautiful moments.

Gewaid said, "I feel like music is like a poem. But it's something deeper than a poem. It adds a little spice and jazz, similar to writing, but allowing for it to stick in your mind. With poems, you'll get repetitive tones, but with music, you'll get that and a tune. I feel like people see songs with memories too, so it can be really special."

Features

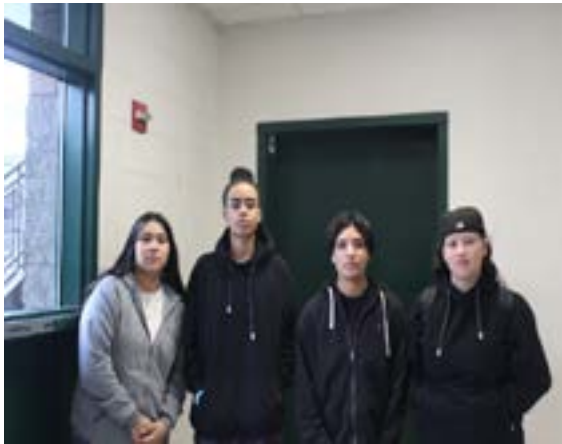
Favorite Gifts To Give



**Staff Writers,
Lianna Smith
Dani Cortes**

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, here are some opinions of what to do for your significant other for the holiday. Some people prefer to give gifts rather than receive, but gifts are a way of showing appreciation towards someone, such as a significant other, friend, or even family. Many big gift-givers enjoy giving gifts, like

hand-written letters, paper-made flowers, and homemade desserts. Sophomore, Analise Valdez said, "Yeah. I like letters and homemade crafts. It's cute--like a gift of appreciation and



that's what I prefer."

There are many quick and easy gifts out there to give to your Valentine that are still memorable and nice. Most of the students all said that they prefer to be on the receiving end, rather than being on the giving side. Sophomore, Heavenly Snachez said, "I love really big stuffed animals

or flowers. Something you can carry



around because I like to show off the gifts I got."

Other students shared what they preferred to receive, such as junior

Savannah Arciniega, when she said, "I would like flowers and a fit." Anghelica Mendoza said, "I'd like chocolates or Lego flowers." Sophomore, basketball player, Alyssa Ramirez said, "I'd want a big teddy bear and money and I'd get them flowers."

Statistically, it's more likely for a man

to get someone a gift than a woman for Valentine's Day. According to finder.com article, "Are you getting someone a gift for

Valentine's Day," by Richard Laycock and Catherine Choi, it said, "67.68 % of men say 'yes' while 32.32% of men 'won't.' and 59.49% of Women 'would buy' a gift while

40.51% 'wouldn't.'"

Even though the main purpose of Valentine's day isn't gift giving, it is very prominent that many



people prefer it. Valentine's Day should be celebrated as a way of showing people care, whether it's something bought or homemade. It's the thought that counts.



Last Minute Date Ideas

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Layout and Design Editor,
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The season of love is a package-deal with warm feelings and excitement. If you're in a relationship, you're no doubt watching the day as it nears in anticipation, or you're looking at the calendar and realizing you have nothing prepared.

On this day, making plans can be especially difficult when couples are going out to celebrate their relationships. Restaurants are



booked, tickets are sold out, and the only option seems to be staying home with your partner. Although indulging once a year can be a nice reward, making it a reality can be unrealistic for some, especially for the youth. Being able to spend excessively is not always an option,

but there are many inexpensive, endearing ways to show your partner appreciation.

If you're in need of advice, turning to people with experience is your best hope. English teacher, Mrs. Edmundson said, "For a last-minute date, I'd probably go walking around Victoria Gardens, and then go to Starbucks or a Boba place. Or I'd go to a bookstore, walk around for a bit, and get some coffee. Getting coffee is always a good date idea,"

A last-minute date can be a simple outing, but if you make your choices carefully, you can create a night filled with you and your partner's favorite activities. As they say, "It's the thought that counts!" Some individuals may wonder if they can get by with a thoughtful gift for the holiday and leave it at that. Their answer: No way! As Mrs. Edmundson

explained, "I never expected any gifts on my dates. The quality time was a gift in itself. I prefer to go out for dates. For a date, I feel like you need to get away from your normal, everyday life." A thoughtful gift is always appreciated, but the only thing that can compensate

for last minute planning is quality time. Carve out even a few hours to spend together, and your partner will be content.

Valentine's Day is the most romantic day of the year, dedicated to love and expressing one's love with gifts or romantic dates is a must for most. Luckily, you don't need to spend a lot of money or time planning how you want to make that special person in your life feel appreciated. For an easy, affordable or even last-minute date, sophomore, Isaiah Bravo said, "I would take my Valentines date mini golfing... because it's fire. Then to eat at McDonalds." Mini golfing is the perfect date for anyone, since it allows a more intimate experience of putting down cell phones and seeing each other's competitive sides.

Last-minute planning doesn't always have to be stressful, when activities like roller skating or even bowling are both affordable and

convenient, which leaves where to go for food. There are many local restaurants, like The Sycamore Inn, a charming steakhouse conveniently located off route 66, perfect

for anyone who prefers traditional face-to-face dates or for those who prefer take out. Senior, Adrian Ventura said, "I would take my Valentine's date to eat at The

Sycamore Inn. They have really good food... I recommend the steak. It's really good."

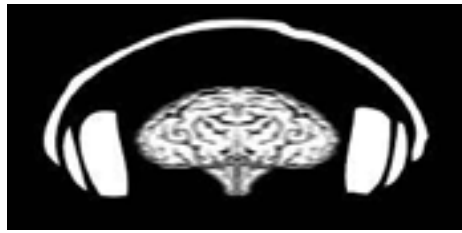
Whether you're in a new relationship or have been together for a while, the memories made on Valentine's Day will be cherished forever. If you haven't already made plans, there are many choices, such as walking around shops, trying out new activities, or simply sitting down at a nice restaurant. For many, just having each other's presence is enough to feel loved and appreciated. Leave behind the misconception that only expensive gifts can accurately represent your love for your partner. The day requires nothing extravagant, only genuine and honest affection.



Music's Effect On The Mind

Staff Writers,
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Adding music to a Valentine's Day celebration can help to create meaningful memories. Music is something that anyone around the world is able to enjoy and music is able to help people stabilize their emotions and feel content within themselves. Amy Johnson's online article, "Music Psychology," from blogaudio-socket.com said, "We all have songs that remind us of specific points or events in our lives. This emotional connection to music allows us to remember events. We can be transported back to past times upon hearing certain songs. Our connection to music as humans goes beyond listening, and we base lots of events around music, or heavily inte-



grate it." Music is a large part of many people's lives. In the article from Health.harvard.edu, "Music can boost memory and mood," by Dr. Anne Fabiny, it said, "Two recent studies—one in the United States and the other in Japan—found that music doesn't just help us retrieve stored memories, it also helps us lay down new ones."

Fabiny explained that researchers at the music and neuroimaging laboratory at Harvard-affiliated Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center have proven that if a person is recovering from a stroke or a brain injury on the left side of the brain, singing a song could be helpful. The right side of the

brain is undamaged and that is where the ability to sing originates, so using this method could help a person recover the ability to speak by singing.

Fabiny said, "Former Representative Gabrielle Giffords used this technique to learn to speak well enough to testify before a Congressional committee two years after a gunshot wound to her brain destroyed her ability to



speak." The indicated method could also be used for someone to learn new words and phrases faster because it sticks with them more and continues to stay with them throughout the rest of their lives.

In the University of Central Florida's online site, it's article, "Your Brain On

Music," it explained that it does not matter what type of music a person listens to in order to make memories. The article said, "In recent studies, they've found that people with dementia respond better to the music they grew up listening to. 'If you play someone's favorite music, different parts of the brain light up,' Sugaya explains. 'That means memories associated with music are emotional memories, which never fade out — even in Alzheimer's patients.'"

So, this Valentine's Day, be sure to play music. If you have a special song with someone or together you choose a song, having it being played can cause a romantic evening to become even more special and memorable event.

Exploring the Five Love Languages

Staff Writers,
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Individuals today can show their love in one of five ways: Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Physical Touch, Acts of Service and Gift Giving/Receiving. Understanding what a partner's preferred Love Language is can be crucial to strengthening a relationship. If an individual knows what type of Love Language a partner prefers, then it will help to unlock the key to a partner's heart.

One of the first types of expression of Love Language is through Spoken Words or words of affirmation. According to VeryWellMind.com's online article, "What are the Five Love Languages," by Sherri Gordon, it said that these types of individuals enjoy words of encouragement, such as inspirational quotes, love letters, text messages, compliments and overall kind words.

The second and most popular love language is Quality Time. Gordon said, "Someone with this love language wants undivided attention. They feel loved if you are present and focused on them when you are together. This means putting

down the cell phone, turning off the computer, making eye contact, and actively listening."

Physical Touch is the third love language. It typically consists of hand holding, kissing, cuddling, and other various physical connections. As Gordon said, "This person's idea of a perfect date might include cuddling on the couch with a glass of wine and a good movie. They simply want to be close to their partner physically."

The next type of Love Language is performing Acts of Service. Gordon said that these acts tend to include being kind and supporting a significant other with simple tasks, such as doing chores, getting gas, cooking, and taking care of one another are a few recommends.



The final type of Love Language is Gift Giving/Receiving. Gordon said, "People who enjoy receiving gifts as part of their primary love language do not necessarily expect large or expensive presents; it's more the effort and thoughtfulness behind the gift that count."

When you take the time to pick out a gift specifically for them, it tells them you really know them."

It's important to begin incorporating your primary love language in your relationship as soon as you identify it.

They are one of the simplest ways to strengthen and deepen a relationship, which is one of the reasons they hold so much significance. Additionally, they build empathy, uphold intimacy, aid in personal growth, and obviously, meaningfully convey love in a way that makes a partner feel special. However, love languages are not always a solution, so it is crucial to avoid becoming reliant on them.

Students and staff around our campus discussed their ideas about the Love Languages. Contrary to popular opinion, Senior Sophia Martinez said, "Words of affirmation are my least favorite type of love language." Martinez believed that in a relationship, people should feel secure enough to know their partner loves them without being told.

When asked what his love language

was, senior, Isaac Serrano said, "It stems from how my family shows love; through food and hugs." It shows that not all love languages are necessarily romantic. They can exist in friendship and family life as well.



As for senior Charles Aragon, he expressed what he felt was most important when he said, "More quality time means stronger bonds, and stronger bonds mean healthier relationships."

Giving an insight to how he communicates with his wife of thirty-two years, UTV Director, James Miura said, "I do it verbally, through actions, notes, emails, gifts, and spending time with her." Continuing on, Miura said, "Time is the most precious thing—and I would much prefer spending time with someone than receiving a gift."

It's vital to be able to communicate with a partner in that partner's preferred love language. We encourage everyone to take the quiz from 5LoveLanguages.com, if they are curious to learn what their preferred Love Language is!

Find your love language!
<https://5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/>

Navigating Long-Term Relationships

Staff Writer,
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Co-Editor,
Liyah Sera

As Valentine's day approaches it may seem surprising how long people, especially high school students, stay with each other. It bears the question of why there is such an appeal to being with one person for long periods of time. According to MeetMindful.com's online article, "Different Needs, Different Speeds Short Term vs. Long Term Relationships," by Krystal Baugher, she explores the science behind long-term relationships and short-term relationships. Baugher said, "Not every relationship is meant for the long-haul. Often times people want a connection of some sort—physical, mental, spiritual—without it being so



serious" Baugher also explained that at, "some point or another many people start wanting more long-lasting relationships; generally, a steady boyfriend or girlfriend, perhaps a husband or wife, or maybe life partner if marriage isn't of interest but devotion is." The idea of long-term and short-term relationships are subjective to

the kind of person someone is and what that person is looking for in romantic relationships, rather than the pressure to stay with someone for a certain amount of time. Relationships are different experiences for every person.

People believe that over time, the sparks that struck between them and their significant others come to an end. Anatomy and Biotech educator, Elizabeth Salazar stayed in that lavender haze with her husband. Salazar is a very joyful and

positive individual who said, "Be patient. Take your time. Learn how to OVER communicate and be willing to give to the other person."

Salazar's advice for younger relationships is to not focus on society's norms and expectations because relationships are always based on a person and that person's choices to stay enchanted with the lover. Salazar and her husband have been together for 22 years and more to come. Salazar explained her secret to a lasting relationship when she said, "Open and honest communication, mutual trust and always be willing to give more than you think you get. Always stay 50/50." A strong and healthy bond in a relationship is made by how much one is willing to put in and it should help to build a happy relationship, keeping that love golden and



strong. People usually think that long-term relationships pertain to only older couples, however, there are examples between high schoolers that have maintained a deep-rooted relationship. Senior, McKenzie Saaverdra and her boyfriend, Leo Bravo, have been dating for four years and believe in the power of long-term relationships. Saaverdra said, "My experience in a long-term relationship has been positive. All relationships have hiccups in their timeline but we have worked through all of them and built up a lot of trust."

All in all, being with someone for a long period of time has no age limit. However, it takes commitment and dedication to another person, in order to perfect a long-term relationship.



Entertainment



Love Tropes in Film

Staff Writers,
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Romance films have defined pop culture. Oftentimes, movies follow the same blueprint for telling a love story. Including the same story-telling components has created the famous love tropes that many look for in movies today. Valentine's season is the perfect time to sit down, relax, and pick out your favorite romantic classic. Whether you're planning a night out or simply staying at home, a bittersweet love story is the perfect way to wrap up this romantic holiday.

In the hundreds of love tropes displayed throughout romance films, there are a special few that many hold dear to their hearts. An article by TCK Publishing identifies enemies to lovers, forbidden love, and love triangles as three of the top romantic film tropes. Enemies to lovers, seen in movies like *Pride and Prejudice*, *Star Wars*, and more are classic ways to create that longing-for-love sensation so many search for in their favorite films. Junior, Kayla



Logan, said, "Although enemies to lovers is unrealistic. I love seeing it in films."

Although most people do not experience the classic enemies to lovers ideal in real life, it's still fun to live it through popular movies, making it one of the most famous love tropes to date. Forbidden love is one of the most well-used tropes, depicted most notably in the classic, *Romeo and Juliet*. This trope, also often referred to as "Star-Crossed Lovers," has been seen in film for decades



and remains a popular way of telling a love story. To many, there is a special bittersweet feeling that comes with

these tales, despite their ability to jerk some tears.

Lastly, a love triangle, seen in countless love stories and often appearing in most people's favorite

shows, such as *The Vampire Diaries*, *Jane the Virgin*, and more is an immensely popular way of creating anticipation and engagement from viewers. Despite the fact that a character may end up with someone you weren't rooting for, it's entertaining to keep up with a story following this classic trope.

Love stories have the unique power to shape people's expectations of real life relationships. There are various character tropes that make appearances in

romantic comedies, but some stand out more than others. One of the most popular male character tropes is the classic "bad boy." An article from *The Take* describes the bad boy character as the guy who "acts like he doesn't care about 'normal' morals or values" and as "the human equivalent of a mystery waiting to be solved." The bad boy makes ap-



pearances in movies like *10 Things I Hate About You* with Patrick, *The Breakfast Club* with Bender, and *Dirty Dancing* with Johnny.

A popular female character type in romantic comedies is the Manic Pixie Dream Girl, a term coined in 2007 by film critic, Nathan Robin. He described the character type as existing "solely in the fevered imaginations of sensitive writer-directors to teach broodingly soulful young men to embrace life and its mysteries and adventures." The Manic Pixie Dream Girl character is seen as fun and different by the male lead. She exists as the 'perfect' partner for him and is exactly what he needs at the current moment in his life. Classic examples of

the Manic Pixie Dream Girl are Summer in *500 Days of Summer*, Clementine in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, and Samantha in *Her*.

Love tropes make romance movies what they are. Enemies falling in love, a manic pixie dream girl, a love triangle, a bad boy, and many other romance tropes are core components of any great love story. So this Valentine's



Astrology, Horoscopes, & Compatibility



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There are many hypothetical methods, as well as superstitions used to tell if couples are right for each other or not. But one of the most popular theories that teens always seem to resort to is horoscope compatibility. According to the Reader Digest's online article, "Zodiac Compatibility: Signs That Should and Shouldn't Date," it said, "Astrology and horoscopes are meant to guide all of the zodiac signs toward the right path to their future—and true love." For example, Capricorns to Virgos or Sagittarius' to Aries.



what they can do to woo them, or if it's even worth trying, especially if they aren't compatible. To test the theory, couples were interviewed to see if their zodiac signs really mattered in their relationships.

One of the couples that was interviewed was the pairing of seniors, Lucciano Sandoval and Andrew Perez. Although the month-old couple do believe in astrology, they are quite an uneven but compatible match. Lucciano, being a Gemini, is compatible with Libras and Andrew, being a Cancer, is compatible with Taurus. Sandoval said, "Gemini's are usually mean." Perez said, "Cancers are sensitive and Aquariuses are kind of weird." Despite those reasons, they're opposite characteristics benefit each other.



Sandoval explained their connection when he said, "My anger cancels out his sadness."

Government teacher, Debbie Glenn said, "Gemini is restless." When she was asked if she believed her characteristics fit her, she said, "I think you could pick out things like, oh, that fits me but is that everything in the characteristic? If you cherry pick what fits you, then is it really valid?"

Mrs. Glenn added that she doesn't personally believe in Astrology but said her daughter is very up to date with it. Mrs. Glenn is a Gemini and her husband is a Leo. Glenn said, "We have been married for 25 years... not that we aren't compatible but I don't think it

is because of our zodiac signs."

Another strong believer of astrology, senior, Daniella De Guzman said, "I've believed in astrology for a good amount of my life." Guzman, being a Sagittarius, believed it fits her. Guzman said, "I've read about my horoscope and everything it said relates to me a lot." Guzman and her boyfriend have been together for five months and her boyfriend is an Aquarius. According to Guzman, she said, "I think our signs are compatible because we both value the same values and beliefs. Our charts aren't fully compatible but I feel that we

When it comes to winning at the game of love, it seems people will try any measure to ensure their success in finding their perfect someone.



Best Breakup Remedies

**Co-Editor,
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Staff Writer,
Jewel Martinez**

Upon breaking up with your significant other, you may want to endlessly wallow in your misery. However, reviving oneself from heartbreak will be beneficial through focusing on self-improvement...and then preparing for payback!

While liberating your anger from the recesses of your mind and picking up the pieces of your

broken heart are important to the process of healing from heartbreak, there are important, self-initiated steps that can be taken to help yourself move fully forward.

Senior, Giselle Avila said, "Personally, the best way to heal from heartbreak is allowing yourself to grieve first. But as a greater portion, spend your time and energy on hobbies, even if it's just bingeing a show. Slowly unwind from worrying what happened and just focus on yourself." Clearly, Avila believes prioritization of one's self is the best remedy to cure a broken heart. She

also said, "Vent! And be honest with yourself about the situation."

Coming to terms with your circumstances allows you to understand that as it was able to occur, it is also

able to pass. Senior, Melanie Jenkins puts healing and revenge this way, when she said, "I would say that to get back at your ex is to show that you can have fun without them. I think showing that your life just continues to go on, with or without them, can show how you don't necessarily need them in your life."

When it comes to truly getting back at your ex, there is silent action and blaringly obvious actions you can take. However, there are ways to get your payback, without being precisely direct. In her take on breakup revenge, Avila said, "I don't really believe in revenge, because I feel it's immature. But if it's a situation where you have no choice, the best way to get back is to not say, but show how you've



grown from what happened, by just enjoying yourself and your happiness." Finding contentedness within yourself will not only instigate regret for your ex, but fulfill the desires of any vengeful spirits that you may have left over from the breakup.

The end of a relationship can feel like your world has turned upside down, but understand that in the aftermath, you can still find beauty and fulfillment in your life, without being dependent on another person for it.



Why Being Single is Okay

**Staff Writers,
Dianeicus West
Maria Perez-Camargo**

Many of us have a grasp of what being single is like. Though not every individual does find peace in being single, some individuals believe that they need to be in a committed relationship, in order to find happiness in life and within themselves. Being single gives an opportunity to find freedom to grow and learn as a person.

School administrator, Monica Carothers, believes that when you are single, you are able to do whatever you want, whenever you want. Carothers said, "Eat chocolate. Go to the movies. Just do things by

yourself and not anyone else."

There are societal constraints that may dictate relationships are mandatory. To Carothers, relationships are more of a need than a want. People seem to need someone to love. Finding yourself is also important, when wanting to be committed to another individual. Carother said, "Absolutely. 110%. You need to find yourself when you think you know someone. Give it time. You're never going to know someone within a week, month, or even year."

Carothers has been in many relationships. If she can compare relationship to relationship, she believes that she could have put them together and be at peace. It is very important to know who you are first, before delving deep into a relationship. As of right now, Carothers goes home and doesn't have much to do. She believes it feels wonderful from time to time but it can also feel a bit lonely. When she goes back to look at those moments, she finds joy in having relaxing time to herself.

Junior, Richard Ejim said, "I think being single is okay because you're born single and you can die

single. You don't need anyone in your life, except yourself and if you love yourself, then that's okay."

Further adding his perspective junior, Jonathan Simental said, "Some people just don't like relationships. Some people are independent people, like my mom. She's an independent woman." Simental believes that when people think relationships are mandatory, "They feel pressured by other people around them. They see other people being in relationships and they feel as if they need that too." Peer pressure plays a significant role when it comes to one's self esteem. Many follow the trend and begin to settle for less, in order to please others.

Offering some advice for ways to cope with being single and feeling obligated to be in a relationship to find happiness, Carothers said, "Find that friend. If it's not a friend, it's a family member because those are the people you lean on. The shoulders you cry on. You don't always need to have that significant other. This is what friends and family are for."

Simental's advice to others was to, "Be more open with yourself."



In addition, Ejim added that, "You don't need anyone else to love yourself. Find content within yourself before wanting to be committed to somebody else. You should always prioritize yourself, in order to make yourself truly happy."

Many people have realized that there is a lot more to life than just love. Relationships do not need to be the only way for people to be truly happy and content with their lives. No one should rely on another person for happiness. Ultimately, people should all be able to decide what's best for themselves, in order to live their lives to the fullest.



Serotonin Levels and Valentine's Day

Staff Writers,
Kaylie Berry
Jack Emerson

Valentine's Day is a day dedicated to expressing love. The article, "Valentine's Day Statistics: Get Informed On This Romantic Day [Infographic]," by Contact Pigeon said, "Based on NRF research, the percentage of people expecting to celebrate Valentine's Day in the US is ~50%." Millions of people are asked to be someone's Valentine, which causes either immense joy from someone accepting, or sadness from rejection. One of the hormones responsible for these feelings is called Serotonin.

According to the article, "Serotonin," by Cleveland Clinic.org, it said, "Serotonin in your brain regulates your mood. It's often called your body's natural 'feel good' chemical." Serotonin is released a lot more frequently during Valentine's Day, when romance is in the air!

Although people might be somewhat familiar with Serotonin, not many people know how it actually works. Freshman, Avril Loza said, "I'm not really sure what it is, I feel like

I have heard of it before but I don't know what it is." Another student, sophomore, Leilani Broussard said, "I think Serotonin is the happy drug in your brain."

According to the Collins English Dictionary, from Collinsdictionary.com, it said, "Serotonin is a chemical produced naturally in your brain that affects the way you feel, for example, making you feel happier, calmer, or less hungry."

An additional explanation as to what serotonin is, is offered by the article, "What Is Serotonin," by Lindsey Konkel, which said, "Serotonin is sometimes known as the happy chemical [...] As a neurotransmitter, Serotonin sends messages between nerve cells in the brain. That makes



serotonin an important molecule for influencing mental health and brain function."



Speaking of mental health, Serotonin has many effects on the body, including affecting the way a person's body functions, as well as their brain. A little-known fact is that serotonin has different effects on the body, besides just making it feel happy. When asked about the effects that Serotonin can have on the body, freshman, Emma Tarin said, "I think Serotonin affects you by making you happy and changing your feelings."

Some people, however, do know what Serotonin can do to a person. Cleveland Clinic.org also said, "Serotonin plays several roles in your body, including influencing learning, memory, happiness as well as regu-

lating body temperature, sleep, sexual behavior and hunger. Lack of enough serotonin is thought to play a role in depression, anxiety, mania and other health conditions."

Love affects Serotonin, therefore during a world holiday, such as Valentine's Day, Serotonin levels are shown to be impacted a lot more. The article, "The Science of Love and How It Impacts The Brain" by Post University's website, postedu.blog, said "Love affects Serotonin [...] for men, Serotonin levels decrease in response to a romantic relationship, while women experience a significant increase in Serotonin. [...] higher serotonin in women was associated with obsessive thinking about romantic partners.

Millions of people celebrate Valentine's Day around the world, which means that Serotonin levels are affected tremendously during this time. Love is one of the main components to impact a person's serotonin levels, which can make them happier and healthier.



Why We Love Chocolate



Staff Writers,
James William
Cash Backer

Valentine's day is finally here, which means many people will be giving gifts of chocolate. Thedailymeal.com's article, "How Many Pounds of Chocolate Do American's Buy for Valentine's Day," by Caroline Menyes, said, "Turns out, 58 million pounds of chocolate are purchased in the seven days leading up to Feb. 14." But this raises the question of how chocolate can make people happy?

According to the online article, "Why does chocolate make us happy," by Sarah Jordan, from sciencefocus.com, Chocolate has something called serotonin in it and it is responsible for happiness. Chocolate also has an amino acid in it, called tryptophan that

raises serotonin levels, which is why when people eat chocolate, it makes them happy and calm.

Chocolate having serotonin goes even deeper. Sfgate.com's article, "Dark Chocolate and Serotonin Levels," by

Jessica Bruso, explained that Cacao, chocolate's main ingredient, also has levels of serotonin. Cacao not only has tryptophan but also has a large amount of phenylethylamine which increases serotonin. Bruso said, "Chocolate containing 85 percent of cocoa has the most serotonin, with 2.9 micrograms per gram,



and chocolate containing 70 to 85 percent cocoa has the most serotonin precursor L-tryptophan, with 13.3 micrograms per gram."

Cacao isn't the only ingredient in chocolate that raises serotonin levels; sugar does too. It only temporarily increases serotonin levels though. According to durango-herald.com's article, "What Sugars Cravings Are Telling You," by Nicola Dehlinger, it said, "Because sugar boosts serotonin levels, you feel happier (but only temporarily), so your brain keeps craving this happy chemical again and

again."

Chocolate gives the brain some dopamine, which is the reward function in our brains when we do something that makes us feel good, after we eat it. According to www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov's article, "The Neuroprotective Effects of Cocoa Flavanol and its Influence on Cognitive Performance," by Astrid Nehlig, it said, "Chocolate may interact with some neurotransmitter systems such as dopamine (chocolate contains the dopamine precursor tyrosine), serotonin and endorphins (contained in cocoa and chocolate) that contribute to appetite, reward and mood regulation."

So, it seems that chocolate is the best gift to give for Valentine's Day because not only is it delicious, it also makes people happy.

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