

# PDA history runs from taboo to 'woo-hoo'

Public displays of affection make some students grimace, but others find 'oral eroticism' acceptable in today's culture

By Caron Alarab  
for the Emerald

**K**issing, hugging, pecking, holding and groping.

At one point in time, these interactions were considered sacred or private, meant only for the home and the bedroom. However, in today's society, some of them have moved outside, where they're known as public displays of affection, and people's views on them vary.

In the book "Strange Customs of Courtship and Marriage," William J. Fielding states that during horse-and-buggy days, kissing along the roadside in broad daylight was known as "spooning" or "mooning" and was considered quite taboo.

Fielding also found that the urban Italians of the late 15th century treated this "oscillatory greeting" so seriously that if a young man kissed a maiden in public, it practically made marriage obligatory. In contrast, Fielding's studies showed that in the early 16th century, Pierto Lando — a Paduan official — ordered his own son to be decapitated for kissing a girl, with whom he was in love, in a public street.

In early 20th-century America, young men of the working class were often promiscuous, according to Alfred Kinsey in "The Modernization of Sex." But because the lower classes considered all types of kissing or "oral eroticism" perverse, a working-class boy might have had intercourse with hundreds of girls but only kissed a few of them, Kinsey states.

Nowadays, social attitudes about physical affection seem to be more diverse, and some people are more accepting.

"I think I'm one of the few people who doesn't have a problem with public displays of affection," senior Molly Lancaster said. "It shows there's a little love in the world."

On the other hand, sophomore Harvey Chan

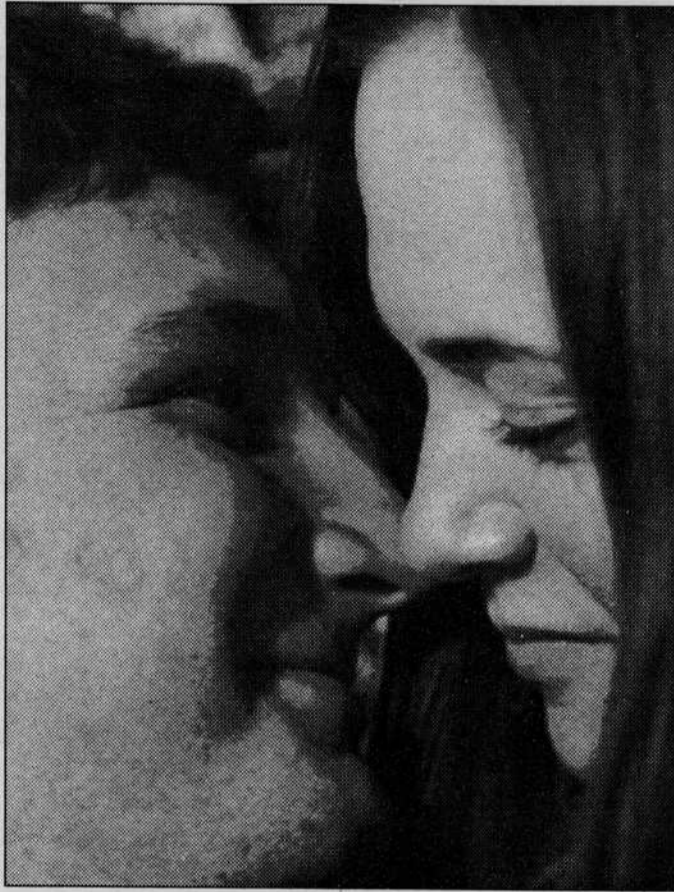


Photo illustration by Adam Amato Emerald

prefers discretion.

"Be aware of those around you. A kiss, a hug, it's all good. But too much touching and stuff, then it's time to get a little bit more private," he said.

Junior Jennifer Levy chooses to abstain from too much public intimacy in her relationships.

"I won't do it," she said. "I'll hold hands, I will hug, and I will give a quick peck. There will be no swapping spit. There will be no long embrace."

Senior Amy Farley and senior Alex Subert have been dating for four years. They think there are some places where people should refrain from public displays of affection; Farley said the worst place would be in class, while Subert said, "I think anytime you're around a lot of chil-

dren it seems like an inappropriate time."

As far as what they allow in their relationship, the two said, "We aren't that into PDAs as a couple. A kiss on the cheek goodbye and holding hands, but nothing really beyond that."

They agreed that PDAs happen most often in the spring.

"Remember in the residence halls, when the couples would come out in mass quantities to make out on the Humpy Lumpy Lawn?" Farley asked.

Sophomore Sara Banks and sophomore James Dugan will celebrate a one-year anniversary on Feb. 12th. They think PDAs happen most often during the summer.

"A lot more bodies are being shown," Banks said.

"Everybody's coming out of their holes," Dugan added.

But they don't agree about everything. They both think kissing

and holding hands are okay, "but no groping or anything," Banks said.

Dugan disagrees. "Oh, I'm OK with groping."

Caron Alarab is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.


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