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Long-distance couples find ways to deal with their separation on Valentine's Day

By Marcus Hathcock  
Oregon Daily Emerald

It may not be unusual to see students holding hands, hugging and kissing at the University on Valentine's Day. But for the many University freshmen with significant others out of the area, close contact is nearly impossible.

Ian Reynoso said he and his girlfriend Jenny had been dating for four months in their hometown of Los Alamitos, Calif., before he left for college. His girlfriend still attends high school in California, while Reynoso studies at the University.

"I guess the worst part of Valentine's Day would be being alone," Reynoso said. "But I have been alone on every Valentine's except for this one, so I am kind of used to it. It will be just like every

# Far and Away

other year."

However, Reynoso said this is the first time he has had a significant other on Valentine's Day.

He said while it's hard to be away from his girlfriend on Feb. 14, it's even harder to watch couples in everyday life.

"Being around couples is worse (than Valentine's Day)," Reynoso said. He cautioned that seeing couples doesn't make him wish for a new girlfriend here. "I always just wish she was closer," he said.

Reynoso said they're going to celebrate the day by talking on the phone and exchanging gifts. He said he plans to send a card to Jenny via his mother in California. He will tell his mother to buy Jenny a specific gift and take the package to her on Feb. 14.

"She's already bought me a gift," Reynoso said. "I'm just waiting for it to arrive."

Kathleen Sullivan is also waiting for her gift to arrive. Sullivan's gift, however, is her boyfriend Jon himself, whom she expects for a visit a week after Valentine's Day, when they'll have a late celebration.

For more than half of their nearly three-year relationship, Sullivan has had to endure a long-distance relationship with Jon. She said they attended high school together on an Army base in Wuerzburg, Germany, until his family was relocated to the United States. Now, Sullivan attends the University while her boyfriend is finishing high school in Fort Knox, Ky.

The promise of a post-Valentine's Day visit is exciting, but not having her boyfriend on the day itself is still somewhat disappointing, Sullivan said.

Valentine's Day "really tests me," she said. "Being around other amorous couples is-

n't easy on me, but in the end it just makes me more thankful for our relationship. I know that he loves me even if he isn't here on Valentine's to show it."

Sullivan added that Valentine's Day lets her know that it's almost time for Jon to come visit.

"The closer to that time, the better," she said.

Sullivan said she expects her boyfriend to arrive in Eugene on Feb. 21.

Though he'll be a week late, Sullivan said that on that day it will be Valentine's Day all over again.

"We'll just have a belated holiday of our own," Sullivan said. Part of that holiday includes exchanging gifts and being "lovey dovey," she said.

But on Valentine's Day itself, Sul-

livan said she'll probably talk on the phone with her long-distance love and go out to dinner with others who don't have Valentine's dates.

"It's okay, though," she said. "He will be attending the University next year, and we will finally be able to have a normal Valentine's Day."

Like Reynoso and Sullivan, freshman Jeff Frawley said he has had to deal with the negative side effects of a post-high school relationship.

Frawley's girlfriend, Dana, attends the University of Wisconsin while he attends the University. Their distance keeps them apart for Valentine's Day, but Frawley said the holiday has traditionally been low-key in their relationship.

"Usually we didn't make too big

of a deal on Valentine's Day," he said. "Maybe we went out to eat or to somewhere special - that kind of thing."

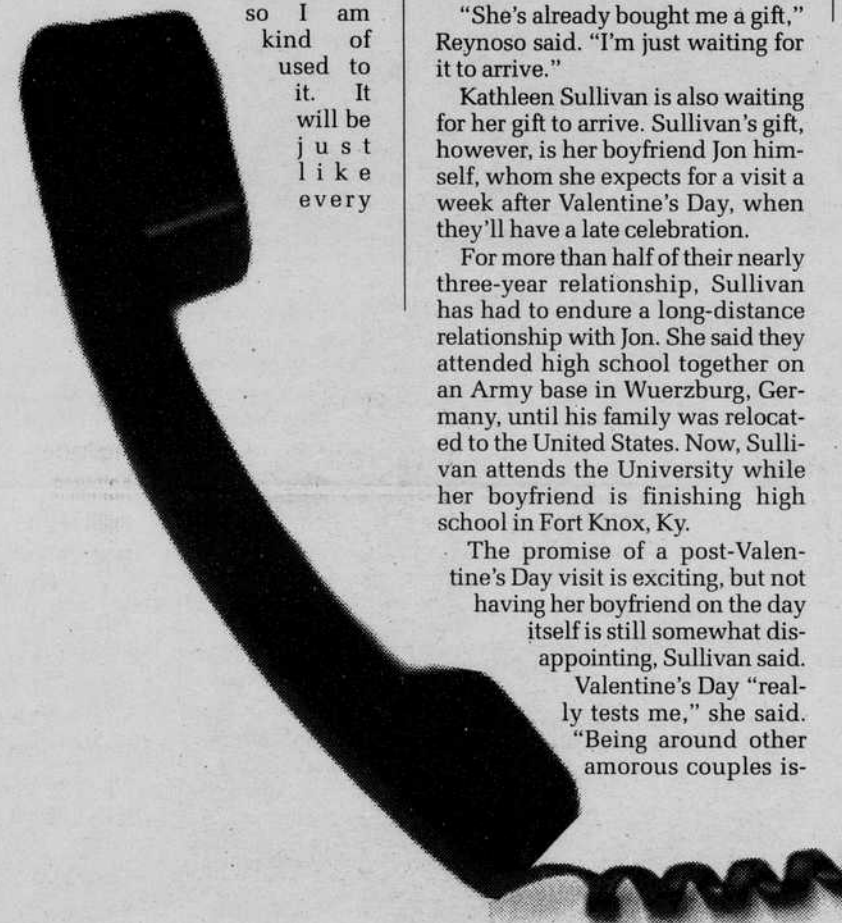
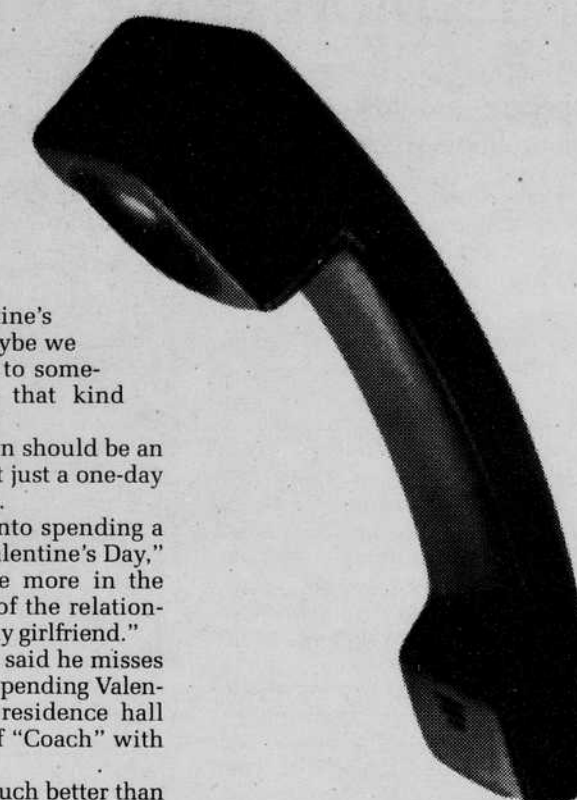
Showing affection should be an everyday thing, not just a one-day event, Frawley said.

"I'm not really into spending a lot of money on Valentine's Day," he said. "I believe more in the friendship aspect of the relationship, and so does my girlfriend."

Though Frawley said he misses Dana, he plans on spending Valentine's Day in his residence hall watching reruns of "Coach" with his roommate.

"It doesn't get much better than that," he said.

E-mail reporter Marcus Hathcock at [marcusathcock@dailymerald.com](mailto:marcusathcock@dailymerald.com).



Freshman Kathleen Sullivan talks to her boyfriend of almost three years, Jon Phillips, who lives in Fort Knox, Kentucky. "(We talk) twice a week on the phone, but we email everyday," Sullivan says.

Adam Amato Emerald

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