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# Valentine's Day can exclude nontraditional relationships

The holiday of love tends to cater to heterosexual and "traditional" couples

**Athanasios Fkiaras**  
Freelance Reporter

A Valentine's Day card depicts a dinosaur picking up a tiny caveman from a heart-shaped candy box as the dinosaur's lover tosses another man in its mouth.

"I love the little scream-filled ones," it snarls.

Relative to the human species, a union between dinosaurs could safely be labeled as nontraditional. However, a casual stroll down a card aisle at Safeway reveals little representation for nontraditional couples. Categories such as "Grandma and Grandpa" or "Mom and Dad" are predominant examples of what one may find. "Dad and Dad" or "Grandma and Grandma," on the other hand, are mostly nonexistent. That society addresses dinosaur unions before non-mainstream human relationships is somewhat irritating to those in such relationships.

"It bothers me," said ASUO President Maddy Melton, who explained what she deemed a "heterocentric focus" in most Valentine's Day advertising. "The term 'heterocentric' is the assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and it's not even a blatant assumption. The way our language is structured leads folks to talk about couples in a very heterosexual dynamic. Heterocentrism really works subconsciously. (It is) the way we're conditioned to think."

Melton pointed to some positive



Lauren Wimer Photographer

Susan Harrison, co-director of the Nontraditional Student Union, said she and her partner, Jesse Dobson, have dealt with some difficulties because of their 16-year age difference.

changes within the media, adding that college campuses and local newspapers are beginning to be more inclusive of homosexuals.

"The fact that I can excel in my leadership as far as I have shows that society has changed," she said.

This is perhaps the lower cusp of the wave Melton said she often finds herself in. She said many homosexuals like herself "go in waves" — sometimes very angry at the

exclusion, and at other times too occupied to think much of it.

Former University student Ryan Minor is also on the lower cusp of the wave for the time being.

"It doesn't bother me," Minor said, referring to the lack of homosexual representation in Valentine's Day advertising. "I view it the same as I always did. I don't feel left out."

Turn to **COUPLES**, page 12B



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# Underwear, Gimp toys on list of alternative Valentine's gifts

Love can be expressed many ways, thanks to local and online gift retailers

**By Reese Lee**  
Freelance Reporter

Feather boas, scented wooden fruits and origami penguins are just some of the gifts available this Valentine's Day. These and many more make for alternatives to the usual flowers, candies and stuffed animals that are often given as tokens of affection.

"You could burn them a CD with all their favorite songs that shows the evolution of your relationship or make a bouquet of their favorite movies to watch together," freshman Amber Aikwij said. "Or you could make little origami penguins, if they really liked penguins."

Lacy underwear come in a selection of colors and styles, and are available at West Moon Trading Co., located at 840 E. 13th Ave., at prices more affordable than Victoria's Secret. Besides lingerie, the boutique also has a wide variety of quirky lampshades and decorative Oriental umbrellas. The lampshades come in modern as well as vintage designs, and the Oriental umbrellas come with different patterns.

Vintage lunchboxes make a nice unisex gift and are available at Hiron's Drug Store, located at 1950 Franklin Blvd. Scented wooden fruits and nuts, available at Hiron's in different scents, can add a touch of fragrance to any not-so-clean



Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

West Moon Trading Co., located at 840 E. 13th Ave., has gifts including lampshades and patterned umbrellas for couples looking to express their feelings creatively.

Turn to **GIFTS**, page 12B

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