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You think to yourself, this could be love.

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# Avoid Valentine's loneliness by scheduling fun for one

If you're like me, your typical Valentine's Day consists of sitting alone in your room, crying and rocking back and forth, struggling to watch your taped documentaries on the Son of Sam through the blur of your tears, only to fall asleep next to an empty bottle of Southern Comfort and a threadbare body pillow.

Even though Cupid didn't strike again this year, however, there's no reason to rip down random Valentine's decorations, laugh whenever generally happy couples fall into a tiff or test the tinsular strength of your wrist flesh against razor blades like some twisted product trial for the Consumer Reports From Hell.

Instead, channel your despair into something positive, something that will curb your solitude for at least one day this year:

1. Get something pierced. Anything. Not only will you have an excuse to show your newly pierced body parts to acquaintances and strangers, perhaps attracting the piercing fetishist of your dreams, it'll give you something to tug on when your emotional pain just isn't real enough (think of it as the safe alternative to self-mutilation). Plus, infections bring

sympathy — always a plus.

2. Attend the benefit V-Day performance of "The Vagina Mono-



**Sean Hanson**  
Sooo lonely

logues" at 7:30 p.m. in the Agate Auditorium. For the student price of \$7, you can watch a parade of characters discuss the ways in which life has sold them and their vaginas short. Uplifting, eh? At least spending the night in a dark room full of strangers is better than being alone.

3. Find a bed buddy. That's not to advocate irrational acts of desperation, but surely you must have an equally lonely friend willing to spoon with you, bemoan your lack of significant others and fall asleep to old Smiths records. Sorry, hookers don't count, and it's unethical to ply your "lonely friend" with

alcohol and roofies. After all, what good is there in feeling loved for one sweet night if you spend the next week in a holding cell?

4. Make a list of five people you'd like to date and ask them out, preferably with a bouquet of roses and a Valentine's Day card professing your undying love in amateurish, middle-school verse ("Roses are red/ Violets are blue/ If you reject me today/ I just might kill you").

5. Send candy to a stranger. Just to cheer him or her up, pretend you're the secret admirer of someone you'd never even date in the first place — oh, who are you kidding? You'd date anyone around this time of year.

6. Go outside and sit beneath the stars with a great novel and a clip-on book light. And as you count the constellations, realize there's an equal number of lonely people here on Earth. They sit alone on barstools and on bus seats, they hunch down in the theater and they're walking down the streets. And remember, if you're alone, you're not alone.

Contact the copy editor at seanhanson@dailymerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

# 'Romantic day' needs new set of rules to avoid materialism

I hate Valentine's Day. It's not something I'm particularly proud of, but over time I've come to realize something: St. Valentine's Day is an utterly worthless holiday, pointless, irritating and totally commercialized. Other than the opportunity to watch "Be My Valentine, Charlie Brown" and eat those chalky little hearts, I find no redeeming qualities.

If such proclamations make you cringe (and those of you out there watching Meg Ryan flicks are probably already doing so), consider this: How can a day that is marked on our

cultural calendar as a "romantic day" be even remotely romantic?

Love shouldn't be about balloons



**Steven Neuman**  
Breakfast epiphanies

and stuffed animals. Quite frankly, if

the only way you can show affection is by buying your sweetheart a pound of candy, I think that's pretty sad.

I have had dates and even relationships that fell on the jour d'amour, but to me the prospect of asking some completely obscure crush for a date (on a day when your romantic intent cannot be misunderstood) seems downright hokey. Isn't it more romantic to take your girlfriend/boyfriend out for a candlelit dinner on any old Saturday or cover their bed in rose petals on some regular day when they don't

Turn to **NEUMAN**, page 11B

# Emotions need not be defined, let love remain unconditional

So I have volunteered to write this column for Valentine's Day, but as I sit down to start I find myself in a state of indifference. I mean, what's there to say that hasn't been said already? We have an online poll about the holiday this week, and one way you can answer is "I don't celebrate Valentine's Day." That option probably best reflects my thoughts, although I might add to that a state of total confusion.

Come Feb. 14, love is the word on the streets, yet it doesn't seem all that lovely to me.

"You're just lonely," some might say. No, really — it's not that. My issues are with the blatant contradictions in this day, which supposedly represents love. Of course, it carries the usual consumer frenzy that surrounds every calendar holiday. Colored chalk hearts, hydrogenated candy, and the colors FD&C Red 3 and 40, Yellow 5 and 6, and Blue 1 are common expressions of this love; gifts of unhealthy doses of refined sugar to your closest loved one abound. Furthermore, we spend exorbitant sums of cash and consume excessively in order to make an impression on those we adore. This description may be extreme, but such an aesthetic does exist.

Of course, in our society, love is intertwined with sex. I mean, saying you

love someone often means you're having, or want to have, a sexual relationship with them. The words frequently don't come out until long after the act has happened, so "I love you" only signifies "I'm having sex with



**Aaron Shakra**  
Notebooks of DJ Serpentine

you." But this is a claim-based approach to love. Love and sex are not one and the same, but they sure as heck get mixed up that way.

Unfortunately, I am not equipped with the knowledge to make a successful critique of monogamy, so I won't even try. I don't really have a problem with it anyway. I'm sure there are plenty of healthy, monogamous relationships that do exist. It's only the obligation-based aspects of monogamy that bother me. When we date someone, for example, need we restructure our entire lives to accommodate one person? This habit

is often taken to extremes, and we start ignoring our family and close friends all for the sake of this one person.

The myth of true love also propagates. For example, throughout your life you might find yourself having a string of relationships, but then one day, you'll come across "the one" and perhaps get married to represent the commitment. Again, the hierarchical aspects of this concept bother me. So when you find your true love, what does that mean about everyone else? Maybe it's more accurately the one true sexual love. Then again, many folks don't even have sex until after they're married.

What confuses me is how someone can claim to "love" another person and yet still condone, or do violence, to another. How can we hold our girlfriend's and boyfriend's hands in joy, but then berate a stranger based on the lone fact that he or she is unknown as we pass each other on the streets? This is a small example. More extreme is when we literally beat up each other over "love" or a simple misunderstanding. Why must it work this way? Why must a hierarchy of love exist? Why must we divide the concept? Don't we know divided love can't work?

Frankly, I think it's this attitude of  
Turn to **SHAKRA**, page 11B