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IT'S COMING National Condom Day February 14th

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O UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

VALENTINE'S DAY BRIEF

Bite-size Valentine's Day factoids

- Valentine's Day is the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. An estimated 2.6 billion cards are sent for Christmas, with 1 billion on Valentine's Day.
- Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France and Australia.

• Cupid is the son of Venus, the Roman goddess of love.

• The oldest known valentine in existence was a poem written by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London.

SOURCES: The Greeting Card Association, <http://www.historychannel.com>
— Jennifer Sudick

COUPLES

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Melton said the feelings she has about homosexual representation change. She added that the type of representation that homosexuals do get is often a person acting heterosexual with a homosexual orientation.

"I think, 'which is worse, bad representation or no representation at all?'" Melton said. "Sometimes I think no representation at all be-

"Not every relationship is perfect — it is work, but a work of love. I'm more than willing to work with him on that level."

Susan Harrison
NSU co-director

cause inaccurate representation creates stereotypes that are forever binding."

Melton said society discriminates based on how one "wears" his or her gender, not their sexual orientation. But society is perhaps leaving out more than just same-sex relationships from its national holiday of love. This is where Susan Harrison, co-director of the Nontraditional

Student Union, fits in.

Harrison, 44, is currently dating a man who is 16 years her junior. They two met four years ago and have stayed in a strong relationship.

"We are a nontraditional couple in age and gender roles because we've swapped them," Harrison said, adding that while she works for most of the year, her partner cooks and washes dishes at home.

Harrison and her partner had a bumpy start because both of their families could not swallow the idea of such a big age difference. Harrison said counseling through the University Center for Family Therapy taught her and her partner a lot about what a "functional relationship" is.

"(Functionality) means to show them their value to you, and to let them know their sense of worth," Harrison said in reference to her partner. She said she was in an abusive relationship before she met her current partner.

"Not every relationship is perfect — it is work, but a work of love," she said. "I'm more than willing to work with him on that level."

For this Valentine's Day, Harrison plans to pass out valentines with her 7-year-old daughter Caitlin, followed by a dinner and spa retreat with her partner.

Athanasios Fkiaras is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

GIFTS

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room. When put into a bowl or funky top hat, they make great one-of-a-kind décor.

Feather boas and huge feathers, also available at West Moon, can be a fun way to tickle that special someone's fancy.

The Gimp, a small soft toy made from vinyl that comes in two choices, is a less-serious Valentine's Day gift. The yellow one laughs, giggles and chuckles when squeezed, and the black one spouts up to three different sexual obscenities when pressed.

Try <http://www.snapfish.com> to make personalized mouse pads, coasters, playing cards and photo books. Ipads at <http://www.ipads.com> offers notebooks, note cards, stickers and notepads that can be personalized with pictures of loved ones.

"Something related to your memories with that person would be good, like a scrapbook of your photographs together," freshman Akiko Nakajima said.

For those who need a little peace

and quiet, mini Zen gardening kits might help. Mini art sets, pressed flower kits, voodoo kits, aromatherapy kits, spa kits and even a "Take-out for Two" kit are also available online at <http://www.runningpress.com>. There are many massage parlors and steam bath services in Eugene as well.

There are also creative variations on more traditional gifts. Miniature wooden benches, available at Hiron's, make a surprising gift, especially with chocolates or flowers placed on the

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Akiko Nakajima
freshman

seat. Another alternative is to buy small metal buckets, decorate them and fill them with candies.

If all else fails, there are dozens of roses waiting as backup.

Reese Lee is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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