

## Love Online - Let the keys do the talking

### Valentine's Day goes the way of computerization with chat rooms, games and e-mail kisses

By JAMES FRANCIS  
Aggielife editor

For many people, Valentine's Day represents a time to send loved ones greeting cards of love and appreciation. The most common way usually has been accomplished is through store-bought cards or computer printouts. These days, however, it seems a more inventive way of sending love to one another is on the Internet. People who live for the Web, and those who have their hands at it every once in a while, are finding that the Internet is a great way to show affection. One such outlet is the Student Advantage Network's home page for love, found at <http://www.studentadvantage.com/qpid>. Lynn Santopietro, online promotions manager at Ston University, said the home page gets a lot of traffic because of its area that can be used to send greeting cards. The site features greeting cards, kisses and Valentine's humor, all of which can be sent electronically to others via e-mail. The most popular is the cards," Santopietro

said. "The online greetings are the hottest on the site."

The e-mail kisses, however, represent a more personal type of greeting.

"A card can be sent to your mom or dad," Santopietro said, "but the kisses are more intimate; they are second in popularity."

As far as Valentine's Day goes, Santopietro said she believes online greetings provide computer users and non-computer users alike a chance to express their feelings in a more than usual manner.

"It provides more options," she said, "and it's a creative and unique way to send a Valentine."

Santopietro said another reason people might want to give electronic greetings a try is because of the cost factor.

"It doesn't break the bank," she said. "It's totally free and it's geared toward students and built by students."

But even with the annual growth of electronic messaging, Santopietro said people should not worry about it taking over completely.

"They're definitely growing in popularity," she said. "I think it's a wave of the future, but it won't put Hallmark out of business or anything."

With the upcoming celebration on Saturday, people all over the world will surely be sending each other messages, some even hoping to find the love of their lives on the Internet.

When it comes to finding a mate on the computer, Santopietro said she does not judge what may be beneficial to some people.

"I've never used it personally," she said, "but it works for some people. Our personals are pretty popular."

Santopietro said she is expecting today to be the most popular day for the site.

"I feel that today will be our biggest day because it's right before Valentine's Day," she said.

Overall, Santopietro said the home page has seen a lot of traffic since it was created on Feb. 4, and it will continue to receive more until the page reaches its ending date, somewhere around Feb. 20.

"As of February 10th, there have been 60,000 visits to the card page," she said, "and 40,000 visits to the kisses page."

As the love-shopping days until Valentine's Day continue to diminish, people should be ready for love in the air and e-mail kisses via the computer on the Internet.

Santopietro said, people should take a look at the Website because it is an alternative way to be involved with Valentine's Day and it gives people a quicker way to reach loved ones.

"I suggest that they visit the home page because it's fun, free, creative and a very '90s way to find a Valentine," she said.

Valentine's Day is a time of year when people get together and attempt to make their feelings known about one another, whether it be family members, friends or those they are in a romantic relationship with.

Going to the store and buying Valentine's Day cards is the way it has been for a long time, and it can be assured that this tradition will not die out.

Electronic greetings, however, are making their presence known and people are realizing they are a source of entertainment and accessibility to reckon with.

So happy Valentine's Day to all those who buy the usual cards, and those who glue their eyes to computer screens in effort to send someone special the perfect greeting.

Hope Cupid finds an arrow befitting whatever the situation may be.

## February 14th represents a day of solitude, reflection

## Nineteen wheels plays The Dixie Theater, delivers tunes on six ways from Sunday



HELEN CLANCY  
copy chief

It's that time of year when flirtatious romantics float through the just-infested air on that daunting quest for a Valentine.

Tomorrow is the culmination of these admirable efforts — but surprisingly, Cupid's arrow might benefit these wanderers more if it were a boomerang.

If you are one of those elusive targets who damns the existence of this pink

day, take a moment to put your misery in perspective.

Remove all distractions and try to recall the time you did the following:

Wrote a letter to a loved one.

Went for a drive without a destination.

Read a book for pleasure.

Complimented a friend.

Introduced yourself to a stranger.

Window-shopped in a pet store.

Eavesdropped on a stranger's conversation.

Chances are, you can't remember. And this should be a startling wake-up call to a comfort need more desperately than love — solitude.

A stimulating state, solitude is necessary in order to find romance. At no other time can one

ignite and appreciate the qualities that would act as a lover. And instead of bemoaning this

holidays, single people should embrace it as an opportunity to discover the reasons why

should fall in love in the first place.

February 14 is the perfect opportunity to get in touch with personality traits that others should

revere. And this isn't a cop-out for those of us proud to admit that we're dateless.

It's an admission of a need far more critical than a box of chocolates. Self-reflection, not self-

indulgence, is the key that enables us to enjoy our relationships.

This can be achieved only through humility and commitment. To endure this journey of personal honesty, it is necessary to shed all inhibi-

tions and learn to share secrets with that old friend you always neglect: yourself.

There is a method to this madness. While all the "lucky" sheep are flocking to the Olive Garden to play footsie under a table of bread sticks, turn off the TV, open the window and unplug the telephone.

Don't rent a movie and don't crack open a six-pack. Instead, begin the process of unearthing those humbling secrets that define your personality. Slowly come to terms with all the flaws and attributes that are forever cloaked behind social entanglements.

It is only through this cleansing that you will be able to assess these qualities in another person. It might be awkward and unsettling, but no one can deny the therapeutic benefits of self-reflection. For some, it helps to organize these characteristics and traits by listing them on paper. For others, the simple cognition of these qualities is enough.

Only after these nuances are realized can they be explored in a genuine relationship.

Love is an emotion that cannot be harnessed. Instead, it must originate from a pure source — a well of confidence and serenity that can only be realized through serious introspection and brutal evaluation.

Like water, love is a force that can cut through canyons by no effort of its own. The softest stuff can yield the greatest satisfaction if it is not spoiled by impatience.

Unfortunately, Valentine's Day is notorious for corrupting the natural process of finding companionship.

In fact, I can't remember the last time I complimented a friend or went for a drive or wrote a letter to a loved one.

But at the same time, I can't remember the last time I accepted my flaws and vowed to resolve them. Maybe that's why I won't be enjoying that box of chocolates tomorrow.

But I'll sacrifice sweetness for honesty any day of the year.

Helen Clancy is a senior English major.

By COLBY MARTIN  
AND  
APRIL TOWERY  
Staff writers

Nineteen Wheels, another rockin' band from Chicago, Ill., is set to play The Dixie Theatre Feb. 28 to promote its latest release, *six ways from Sunday*.

Similar to many of the mainstream bands of today, Nineteen Wheels thrives upon the same three chords. In fact, the band could be more appropriately named Matchbox 20.

Somewhat along the lines of Hanson after puberty, this music could be described as hard core b-bop.

The band might be fun to see live because, if anything, it is up-tempo, feel-good music to sing along to. Nineteen Wheels could be described as a "background band," music that doesn't warrant being turned up, but should not be turned off either.

Proof of this is Nineteen Wheels' "big break" into the mainstream in the form of background music on the MTV programs "Road Rules" and "The Real World."

The lyrics on *six ways from Sunday* are cheesy, to say the least. They are reminiscent of poetry written by a ninth-grade English student to the girl he's "going with."

For example, on the track "Starlight," vocalist Chris Johnston sings "How many moons from now is hard to say / But don't let it hold us back / 'Cause this night has come to pass / And we'll be thinking 'bout this or that." Uh, what?



NINETEEN WHEELS ARE (L TO R): SCOTT OWENS, GREG WILLIAMS, CHRIS JOHNSTON AND TIM MARZORATI.

The songs are hook-less, with no direction in their lyrics or music.

After reading through the lyrics, it is obvious that the band is targeting a younger female crowd who will swoon at the meaningless sappy poetry crooned to the beat of three repeating chords.

Although the music isn't bad, it is unbearably redundant, not something one would want to sing along to. But Aggies may enjoy this mainstream sound that made Matchbox 20 and Third Eye Blind popular. But at least those bands are versatile, whereas *six ways from Sunday* is the type of album on which track one could easily be mistaken for any track on the album.

Any band that proudly displays on its press release that it was discovered by the same independent Chicago-based label, Aware Records, as Hootie and the Blowfish, Verve Pipe and Better Than

Ezra, is not afraid to be pigeonholed as a mainstream, sounds-like-everyone-else rock band.

Drummer Greg Williams obviously is not aware of the band's lack of versatility. Williams described the band's music in a press release.

"There's some trippy sounding stuff, there's some straightforward acoustic stuff and there's big rock dog stuff," he said. "Hopefully, it all still sounds like us."

That says it all — who can resist "big rock dog stuff"?

Basically, what this band needs is a few more months in the studio and a little more practice songwriting. It does have the potential to be a crowd-pleasing live band, but probably won't sell as many albums as its influences.

What might make this show worth seeing, besides having a few beers, is seeing headliner Trish Murphy of Austin.

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