

## Eyes Wide Shut

*From marriage to living nightmares, blind dates result in a variety of experiences*

By Lyndsey Sage  
THE BATTALION

Mentioning "blind date" is enough to make palms sweat, hearts race and butterflies flutter in nervous stomachs. Dating is nerve racking, but when neither partner knows anything about the other the adventure of dating becomes a whole different story. However, as Justin Wyatt, a sophomore engineering major, discovered, once the nerves settle, a blind date may not be as dreadful as one might anticipate.

When Wyatt was in high school, he agreed to a blind date arranged by his cousin's girlfriend, and the friendship cultivated from the date continues to remain strong.

"We ended up going out three more times and eventually dated for half a year. We became good friends and continue to talk quite a bit now," Wyatt said. "It is something I would try again."

Some, like Wyatt, who have dared to trust their matchmaker, are able to tell happily-ever-after stories of their blind date.

Angela Wilke, Class of 2000, is one of those people. She said she never anticipated the simple twist of fate when she was set up with a co-worker's brother last winter.

"I was nervous, because I hate blind dates," Wilke said.

A year later, she tied the knot with her blind date. Their matchmaker, thinking they would get along well, set the couple up for dinner before Christmas break last year. Chris Wilke said the atmosphere of the date was relaxed, almost like talking to a best friend.

"He was a gentleman," Angela said. "I felt like I talked too much, but he was a good listener and conversationalist."

After the initial blind date, they met again for New Year's and, since marrying three days before Christmas, they have been together ever since.

The romantic side of blind date success stories can be amazing, but there are those who try to block out blind date nightmares.

Josh Black, a sophomore at Baylor University, would rather forget a blind date from this past year.

"I don't even remember the girl's name, so that should tell you something," Black said. "One thing that started the date off bad was that I had to ride in the cargo compartment of her Explorer to the party, which was 20 minutes away. Then, during the date, she kept getting a little too close for my comfort."

Set up by a mutual friend, Black said he spent most of the evening trying to avoid his date. He said he was so miserable that he lied to end the date early.

"I told her that since I was pledging, I had a curfew of 10 o'clock, which was not true," Black said.

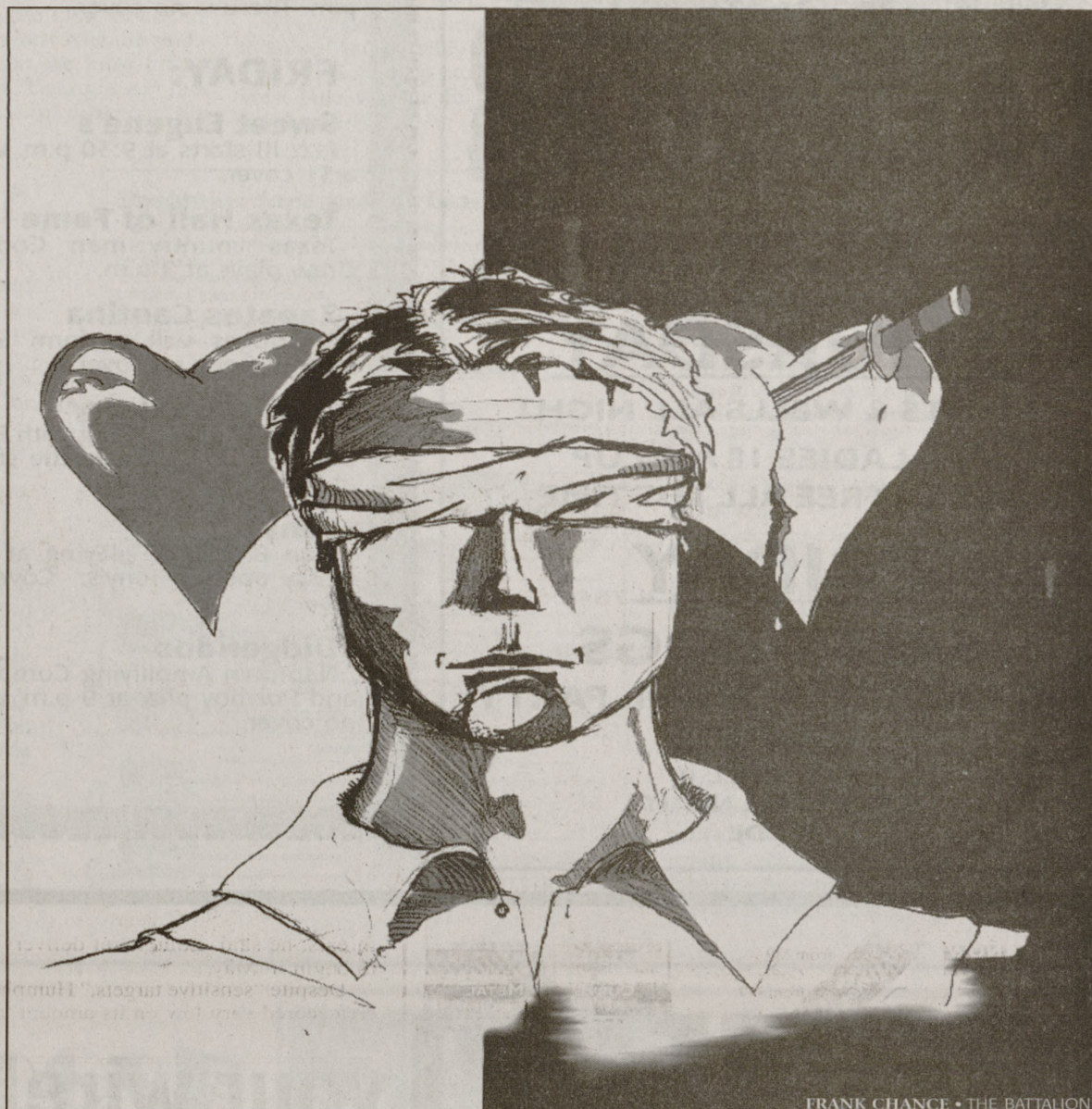
To avoid such negative experiences, an individual should devise a fail-proof escape plan. As with any potentially dangerous undertaking, blind dates should be approached with caution. Preparing a back up plan so a quick escape is possible, planning to first meet over drinks and avoiding an extended time commitment are vital to creating a safe dating environment.

Whether the date ends as friends or foes, most participants view their blind date as a positive experience.

"[Blind dates] give you a chance to branch out from the norm and meet someone new," Katie Birdsong, a sophomore business major, said. "I would recommend trying it if you ever have the opportunity. The worst that can happen is that you aren't a match, and you never have to see your date again."

Yet for Birdsong, a certain blind date holds significant value.

"My parents met on a blind date and have been married 26 years," she said. "You never know what will happen."



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## LIFE WITHOUT FOOTBALL

*Students explore alternative weekend plans during the off-season*

By Thomas Phillips  
THE BATTALION

The college football season has ended, leaving students with hours of free time on weekends to pursue activities precluded by an autumn of attending Aggie games.

For some, the spare time and approaching spring allow abundant opportunities to explore leisure activities.

Kyle Boothe, a junior finance major, said he enjoys attending Aggie basketball games. "You get to sit down and relax, and I like that about them."

Boothe said he enjoys the slow pace of the spring semester, which lacks the practices of pulling football tickets, fighting stadium crowds and fulfilling his duties as a member of the 12th Man.

Boothe said basketball and baseball games make for an easy afternoon or evening of entertainment.

"I probably enjoy those better than I do football games, just because you get to

sit down and watch a good game," Boothe said. "And it's a lot easier to get tickets to basketball and baseball games."

For Boothe, this and the fewer people in the community than during football game weekend, makes inviting guests to town for the weekend easier.

"If my brother wanted to come to town or a friend from another college, then I could show them around town and it wouldn't be so busy," he said.

Outdoor activities also intrigue Boothe, an avid hunter and fisherman, which he said he pursues in the mild Texas winter and spring.

"You do have more time on the weekend because there's no football game," Boothe said. "I usually get lazier in the spring semester because I'm tired of school and I want to just have it done with. So I do a good enough job in school and try to enjoy myself the rest of the time."

Other students spend the semester anticipating the end of the school year,

waiting for an extended vacation.

Lindsay Lynch, a junior marketing major, said she looks forward to the approaching summer months. She said she plans to spend the spring checking out the Aggie baseball games and playing with her pet dog, Maggie, but said that she struggles to remain focused on her studies.

"The spring semester is more difficult than the fall, because I seem to check out a little bit earlier," Lynch said. "When spring break comes, I never really check back into school."

With her friends, Lynch said she hopes to relax from the overwhelming fall semester and have little trouble filling her time between classes and volunteering with Young Life, a student outreach program geared toward junior high and high school students.

"We can always catch a great movie, spend a lot of time at Research Park. It's going to be spring and start to get warm," she said.

Better weather, Lynch said, keeps her motivated during the spring. On the weekends, Lynch said she will spend time recovering from the week.

"I use the weekend to catch up, and I typically do better (in school) in the spring than in the fall," Lynch said.

For Zach Stowers, a sophomore general studies major, the spring semester brings back a yearning for diamonds — baseball diamonds.

"Spring reminds me of baseball and all those memories," the former high school baseball player said. "In high school we used to play in the Brenham baseball tournament every spring, and I'm going to miss that."

Without football games, Stowers said he has time for other activities like exercising.

"The weather's better and you can do more stuff outside," he said. "I'll probably need to study a little more and I'll definitely play more golf."



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### PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

#### Dido's nomination revoked

LONDON (AP) — Chart-topping singer Dido had her nomination for a British best-newcomer award revoked Wednesday, after officials realized she wasn't that new after all.

The singer, who rose to stardom after rapper Eminem chose her song "Thank You" as the backing track to his chart-topper "Stan," was nominated Monday in the category for a Brit Award, Britain's equivalent of the Grammys.

Observers pointed out that the 30-year-old Dido, whose real name is Florian Cloud De Bouneville Armstrong, had been nominated for best female artist the previous year.

The Official U.K. Charts Company, which compiled the list of eligible artists, said Wednesday it had made a mistake and apologized to Dido, her record company, the Brits and listeners of British Broadcasting Corp.'s Radio 1, who vote on the winner from the list of nominees.

Dido said the mistake didn't bother her.

"I think it's quite funny. It's so silly," she told Radio 1. "You just don't question it. If you're given a nomination, you don't think 'Oh, am I eligible?' You just don't know the rules. I don't know if anyone knows the rules."

Dido is still up for best video, best female solo artist and best album, for "No Angel."

#### Harding evicted from home

VANCOUVER, Wash. (AP) — Tonya Harding's landlord has filed a lawsuit to evict the former Olympic figure skater and her roommate from a three-bedroom riverfront home.

Landlord Dale E. Anderson claims Harding and her former manager Linda Lewis owe him \$4,530 in rent, according to court documents filed Monday in Clark County Superior Court.

Harding, 31, and Lewis have been renting the 1,300-square-foot three-bedroom, two-bathroom ranch house overlooking the Columbia River since August 2000, court documents say.

On Jan. 9, they were served a three-day notice either to pay their \$1,195 monthly rent for November, December and January, plus late fees, or leave, the documents say.

The lawsuit seeks to have Harding and Lewis pay the rent and late fees, move out of the house, forfeit their deposit and pay an additional \$450 in attorney's fees.

Neither Harding nor Lewis could be reached for comment Tuesday. They're scheduled to appear in court Jan. 25.

Once a top figure skater, Harding's life has been swirled in scandal since a knee-whacking attack on rival Nancy Kerrigan before the 1994 U.S. National Championships and the Winter Olympics.

Harding pleaded guilty to hindering prosecution and was stripped of her national championship title.