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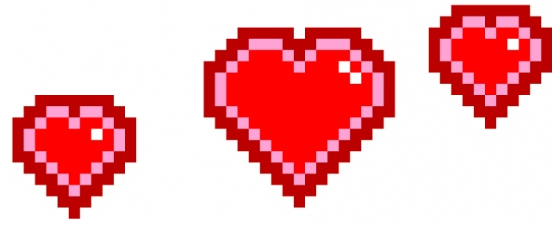
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A Quarantine Love Story: Swiping Left or Right This Valentine's Day

Megan Zandsoltani , Staff Reporter

Valentine's Day is just around the corner, but with the number of COVID-19 cases still on the rise throughout the country, this holiday is going to look different for both single people and couples.



The dating culture molded by COVID-19 has called for creative solutions, such as revamping dating profiles or redownloading a favorite mingling app. On the other non-single hand, couples are finding new ways to spice up their date nights through the romantic ambiance of at-home dinners. Now more than ever, it is important to follow statewide restrictions, practice social distancing and to mask up, especially if choosing to celebrate Valentine's Day in-person with loved ones.

Leon Lee

When Gov. Jay Inslee set restrictions on reopening the state, Washingtonians made the best of it, finding creative quarantine solutions to socialize. Although she is home quarantining and social distancing, this has not yet stopped fourth-year Media Studies and Strategic Communication major Maria Piñero from enjoying date nights with her boyfriend.

"We usually take a little trip since Valentine's Day and President's Day fall on the same week," Piñero said. "I don't think it's the right thing to be traveling during the pandemic, so we're deciding to cook a fancy dinner with some wine and chocolate covered strawberries for dessert, and a rom-com to end the night."

For Haley Cummins, a fourth-year Strategic Communication major, Valentine's Day is just another day that reminds her of her singleness.

"Cuffing season starts around September. You get boo'd up then you have Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you're not getting cuffed in September, good luck on Valentine's Day," Cummins said.

Due to the disruption of the pandemic inhibiting social lives, Seattle U students have expressed quarantine loneliness and expressed how dating apps have curbed their boredom. Cummins has gone outside her comfort zone, keeping COVID-19 guidelines in mind.

"I have expanded my location filters on Bumble, Hinge and Tinder just for fun because the boredom is so real," Cummins said. "In a pandemic, I think it's exciting meeting new people, because I have my mask on and they do, too. Even though we both can't see each other fully, the human connection is what we are missing."

While dating apps have taken over late nights at the club and happy hours at the bars, fourth-year Nursing major Ryan Tanabe-Fort has found himself using the apps to converse with new people in hopes that the dating scene returns to normal sometime soon.

"It's very difficult to trust people outside of your household, so meeting new people gives me a little anxiety. When the time comes, I look forward to being treated to a nice dinner with the right person," Tanabe-Fort said.

Though the pandemic has created a unique online experience for Cummins, love for her family is at the center of her Valentine's Day.

"Ever since I was a little girl, my dad has always gotten something for me and my sister," Cummins said. "Even though I'm single, my dad is always my valentine."

While this holiday has its lows for those in and out of relationships, one thing remains regardless of relationship status—love.

"It's a reminder to always show love. Through it all, you should recognize and appreciate those people you love in your life," Piñero said.

This year is going to feel and look different for many people. But living during a pandemic does not mean traditions have to be left behind—it may even allow for an opportunity to think outside the box and reflect on love.

Though no two people are the same in the way they celebrate love, it brings solace knowing Redhawks are not alone during this time.