Valentine's Day is fast approaching, and that means people in relationships will give their partners all kinds of gifts. Roses, chocolate, teddy bears and expensive dinners are probably the first thoughts that come to most women's minds — but what if there was more to Valentine's Day than just these gifts?

Utah State University sophomore Lilly Hall said, “It depends on the person because some people, you know, their love language is receiving gifts, but for myself, I don’t want all that. I’d rather spend time with Evan and watch a movie.”

Hall said she values quality time over physical gifts, as she may eventually throw or give these gifts away.

Her husband, Evan Hall, also a sophomore at USU, said before he started seriously dating Lilly, he thought all girls wanted flowers and chocolates for Valentine's Day. He said he thought this way because of what he saw in the media.

“Every time you watch a TV show or movie and there's Valentine's things, the guy walks up to the door to pick up a date on Valentine's Day. He has a thing of roses and a heart shaped box of chocolates and so that's just kind of what you think of,” Evan said.

But after he started dating Lilly, he realized Valentine's Day is deeper than some TV shows make it seem.

“I learned that women really just want to be appreciated and have all of the things that they do for you noticed,” Evan said.

First-year student Kinsey Bitterman said she thinks women like to be reminded they are loved — whether that's through a hug and a kiss or a handwritten note.

While Bitterman appreciates gifts, she wishes more people would look at Valentine's Day as a holiday to commemorate love for everybody, not just a romantic partner.

“Some of my roommates are like ‘Gross, Valentine's Day’ because you know, they don't have a partner. I don't see it that way though because I'm like, ‘Well, I love my family and my friends and all those people,’” Bitterman said.

Lilly said there are things people can do to make Valentine's Day a special day, no matter what your relationship status is.

“I think Valentine's Day could also be a date for yourself where you prioritize your own self and even take yourself out for dinner, but I also think getting together with friends and family who maybe aren't doing anything or aren't dating anybody would be good,” Lilly said.

Bitterman, who is single this Valentine's Day, said she will probably treat the holiday like a normal day, but will make sure to tell her family and friends she loves them.

“I think the idea of love kind of gets pushed to the side in the busy world. So, I think taking that one day just to make sure that you tell your family or whoever it is that you love them is really important,” Bitterman said.

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**THREATS**

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**CRIMINAL MISCHIEF**

**WAYNE ESTES CENTER**

**JAN. 24 —** FBI in DC contacted Chief Barfuss due to his current role as a FBI Task Force Member, regarding domestic extremist threats had been made through the Yik Yak social media platform threatening minority groups and politically affiliated groups. Information quickly identified the person responsible as a USU student. This student was interviewed within hours of posting the message on Yik Yak. The student stated the goal was to write the worst possible message to see if they could get banned from Yik Yak, as their motive for authoring the message. Due to the students inability to carry out the threats, criminal charges were not pursued. The student was issued a Disciplinary Referral to Student Affairs for conduct and is going through internal school disciplinary measures.

**JAN. 26 —** Late report damage to a sign, created by known individual with mental health issues. Athletics staff observed a sign had been damaged and removed from the wall. Review of video surveillance identified the person who removed the sign from the wall. The person identified is of diminished capacity, and his been contacted and trespassed from the Wayne Estes Center. No criminal charges at this time.

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*If you have any more information regarding these cases, contact the USU Public Safety Department at 435 797-1939. Summaries are from USU Police Chief Blair Barfuss. You can find these and other USU reported crimes at www.usu.edu/dps/police/daily-crime-log
Watching out for red flags in a relationship

By Carter Ottley
NEWS REPORTER

In every relationship, it is important to stay alert for red flags and actions negatively impacting the relationship. Red flags are warning signs in the relationship that something isn’t how it should be. They can range from serious concerns to personal preferences.

Felicia Gallegos, the Sexual Assault & Anti-Violence Information (SAAVI) Office’s outreach and prevention coordinator, said the behaviors can change depending on the relationship and individual.

“It’s important to be aware of these behaviors because they are often easy to miss at first, but can escalate quickly,” she said. “Unhealthy relationships don’t just exist between ‘bad’ people. Anyone can find themselves in a relationship where they are causing harm or experiencing harm.”

A great way to address the issue is by talking to your partner.

“If you find these behaviors in your relationship, it is important to have an assertive conversation,” Gallegos said. “Talk to them about how their words or actions are impacting you, and give them the opportunity to correct them.”

She said if they don’t respect your experience or refuse to change their behavior, it is probably time to end the relationship.

In a relationship, both people need to be willing to listen to each other and talk about important issues. Sometimes your partner can ignore your texts or other forms of communication, but they should want to talk to you and get to know you better.

Ashley Moncada, a USU junior studying social work, said one of her red flags is when someone is really bad at communicating.

“One red flag is someone who doesn’t answer for two days, and then is like, ‘Oh sorry, I was so busy.’ Nobody’s that busy,” she said.

A partner criticizing or speaking negatively towards you can have negative impacts on your mood and self-esteem. Even if the comments are not directed toward you, they can create a negative environment.

Brandon Sorensen, a first-year student studying marketing, thinks it is a red flag if a partner speaks negatively about themselves.

“It’s a red flag when they put themselves down a lot,” Sorensen said. “There’s a difference if someone’s just not confident, and you can be there to help bring them up and have them realize how great they are.”

Friends play a huge role in our life. They are there before we get into a relationship, and are there if the relationship goes poorly. A partner will sometimes try to limit your contact with family or friends to isolate or control you.

Riley Crezee, a senior studying communications, sees this as a lack of trust.

“A big red flag for me would be a lack of trust, whether that’s not letting you communicate with their friends, or maybe not wanting to hang out with your friends a lot,” Crezee said.

He said friends can play an important role in identifying red flags you might miss.

“When we’re in that romantic phase, we can discount red flags, so check with your friends and trust their opinions,” Crezee said.

“There’s lots of relationship red flags, and it’s really hard to see them when you’re in a relationship.”

The advocates at SAAVI can help explore healthy and unhealthy elements of a relationship and decide how to end it safely if needed. They can also help individuals file protective orders or report relationship violence to USU or law enforcement.

“It is also important to realize that leaving a relationship that is unhealthy is extremely difficult, and your most important role as a support person is to be understanding of whatever they decide to do - whether that’s leave the relationship or stay with their partner,” Gallegos said.

Gallegos said it is important for someone in an unhealthy relationship to have someone who believes in and validates their experience. She said it is never the fault of the person experiencing the harm.

Carter Ottley is a junior studying journalism and political science. When Carter isn’t writing for the Statesman, he enjoys Chilis, reading and Imagine Dragons.

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THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES

According to Utah State’s extension page on relationships, “Relationships can be one of the greatest joys in life. Research even suggests that love and intimacy have a greater impact on our quality of life than any other factor, including diet, exercise, stress or genetics (Ornish, 2018).”

An important part of any relationship or friendship is determining how you most comfortably show and receive love.

To determine this, people often refer to the theory of five love languages.

This theory was created in 1992 by Gary Chapman, a counselor and NYT best selling author.

Chapman’s theory outlines five general ways that people express and experience love: acts of service, gift-giving, physical touch, quality time and words of affirmation.

The way everyone expresses and experiences love is unique to them, but this theory allows them to more specifically narrow down their “love language.”

The Statesman randomly surveyed some of our Aggies to see which love language they most connect with.

Hannah Nelson said her top love language is quality time because it is really attractive to her to know people will make the effort to spend time with her.

Jace Bingham said his top love language is physical touch because it also includes spending time with someone you love.

Baileigh Beebe said her top love language is quality time because she feels valued when someone is willing to sacrifice time for things they could be doing to spend time with her. She also said spending time with those she loves makes her happy.

Allison Jones said the way she likes to receive love is acts of service because it shows her how thoughtful and attentive someone is, and it is a great way to warm her heart. “Actions always speak louder than words,” Jones said.

Mantas Sliesoraitis said his top love language is quality time. He said he feels as though spending time with others allows you to come closer to another and incorporates other love languages as you build trust and share an experience.

Kalicia Adams said her top love language is quality time because she loves spending time with other people, and she loves when people make the effort to spend time with her.

Mikayla Southam said her top love language is quality time because she thinks the best thing someone can give her is spending time with her.

Claire Ott said her top love languages are words of affirmation and quality time. She said she really values the things people have to say and the time she gets to spend with them. She also said she feels like she can connect with someone by getting to share words and time.

Bryson Leithead said his top love language is quality time, because if someone spends time with him, it shows him they care about him more than all the other things they could be spending their time on.

What is your top love language?

By Kate Stewart
News Reporter

Resources for healthy relationships can be found at extension.usu.edu/relationships/faq/signs-of-a-healthy-relationship.
Q: What makes a bad date bad?
“If they talked about themselves a lot - they’re self-centered.” - Kara James

“If your guys’ view of the world is very different, and you can’t see eye to eye.” - Merit Dame

“When you’re not attracted to the person you’re on the date with - and they’re annoying.” - Canon Breckenridge

“When it’s very one-sided.” - Emily Nelson

Q: Worst date story?
“He took me to the temple on a first date. And he was like, ‘Do you have any Pinterest boards that have rings you like?’ And I said ‘no’ and was ready to go home. So we went home, and I was like, ‘I’m tired.’ He’s like, ‘Well, can I come inside and use your restroom?’ And I said sure. And after he used the restroom, I was like, ‘OK, thanks for the date,’ but he asked if he could get a tour of the house, and I said no, but he started going up the stairs, so I followed him. He asks, ‘Is this your room?’ I was like, ‘Yeah, I shared it with my roommate.’ Then he sat down on my bed and made himself at home. I just sat on my roommate’s bed. And eventually, my roommate came and saved me.” - Kara James

“It was with a girl I met at the Howl and thought she was really pretty. Flash forward; I reached out and was like, ‘We should go on a date.’ She’s apparently a musician, she plays the bass, and I was like, ‘That’s really cool. I play the guitar.’ And I sing, so I was like, ‘We should write a song or something.’ So she came over to my dorm, and it was just so bad. I don’t want to hype myself up or make myself sound arrogant or like better than her, but she was not a very good musician. She could not sing, and it was really awkward. When she was proposing ideas for the song, they were just very cliche and not good.” - Canon Breckenridge

“My first date ever, my date ‘got food poisoning’ and kept trying to ditch me.” - Gracie Beecher

Q: What makes a good date good?
“You can talk comfortably with the other person. You don’t feel like you’re walking on ice. You’re not worried about saying what’s on your mind, and you’re comfortable screwing up.” - Merit Dame

“No one’s talking over one another, and you’re just happy.” - Canon Breckenridge

“If you have similar music tastes, and a lot of laughter, easy conversation.” - Kara James

Q: Best date story?
“Best date was a thing we called coupon day, where we would just hit the town on a Saturday and use all of the gift cards and coupons that we had laying around. We got, like, so much free stuff that day. We spent like $3 in total, and we got so much food and snacks.” - Canon Breckenridge.

“It was like a little picnic. We just got some snacks and painted in the mountains. It was so nice. So beautiful. Super simple. And it was a short date.” - Kara James

Q: Tips on dates?
“Make sure you’re emotionally available to go on dates in the first place.” - Canon Breckenridge

“When you pick up the girl, come to her door. Be super raw. I think, like, if you don’t agree with something, you don’t have to act as if you agree. Also, I don’t know why this bugs me so badly, but if you don’t know the song, don’t try and sing it.” - Kara James

“Find someone you can actually have a conversation with.” - Merit Dame

Alivia Hadfield is a first year student at USU who loves being an Aggie. Alivia’s other passions include songwriting, reading and competing in pageants.

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Chocolate Festival returning in person for first time in three years

By Cait Keith

LIFESTYLES STAFF REPORTER

A fter two years of being held online, the annual Cache Valley Chocolate Festival is taking place in person once again. The festival, which benefits Planned Parenthood, will take place at the Riverwoods Conference Center on Saturday, Feb. 11 at 6:30 p.m.

Nancy Sassano, a proposal development specialist at Utah State University, is currently serving as chair of the Chocolate Festival committee. She has been on the committee for 20 years.

This is the 36th year of the festival, and Sassano said it has been growing every year.

“The initial concept of it when it first started was to have a chocolate dessert competition,” Sassano said. “And that has risen to fantastic levels over the years, having local people who are really good bakers, or who are very creative, entering.”

Sassano said the chocolate desserts are reviewed in the afternoon by a panel of judges. In the evening, the festival opens and the public can pay their $10 donation for a tasting ticket to sample 10 of the desserts.

Along with awards from the judges, contestants can also win people’s choice awards.

Erin Hofmann, an associate professor in the sociology department at USU, has been entering desserts in the festival since 2013.

“I heard about the Chocolate Festival that first Valentine’s Day that I was here, and we had just moved; we didn’t know a lot of people here yet,” Hofmann said. “It seemed like a fun thing to do. I like to bake and I’m competitive, so that appealed to me. I was surprised when I went to this for that first time and I won second place for truffles, and ever since then I’ve been hooked.”

There are different contests with the festival that desserts can be entered into. The open contest is for anyone who wants to join and share their chocolate treats with others while also participating in a competition. The youth/families is for contestants under the age of 16 who create their treat alone or with friends or family.

“As my kids have gotten older — I have a fifth grader and a kindergartener — the fifth grader in particular really likes chocolate and really likes baking,” Hofmann said.

“We’ve started doing entries together, and those tend to be more kid-friendly things like plain chocolate cakes.”

Within the open and youth/family contests, contestants can enter brownies, chocolates, cakes, cookies or potpourri categories.

The Premier Showcase desserts, new to the festival in 2020, are entered by a business or organization.

“It’s basically a showcase with professional bakers, professional pastry chefs, businesses that have a culinary connection that want to show support,” Sassano said.

“And this year, we’re featuring several community organizations that have missions that are tied in with Planned Parenthood, and they create a showstopper entry.”

These entries can still be sampled by the public but are judged separately from other entries.

The chocolate Festival serves as a fundraiser for Planned Parenthood in Utah.

“All the fundraising supports the Utah affiliate of Planned Parenthood, which then supports all of the Planned Parenthood clinics around the state,” Sassano said. “We have eight health centers in Utah.”

Sassano has served on the state board of Planned Parenthood for the past 12 years.

“The funds that are raised support all the activities and the clinical services of Planned Parenthood throughout the state,” Sassano said. “Without that kind of support, we would have a lot less of that.”

Sassano said the Chocolate Festival is a volunteer-run event. There are often USU students who participate.

“It’s a really fun way to be a part of the event without having to bake something. We’d love to have more student volunteers and there is a link on our website to sign up to volunteer,” Sassano said.

The festival also includes a live auction and a silent auction. All pieces in the premier showcase are entered in the live auction. All other desserts are offered in the silent auction.

This year, tickets can be bought in advance online. Tickets will also be sold at the door.

“It’s been a really good way for me to be more involved in the community,” Hofmann said. “I said I liked the baking, but I’ve also gotten to meet a lot of people that way. I’ve really liked the community aspect of it.”

More information on the festival, entering a dessert or volunteering can be found at thechocolatefest.com.

Caitlin Keith is from Utah and is currently a junior studying journalism. Other than writing, she enjoys watching and ranting about tv shows or sports, speaking German and eating snacks.

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What does a healthy relationship look like to Aggies?

By Avery Truman
LIFESTYLES STAFF REPORTER

Valentine’s Day is right around the corner, so we asked students at Utah State University what a healthy relationship looks like to them.

Asa Finch is a second-year student.
“To me, a healthy relationship is open to communication and boundaries,” Finch said. “Any relationship is a no-go for me if me and my partner can’t set good boundaries with each other as needed. I like a relationship that is secure when we are apart. And it’s important to me that we are not anxious or avoidant of the other but able to function as a couple independently and together.”

Andrew Greer is a second-year student.
“I think a healthy relationship is between individuals who are able to effectively and safely communicate their feelings, wants and needs with each other,” Greer said. “Also to have respect for each other and understand each other, to uplift and inspire one another and create a safe and happy environment.”

Ivy Warde is a first-year student.
“I believe that a healthy relationship is centered on common beliefs and goals, or at least similar ones,” Warde said. “For me, that is God and getting sealed in the temple. A healthy relationship will not only help you achieve your goals but will help you when you fall a bit. A healthy relationship should help you feel more free and make anywhere you are together feel like home. It doesn’t matter if it’s a friend, a parent or a significant other. If it’s a healthy relationship, you should feel confident that even if you have difficult times or conversations that that relationship will still be there for you, even if you don’t agree perfectly on everything.”

If a student believes they or someone they know is in an unhealthy relationship, USU has resources to help in a variety of situations, one of which is the Sexual Assault & Anti-Violence Information office, SAAVI.

“I know SAAVI is meant to help with sexual assault and violence. I’ve been told that they also help with relationships and healthy habits,” Finch said.

“I know SAAVI is a school resource that can be used for individuals who have experienced sexual assault or violence in their life and they help get students help, or connected with the necessary help to get through it,” Greer said.

“SAAVI is an on-campus aide that helps those who have or are being abused. They seem like really nice people. They are also confidential, so that’s really good for people who are scared,” Warde said.

Alexis LeBaron, a senior at USU, is the Utah Marriage Commission intern program coordinator. LeBaron said it is important for people to gain the courage to be proud of who they are.

“Maybe you’re not in a relationship like your grandma wants you to be, but just being like, ‘I’m OK with knowing that I’m not exactly where I was and I’m not exactly where I want to be, but I can be happy with where I’m at,’” LeBaron said.

Whitney Howard, a victim advocate for SAAVI, said a healthy relationship is about openness.

“Healthy relationships are built on trust, communication, and mutual respect,” Howard said. “Concerns are expressed openly and boundaries are respected. In any healthy relationship, all parties should feel safe, comfortable, empowered and supported to be their best selves.”

According to Howard, SAAVI can help in a situation when a relationship becomes unhealthy.

“We understand that relationships are complicated,” Howard said. “It can be hard to accept that a person we care about is capable of harm. SAAVI provides a free, confidential space for anyone at Utah State to receive information and know their options. You will never be judged or pressured to make a decision. Our advocates strive to empower you in whatever decisions you make regarding your own life and relationships.”
Sundance Film Festival 2023

As reported by The Utah Statesman

By Maya Mackinnon
LIFESTYLES EDITOR

The following entries are reviews and commentaries on movie screenings attended in-person at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

Shortcomings: A comedically entertaining and thought-provoking film directed by Randall Park. Not only does Park constructively comment on the lack of Asian American representation in the film industry, the complexities of romantic relationships are also addressed. The main character, Ben, is distracted — at his own detriment — by the social idolization of young, blonde white women. Through the voices and actions of his girlfriend and additional women he is interested in, Ben is made to reflect on the ingrained sexism of his thoughts and beliefs. The film caused mixed emotions for me, which I suspect was Park's goal. Ben is the protagonist, yet he is an extremely frustrating and unlikable character. Ben expects the world to jump when he says jump and feels wronged by everyone around him. The women in his life have immense patience, but they finally leave him to prove they cannot be used anymore. I appreciated the way these circumstances were presented, and I think the message was well told.

Bad Behaviour: Dramatic and comedically perplexing, Jennifer Connelly perfects her role as the protagonist of “Bad Behaviour.” Director and actor Alice Englert constantly surprises the viewer with well-placed plot twists and developments. The story presents complexities of a mother-daughter relationship in a dark yet widely familiar way. My favorite theme of the film comments on the social judgment of women experiencing anger. The emotional spectrum of anger is portrayed in a hilariously relatable way that, as a woman, was highly enjoyable.

The Accidental Getaway Driver: Visually, this film was exceptional. Focusing on the character’s eyes, the story was told equally through emotion and dialogue. Watching this film was a full body experience, utilizing all senses. The storyline carries you through the experiences of toxic masculinity, people of color, Asian Americans, immigrants, children of immigrants and finding a home. Director Sing J. Lee was the well-deserved winner of the Directing Award for the U.S. Dramatic competition.

“Bad Behaviour” winner of Grand Jury prize in dramatic.

Bad Press: My favorite film and the winner of the U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Freedom of Expression. “Bad Press” is an incredible documentary about MySkoko Media’s fight for free press in the Muscogee Nation. Directors Rebecca Landsberry-Baker and Joe Peeler documented an immensely inspiring true story of strength, perseverance, morality and achievement. Unfortunately, the fight for truth and transparency is all too familiar, but this documentary proves that goodness and justice win. Having the opportunity to interview Angel Ellis, the reporter heading the fight for MySkoko Media, was an unforgettable experience.

“You’re told so much as a journalist you have to be completely objective, you have to have no opinion. But you get one ‘get out of jail free’ card and that’s to advocate for free press, free speech, freedom of information,” Ellis said.

Victim/Suspect: “ Victim/Suspect” is a documentary directed by Nancy Shwartzman that follows journalist Rae de Leon in uncovering the truth behind the arrest of women who “falsely” report men that raped or sexually assaulted them. Following a four-year investigation, the film reveals what really happens in police interrogations in which women were not believed and cases were “closed” under the guise of a plea bargain or a manipulation to confess they were lying (when they weren’t). This is a nationwide pattern that typically ends in arrests and incarcerations of women at the hands of and failure of law enforcement. The documentary further proves the processes in action that protect men at all costs. Footage

Maya Mackinnon is a senior studying print journalism and art. When she is not managing the Lifestyles team, she is enjoying the outdoors and traveling.

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By Leah Call
LIFESTYLES STAFF REPORTER

@ryfrancis_
the frost being on the INSIDE of your windshield is so sinister actually

@hailey_tubadiva
I wonder what the USU pep band will play now that Panic! At the Disco is breaking up.
of police interrogations depict interviews with assailants ranging from 15-30 minutes and consisted of incessant apologies from officers for the “inconvenience” of having to come in. Meanwhile, the women are manipulated and tricked into believing they have somehow lied or dramatized their assault in hours-long interrogations. The film highlights the harm caused when a victim becomes the suspect.

**Pretty Baby: Brooke Shields:** To many, Brooke Shields is the pop culture icon of the ‘80s and ‘90s. Until watching this film, she was someone my mother referenced at times as an integral and formative figure of her childhood. Now, to me, Brooke Shields is a survivor. Directed by Lana Wilson, “Pretty Baby: Brooke Shields” tackles themes of the oversexualization of women in the media, the exploitation of a child and the impact it can have on a woman depicted as an American sex symbol from the age of 11. Starring in the 1978 film “Pretty Baby,” Shields played a child prostitute who was made to look older and desirable. Following her debut, Shields starred in “Blue Lagoon” and continued to book mature acting and modeling deals under the management of her alcoholic mother. Reflections and interviews with Shields reveal the vulnerability she felt and the scrutiny she was under as a public figure and her own personal removal from the very public part of her life.

**All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt:** “All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt” is a story told through body language rather than dialogue — a story told through memories triggered by a feeling such as a hand running through water, dirt falling through fingertips, a drawn-out hug, the texture of the fish caught for dinner and the metaphorical texture surrounding Mack as she grows up in Mississippi. The simplicity of this film is what made it so enthralling to watch. Told in non-sequential scenes throughout Mack’s life, the film displays the inner workings of the female mind: growing up, being a mother, not being a mother, finding love and searching for acceptance. Written and directed by Raven Jackson, “All Dirt Roads Taste Of Salt” is a beautifully dynamic film that allows the viewer to feel a childhood in Mississippi rather than just watch it.

**Animalia:** “Animalia” was a movie whose power only registered once I had time to reflect on the not-so-obvious themes. Directed by Sofia Alaoui and winner of the Special Jury Award for Creative Vision, “Animalia” is a first-of-its-kind dystopian film set in Morocco. The film was made to make the viewer slightly uncomfortable and focuses on the socio-economic imbalances between those in higher classes and those in lower classes. The film follows pregnant Itto, who marries into a wealthy family and is left stranded at home after her in-laws leave for a trip she decided not to attend. After the government declares a state of emergency, she leaves in search of her family, traveling through a series of mysterious weather phenomena. “I hope that it will help to continue fighting against the stereotypes surrounding a woman’s emancipation,” Alaoui said.

_Leah Call is a junior pursuing her degree in print journalism. In her free time, she loves finding new music to jam to and is always on the lookout for the perfect iced chai tea._

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**Plan C:** “Plan C” highlights the story of a group of women working hard to get the medication Mifepristone to women searching for an alternative to pregnancy. Touching on abortion bans and Roe v. Wade's overturning, we heard many voices of the people impacted by this project. Throughout a changing political atmosphere, the group of women had to alter their business to ensure safe and legal access. While watching the film, I couldn't help but be in awe of the bravery and dedication of the women involved. They would drive a van to make the medication mobile, and continued to deliver even after their van was identified by threatening pro-life protesters. At one point, they kept shipping to women in states where the medication was banned until it was decidedly, absolutely illegal.

_Leah Call is a junior pursuing her degree in print journalism. In her free time, she loves finding new music to jam to and is always on the lookout for the perfect iced chai tea._

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Read the rest of this story at usustatesman.com.

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@stephk_davis

my favorite part of grocery shopping is stopping in the oreo section just to see what those weird little freaks are up to now

@heididjarin

the way that the last of us outbreak happened in 2003 in the show.. imagine seeing an infected running at you wearing juicy couture

@murdercatdad

has anyone thought about filling the great salt lake as an eagle project
On Christmas Eve 2020, Steven Ashworth pulled up to the house of his then-girlfriend, Peyton Burr, in a horse-drawn carriage. Ashworth had hatched a plot to surprise her, and he had a burning question to ask.

“I told her I couldn’t make it to Christmas Eve because we had practice and that I would see her on Christmas Day,” Ashworth said. “I played it off like I couldn’t go.”

He knocked on the door and asked Peyton if she would marry him. She said yes, and the newly engaged couple celebrated with a carriage ride.

The two met in high school, attending Lone Peak in Highland. Steven, a sophomore at the time while Peyton was a junior, was scouting for love among his peers.

“I had just moved from Vegas, and he was asking the cheerleaders if there were any new girls he could go out with — he was the ripe age of 15,” Peyton said, laughing. “They introduced me to him, and he would text me all the time.”

Steven has been playing so well for the Aggies, the student section even gave him a new nickname, “Splashworth.” Peyton said she will be the only person who does not call him that.

“She hasn’t adopted that yet, but might do it as a joke,” Steven said.

Playing basketball at a collegiate level means Steven has to balance being not only an athlete and a husband, but also a student.

“I am very impressed. He is the perfect person to juggle all of this stuff. He’s motivated, confident, schedules out his time — he is just a great student, athlete and husband,” Peyton said.

But even a balanced life brings time away. When Steven goes on the road with the team, Peyton has to stay back.

“It’s usually about a week when I am gone with the team. A lot of FaceTime calls and texts. All of our family is down south, so there are a lot of check-ins, and we do a good job of navigating that,” Steven said. “Communicating is a huge part of that and keeping that love that we have had since high school.”

Peyton said even though they are both busy, the couple’s communication is “constant.”

“We are always texting, and he makes sure to FaceTime me, which probably bugs Rylan Jones, who is his roommate on the trip,” Peyton said, laughing. “He leaves me notes when he leaves for the road, which is super thoughtful.”

“Rylan is a great roommate, but nowhere near close to the roommate Peyton is,” Steven said, laughing.

Utah State head coach Ryan Odom also praised Steven for balancing his life so well.

“He is the best at all three — being a husband, student and athlete. I came in the day of a game early in the morning, and I heard the balls bouncing and I looked down the tunnel, and there was Steven, just getting ready for the game,” Odom said. “He is committed to being the best that he can be. He is committed to being the best husband, taking care of his family and being a great son and brother. Really committed to his family.”

Steven and Peyton’s story hasn’t always been perfect. The two had to spend a school year long-distance, then two more years during their missions for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“She went to college my senior year, but we still dated. I didn’t know if she would find bigger fish down at BYU, but after a year of that, we both went on missions and went at the same time,” Steven said. “I served in Indiana, and she served in Paraguay. We both got back and knew it was still right. After about eight months of being home from our missions, we got married.”

Now, the pair continue to grow their relationship. They will celebrate their second anniversary together this coming May.

On the road, Steven is reminded how grateful he is for his wife.

“Every single road trip, I remember more and more why I love her so much and want to be with her and wish she could be on every road trip,” Steven said.

Peyton is equally complimentary of her husband.

“He is definitely confident, social. He is a go-getter and has such big goals. He is so motivating for me,” Peyton said.

Odom said Steven is the type of player and person “we want at Utah State.”

“It helps that he is that good of a player and made himself into that. He may not have the physical size, but he plays big on the court. He has that confidence in himself,” Odom said.

Catch Steven on the court on Wednesday when the Aggies host San Diego State at 8 p.m.

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@NateDunnUSU

The two met in high school, attending Lone Peak in Highland. Steven, a sophomore at the time while Peyton was a junior, was scouting for love among his peers.

“I had just moved from Vegas, and he was asking the cheerleaders if there were any new girls he could go out with — he was the ripe age of 15,” Peyton said, laughing. “They introduced me to him, and he would text me all the time.”

Steven, who turns 23 this May, is in the middle of his junior season at Utah State and has statistically been one of the best players for the Aggies this season. He averages 15.3 points a game, 4.7 assists and 0.8 steals, all the highest averages on the team, while shooting nearly 48% from three and 47% from the field.

What makes this sharpshooter a talented player? Well, Steven credits his wife.

“She is the most important person in the world. She makes my world go round. She is helpful at the house and on the court, and she will even come and rebound for me,” Steven said. “She will even do as much research as she can to help me on the basketball floor.”

Peyton said even though she loves watching her husband play, it causes her stress.

“Mostly very happy and proud when I watch him, but during the games, I am so stressed — and way more stressed than he is, but it is so fun to watch him,” Peyton said. “I love going to the games, and it is one of my favorite hobbies.”

Steven has been playing so well for the Aggies, the student section even gave him a new nickname, “Splashworth.” Peyton said she will be the only person who does not call him that.

“She hasn’t adopted that yet, but might do it as a joke,” Steven said.

Playing basketball at a collegiate level means Steven has to balance being not only an athlete and a husband, but also a student.

“I am very impressed. He is the perfect person to juggle all of this stuff. He’s motivated, confident, schedules out his time — he is just a great student, athlete and husband,” Peyton said.

But even a balanced life brings time away. When Steven goes on the road with the team, Peyton has to stay back.

“It’s usually about a week when I am gone with the team. A lot of FaceTime calls and texts. All of our family is down south, so there are a lot of check-ins, and we do a good job of navigating that,” Steven said. “Communicating is a huge part of that and keeping that love that we have had since high school.”

Peyton said even though they are both busy, the couple’s communication is “constant.”

“We are always texting, and he makes sure to FaceTime me, which probably bugs Rylan Jones, who is his roommate on the trip,” Peyton said, laughing. “He leaves me notes when he leaves for the road, which is super thoughtful.”

“Rylan is a great roommate, but nowhere near close to the roommate Peyton is,” Steven said, laughing.

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Nationwide ref shortage hits USU intramurals

By Madison Weber
SPORTS REPORTER

As a new intramural sports season started this semester at Utah State University, Campus Rec rushed to hire more referees.

With over 600 players signed up for the basketball league and only 14 referees, officiated games seemed out of reach.

Campus Rec coordinator of competitive sports Bailey Adams emailed current players in January, stating if more students didn’t apply to officiate, they would have to call their own games.

“While we are on pace to have a record number of teams signed up to play in the 5v5 basketball league this season, there is, unfortunately, a lack of students that are interested in the part-time officiating position,” Adams wrote.

Nationwide, there is a shortage of sports officials. Utah State is no exception.

“Officiating sports, especially for your peers, is not a particularly easy job,” Adams wrote. “Our program is willing to work with students to find a part-time schedule that works with your classes and other extracurricular activities.”

The email told players that without enough referees, they would have to call their own games.

“Unfortunately, if no more students are interested in the officiating position, we will only be able to provide referees for regular season games every other week,” Adams wrote. “On the weeks that your division does not have referees, players will need to call their own fouls and violations.”

Adams finished the email with a hopeful call to the registered players.

“This is not an ideal situation, and we are hopeful that 1.7% of the players in this league are willing to come officiate the sport for a few hours a week,” he wrote. Aggies answered the call, and by the first basketball game, enough referees had been hired. First-year student Brenden Reed was relieved to hear the positions had been filled.

“I think it would take some of the organization out of it. It’s fun to come and play a team you don’t know. I feel like it might cause fights if we don’t have one,” Reed said.

Some players pointed out that reffing their own games wouldn’t be fair to either team.

“I feel like people would take it less seriously,” player Ella Nunn said. “They’d keep playing and not call the fouls because you wouldn’t want to call it on your own team.”

Izzie Finlinson, a first-time official, also admitted to players not calling fairly.

“It would not be taken very seriously because obviously if you’re judging your own game, you’ll be harder on your opponent than your own team,” she said.

Cade McDougal has reffed since August and believes the entire game would change without official refs.

“It would be a lot different,” he said. “It wouldn’t be as competitive, and you couldn’t play the actual rules since no one would be setting up free throws or things like that. It would just be a whole different game.”

There are multiple reasons why shortages are happening across the nation. At USU, it could have something to do with low pay, bad reputation or pressure on the job.

Adams expressed his own concern about the pay and how that may be what’s preventing students from applying.

“I am under the belief that officials for all sports are underpaid,” he said. “Even though this is a paid part-time position on campus, we are still constrained to certain wage scales within the department and division.”

Current Campus Rec officials expressed other concerns that may stop students from applying for the position.

Intramural ref Andrew Austin said, “I think that refs get a really bad rep. We just try to do our job, and people think that we’re bad people. Or they’re too scared to get yelled at; but somebody’s got to do it.”

McDougal says the yelling is part of the position.

“You are an official, so you will get yelled at, and people may not like you,” he said. “But that’s just something that comes with the job.”

Reed said the refs he’s encountered have been “awesome.”

“They joke around with us and they have fun,” Reed said. “I don’t know why students wouldn’t apply.”

While the position isn’t as glamorous as other jobs may be, Campus Rec is hopeful students will continue to apply and join their team.

“It’s definitely worth it, and people always come up to you after the game and say sorry if they do something wrong,” Austin said.

Read the rest of this story at usustatesman.com.

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Tennis
Men’s
Feb. 8: @ Utah
6 p.m., Salt Lake City
Feb. 11: vs. Brigham Young Noon, Sports Academy
Women’s
Feb. 11: @ Brigham Young Noon, Provo, Utah

Basketball
Men’s
Feb. 8: vs. San Diego State
8 p.m., Dee Glen Smith Spectrum
Feb. 11: @ San Jose State
8 p.m., San Jose, California
Women’s
Feb. 9: @ Wyoming
6:30 p.m., Laramie, Wyoming

Track and Field
Feb. 10-11: @ Husky Classic Seattle
@ Don Kirby Elite Invitational Albuquerque, New Mexico

Gymnastics
Feb. 10: vs. Boise State
7 p.m., Dee Glen Smith Spectrum

Softball
Feb. 10-12: Easton Classic Fullerton, California
Josh Bengtzen is a first-year student majoring in marketing. He loves off-roading, photography, cars, the medical field and meeting new people.

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AND SO MUCH MORE!
Dear Aggie,

Q: Dear Aggie,

I’m feeling pretty lonely. All of my roommates are dating people, and I’m the only one without any romantic relationships. My mom says I just need to “put myself out there,” but I’m not really sure how to do that, and I’m not interested in downloading a bunch of dating apps. The holidays are over, but now Valentine’s Day is coming up, and I don’t want to just feel sad all the time. Any advice?

— Lonely in Logan

DEAR LONELY,

It’s easy to feel like you’re the only person without any romance in your life, especially in a college town like Logan, but I promise you’re in good company. Although the media and other aspects of consumer culture tend to portray Valentine’s Day as a day all about romantic love, you are free to celebrate how you choose. My favorite Valentine’s Days have been the ones where I spread love to lots of people in my life, regardless of the relationship. Romantic love can’t be replaced by platonic or familial love, but it should be supplemented by it — you need all kinds of love for a happy life. Rather than focus on the type of love you’re missing, spend time strengthening the others. Mail some cheesy valentines to your parents, take chocolates to your favorite coworker, or highlight a friend on social media. Everyone wants to feel appreciated, and you might be surprised at how your relationships grow when you invest even a little bit of extra time and love into them.

Still, this is not to say you should just ignore your loneliness. Romance is a desirable thing, and it won’t do you any good to pretend like it’s not. Often, the more we try to bury our pain, the more painful it becomes. So, maybe you’ll want to make time to sit with it. If done within reason (don’t dig yourself into a hole), watching a movie about love or listening to your favorite love songs can be therapeutic.

If you’re not feeling a drive to pursue romance through something like a dating app, don’t. It’s perfectly OK to want something more organic than that. “Putting yourself out there” doesn’t have to mean upping your flirting game or imagining every acquaintance as a potential partner. You can meet more people, whether they’re friends or maybe more than friends, by joining a new club or volunteering in the community. Picking a new study spot and walking up to someone new will work, but it’s often too intimidating to be realistic. Meeting people through a common activity, however, is a much more comfortable way to expand your circle.

You have a whole life ahead of you — don’t tell yourself you’re out of time. You’re not alone, and the years ahead will bring love of all types into your life if you seek for them. If you work on finding a balance between acknowledging your loneliness and enriching your life in other ways, I bet this Valentine’s Day will be a bearable holiday, if not a happy one.

Dear Aggie is the Statesman’s anonymous advice column. Send any burning questions or restless thoughts to dearaggie@usustatesman.com.

Howard: Swipe Right: Dating in the Digital Age

Online dating is the most common way for Americans to find a date. According to a study from Stanford, about 39% of heterosexual couples and 65% of same-sex couples have met through online dating apps.

For many of us, our online presence is a huge part of our “real” lives. This raises the question: How do we safely navigate dating in the digital age, with its unique pitfalls and risks? While it isn’t possible to anticipate every scenario, these tips can help with online dating at any stage.

Vetting Matches
Someone’s online dating profile can reveal a lot about them. While sussing out if your match is cute and funny, also ask yourself if they are likely to be who they say they are. Dating apps don’t run criminal background checks, which leaves it up to you to decide who you feel comfortable communicating or meeting with.

Avoid connecting with suspicious accounts. Accounts without a bio, links to social media, and only one photo may be fake. Be suspicious of anyone that requests financial help or asks for personal information (such as social security number, work/home address, or banking information.) Consider reporting suspicious accounts to the platform, or report to the Fair Trade Commission if you suspect fraud.

As you and your match exchange messages, assess what you share about yourself and how much you know about the other person. Ask yourself, do you feel comfortable with the pace your relationship is progressing? Does this person respect your boundaries? Are there red flags? These can be useful questions to ask, not just before you meet, but throughout the relationship.

Meeting in Person
Before meeting for the first time, consider scheduling a video chat. This can not only help you determine if your match is who they claim to be, but can alleviate some awkwardness when you meet in person.

On your first date, meet in a public place with plenty of other people around. Staff, such as waiters or bartenders, can be useful to turn to for help if you feel unsafe. Avoid meeting someone at your home, your workplace or an isolated location, such as a public park. Arrange for your own transportation, so you can control where you go and when you leave.

Let at least one trusted person — a family member, friend, or roommate — know where you are going and who you will be with. With your go-to person, create a game plan for when to check in and follow up. Also make an exit plan, just in case the date goes south and you need to safely leave.

You are not ever rude for leaving a situation that makes you uncomfortable. Trust your gut, and remember your safety is most important. Regardless of if you follow all of these tips or none of them, you never deserve violence, abuse, or harassment. Know you can reach out to the Sexual Assault and Anti-Violence Information (SAAVI) office for more information and support.

Whitney Howard is an alumna from Utah State University and a former staff writer for The Utah Statesman. She is now a full-time victim advocate for the SAAVI office.

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