



The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!



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Welcome to the February 2021 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by the FYC. For this issue of *The Noodle*, members of the FYC were asked “What was your most memorable Valentine’s Day?” This topic allowed members to share their thoughts on their memories Valentine’s Day. We hope you will take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to learn about our experiences and enjoy our thoughts and opinions in this edition of *The Noodle*!



Believe in your self!!

Current Members:

- John Baldino
- Shevie Barnes
- Derek Carraway
- Alexander Gonzalez
- Leah Gorman
- JJ Humphrey
- Josh Tapia
- Christina Waldron
- Serena Wetmore
- Brandon White
- Niki Germain - FYC Youth Advisor





Mr. Lonely

I've never had a Valentine's Day with someone I loved. It was always just me on my lonesome watching everyone else buying gifts that would be thrown away in a week or two. I should say, it's always just been me and the boys, considering that we all were single and didn't have the courage or self-confidence to make that change. So we always made plans, and for us Valentine's Day turned into our "Guy's Night Out." Throughout the day we treated it as if it were another day, but when 6pm came that changed for us. This one Valentine's night we pulled an all-nighter; we went bowling, paint balling, and go-karting, and that very same night I discovered that I was an absolute god at mini-golf. However I had the tendency to smack my ball into the *Hooters parking* lot just across the road. Even though it was just a group of guys doing childish things we always had fun. See, Valentine's Day isn't just for showing how much you love someone. You don't have to be dating/married to a person to enjoy the "thrills of Valentine's Day" and just to let someone know that you care about them. Just spend the day with a close friend or friends, go out, and have fun. That's what my friends and I decided to do. That way we could be just as happy as everyone else was. We may have bent the rules a little bit, but that was our way of saying "No matter what, I'll be here for you."

By Brandon White

Valentine's Day Memories

I really don't have any memorable Valentine's Days memories. When I was in elementary school, we used to do the whole card thing, and sometimes decorated our boxes for everyone to receive their cards. There was one year when we made cards for each other in the class and I liked that because no one felt left out. In middle school we weren't allowed to have parties for some reason. (Yeah, I know, really!) In high school my club, Rays of Hope, used to put on a party for the kids in ESE. Those were a lot of fun, with a DJ, dancing, food, and decorations. I looked forward to that every year because it was a time that I could spend being myself and creating a great social event for other students.

The other big event that I associate with Valentine's Day is the "Night to Shine" dances put on by local churches and now funded by the foundation of a former football player from UF who won the Heisman Trophy. I'll let you all guess who that is! These are a blast because you get the opportunity to dress up and be with





all your friends. If you ever get a chance, you should definitely go to one of these events.

I am looking forward to a special Valentine's Day, hopefully soon, with a special someone! It doesn't matter what we would do on the date, it could be going out to dinner or just sitting around the house watching a movie. As long as I have someone to share it with, I am sure it will be memorable.

By Serena Wetmore



A Memorable Valentine's Day

Most everyone can point to a certain Valentine's Day of years past that sticks out to them for one reason or another. I say most because I can't really point to a particular one. I only recently started caring about the day to begin with a couple years ago after I met my now wife. Prior to that, it was just another day to me because I never dated, had a girlfriend or anything like that. If anything, I guess you could say I looked forward to the day every year because it was and still is the day registration opens for The Annual Family Café conference. Some treat the day like a holiday. I personally disagree with that because a true holiday constitutes getting the day off from school/work in my book. I guess you could say though this Valentine's Day coming up will be my most memorable, because it will be my first one as a married man. It will also be the first one when my wife and I will get to be physically together on the day. That's because the previous two since we met and have been together, we were long distance, and a virtual video chat just isn't the same. It'll be so nice getting to spend the day together this year doing whatever we decide to do to celebrate it, and that's why this Valentine's Day will be my most memorable one to date!

By Derek Carraway



Most Memorable Valentine's Day

When I saw this month's *Noodle* topic, I had absolutely no idea what I would say. I had to really pick my mind to remember Valentine's Days of the past. First, I am single and have always been single and not taken. So I never had a real reason to celebrate Valentine's Day. Second, I'm homeschooled so it's not like I can send flowers or Valentines to classmates. But then I remembered!! There was a Valentine's Day that was memorable. It was years ago.

When I was 8 or 9 years old, Valentine's Day fell on an "Out of the Box" day. Everybody in the theatre troupe brought a Valentine for all the members. There were so many of us that bags were put up on the stage for each one of us and TKs filled them with the Valentines. Most people just signed their names. Some people added candy or gum to them. And some people wrote notes. I saved those Valentines. I don't remember where I put them. But every now and then, I'll come across them and it's fun to read what they say and remember a fun day of the past.

By JJ Humphrey





How Do I Become Part of The Florida Youth Council?

The Florida Youth Council is a group of youth (between the ages of 15 and 17) and emerging leaders (between the ages of 18 and 30) with disabilities or special health care needs that live in Florida.

The Florida Youth Council is all about getting youth and emerging leaders involved in self-advocacy, peer mentoring and other activities that will improve the quality of life for youth and emerging leaders with disabilities in Florida. The program empowers youth and emerging leaders to decide what issues are important to their generation, to discuss those issues in their state and local communities, and to develop strategies to address them.

We are seeking a group of enthusiastic, motivated youth and emerging leaders to participate. If you would like to take a leadership role in advocating for youth and emerging leaders in Florida, please visit The Florida Youth Council website at www.floridayouthcouncil.com. The program is open to application year round. We hope to hear from you soon!



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