



“A safe and caring place for all to learn”

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# THOM TIMES

*Let's talk about love, baby!*

**@thomtimesnews**



*All unmarked photos have been taken by : Hannah H. (She/Her), Grade 9*

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## Gushy, Mushy, Stupid, Valentine's Day

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Ben S. (He/Him), Grade 9

Valentines Day: a day we show our love to others. But, according to store-bought candy, only in a *romantic* way.

Isn't it weird how the candy always has a flirty saying written on it? Imagine someone asking you out with a heart shaped M&M that says "hey we should go out on a date." I honestly do like the idea of Valentine's Day, but considering how advertised and commercialized it is, it makes me feel sad. Yes, I know I'm single -- you don't need to remind me....Walmart.

But that's not even the "best" part of the holiday. The best would be when the kids in your class are incredibly awkward and give their crush cute little gifts. Actually, the best part of V-Day is when the candy always goes on sale on the 15th and onward. I mean sure it may be the picked-over, high-end chocolate but it is a heck of a lot cheaper than it is on full price.

Valentine's Day is a hated holiday and I do understand it. However, I still think it's important to show your love in romantic gestures.... or not. Plus it gives me an excuse to cuddle up on my couch and watch some good movies with a message of love in them like "Wall-E" and "Megamind." All I am going to say is "Gushy, Mushy, Stupid Valentine's Day."



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## Love has no labels/queer-teen dating

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Isaac M. (He/They/She), Grade 12

As a queer person, the idea of love can be pretty tricky. When I was asked to write this article, I wasn't really sure what to do because the only true, unconditional love I think I've ever felt was for my dog. While I've been in relationships, they've always felt weird; mainly because as gay people, I think we often feel compelled to be with the first other gay person we see, whomever they are. Unlike straight folk, who can with confidence, ask anyone out, we can't. In theory, we could but that could lead to some not so great things, which is no bueno. This inability to do what our straight counterparts are able to do feels pretty crappy most of the time - we have to hunt for signals like asking if they listen to Girl in Red, checking to see if their jeans are cuffed and that they have a clear phone case or casually slipping in a Drag Race reference to see if they react or not.

Dating as a queer teen can be really tough and lonely, especially while living in a considerably conservative province. However, with the help of the Internet, we can see that this loneliness will likely pass and we'll find someone who shares similar values as us, like eating the rich or running away to a cabin in the woods and never returning. For most of us, this person or these people won't come for a while, which is okay.

Even though it can get tough, as queer people, we need to stick together and get eachother through it so we can all prosper in this heteronormative landscape. As queer teens, sometimes we're all eachother have, so stay safe and drink some water.

"Love has no labels" by Ad Council with music by Mary Lambert :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnDgZuGIhHs&t=28s>

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## Getting Creative this Valentine's Day - How are people celebrating within COVID guidelines?

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Marjan R. (She/Her), Grade 12

As February has fast approached us, Valentine's day has come at a much-needed time where everyone needs to be told and shown how loved they are. The pandemic has snatched our most valued traits that define us as human: the need to touch and communicate. With COVID restrictions, one has to communicate with their loved ones through physical distancing and virtual communication. Although the virtual world is all too familiar to us, nothing to this extent has ever crossed our minds. However, to make this special day (and month) worthwhile, provided below are creative ideas to make your valentines all more special and safe!

### How are people celebrating Valentine's day within COVID guidelines?

1. Watch a movie and enjoy some popcorn whilst you are it with your friends/partner, in the comfort of your home. Make sure to adhere to the Public Health guidelines that states gathering is limited to 5-10 people (ensure physical distancing of two meters is kept in mind). You could even video chat with friends while watching a movie, almost as if you were together in person!
2. Spend quality time with your partner or loved ones by cooking home-made food, making a Valentine's day craft, or making an indoor picnic!
3. Exchange gratitude letters or gifts to make each other feel special!
4. Go out for an outdoor date where few people visit!



### If you are celebrating alone, here are more ideas:

1. Enjoy a self-care day! You can take yourself out on a date, indulge in chocolates or your favorite dishes, or start a skincare routine.
2. Watch a movie you have been putting aside for some time!
3. De-stress and take the initiative to show gratitude to your loved ones!
4. Last but not least, love yourself and see the good in you that make you who you are.
5. Happy Valentine's day!



Credit: <https://people.com/lifestyle/how-to-celebrate-valentines-day-2021-coronavirus/>

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## Valentine's Day is for singles, too!

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Emmalea H. (She/Her), Grade 12

The word *single* can be a very sad thing for many people. Being single can feel heartbreaking and damaging for one's own self. It can make you feel like you are not good enough, pretty enough, smart enough. Just not enough. But, in no way is that true! Valentine's Day is not just designed for people in relationships. It is made for you to take the day and show love to yourself. On Valentine's Day, curl up on your comfy couch in a blanket watch some sappy romance movies, eat some cheap drug store chocolate, and just indulge in knowing that you are amazing. You are kind, caring, smart, and strong!

**"YOUR GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO LOVE YOURSELF  
AND TO KNOW YOU ARE ENOUGH"**

-BuddyBits

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## Living with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

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Isaac M. (He/They/She), Grade 12

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Those numbers repeat in my head every moment of every day. The constant drone of counting through everything I do, needing things to be placed a certain way and intrusive thoughts telling me to swerve my vehicle to hit a person on the sidewalk fills my mind daily. The need to step on every odd tile in my basement, needing all of the Tupperware in my home to face the same specific direction, and the urge to bang my head on things so that the compulsion can subside, giving even a minute of relief are always there. These things only show a glimpse of how my Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder is affecting my life and how it has affected my life for years.

For those who aren't aware, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a disorder where thoughts, ideas and/or compulsions (actions) repeat in your head, making you think that the only way to get rid of them is to do what they say. For example, one of my compulsions tells me that I need to run my tongue across my teeth and count to seven. Once it's finished, I'm fine. However, if I don't do it, I'm overwhelmed with anxiety. While for some folk, not completing a compulsion can lead to feeling like something bad is going to happen, like your friends and family are going to die, mine just tells me to start panicking without reason.



Something else that comes with OCD is intrusive thoughts, which are basically when something (usually bad) pops into your mind. For example, when driving I often have intrusive thoughts that tell me to crank the wheel to one side and hope for the best. Thankfully, they're controllable, but they can get pretty scary.

Before I was diagnosed, I didn't realize that other people didn't think the same way I did. For example, in classrooms and computer labs I had my specific spot, which was where I would go every time I was in that room. If someone got to that spot before me or sat in it to 'change things up', a wave of anxiety would cover me, which could only be dried by either asking them to find a different seat or to just sit on the floor. While I was aware this was strange, I just thought that other people dealt with it in a different way.

I knew that something was going on, so I told a few friends and they seemed to agree that this was something I should keep an eye on. Over a month or two, I tried my best to remember the 'strange' things I needed to do throughout the day to not feel anxious from my thoughts. This led to seeing a psychologist.

When I began explaining what I was feeling to her, she wasn't certain it was OCD. When I think of people with OCD, my thoughts immediately go to people who obsessively clean or need to check their door five times to see if it's locked, even though they just checked it. Because my counting, avoiding, and self-soothing was so ingrained in my day-to-day life, it was hard to diagnose. Sometimes, I didn't even realize what I was doing.

Eventually, in November of 2019, I received my diagnosis. It scared me a bit knowing that there was something officially wrong with me, which could never be fixed. Of course, this was the wrong





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way to think about it; but at the time and even now, I didn't know what was going to happen next, which terrified me.

One of my worst compulsions prior and following my diagnosis involved cleaning the school's SRC room. I would often spend 4 hours after school cleaning it. I would stay after school most days because I became so overwhelmed with anxiety from the mess that I couldn't function or leave without doing something. I hyperfocused on the table being dirty, the paintbrushes sitting in the sink and the unorganized white board to the point that I simply couldn't do anything but fix them. I spoke with my psychologist about this and she recommended I avoid the room completely, which was easier said than done. I grew resentment toward the other members because I repeatedly asked them if they could help but that was to no avail.



When lockdown hit, I was in a really bad place mentally. I had just gone through an extremely rough patch and was feeling so overwhelmed with life that I wasn't sure how to function. Thankfully, no longer needing to go to school was actually a good thing because it gave me a chance to rest. After a month or two of developing a 10+ hour sleep schedule and starting medication, I began feeling more in control of my life. I continued to see my psychologist and we worked on managing my compulsions. I was beginning to feel better about myself, which felt really good.

However, over these past few months, my mental health took a dip and my OCD began taking over again. I couldn't function properly no matter what I tried. At this point, I had also developed tics (like in people with Tourette Syndrome), which only led to more stress because I still don't know why they're here.

In mid January, at my worst, I developed a compulsion, moreso an intrusive thought, that made me feel the need to bang my head against things. Before, I would have been able to redirect my thoughts but because of my new tics, I began hitting my head on a cabinet uncontrollably. This lasted for about 10 minutes - hitting my head to the point of tears and panicking because I didn't know why this was happening. Earlier that day, I had experienced the worst tics I had ever had, so with this alongside extreme head pain, I didn't know what to do. The thought of going to the hospital crossed my mind multiple times. Once I was finally able to pull myself away from the cabinet, I sat on my couch and cried for about twenty minutes before my mum came home.



Living with a mental illness is really difficult, especially one like OCD. When I tell people I have it, I usually get: "oh, okay, cool" (the preferred one) or "wow, so you must be super organized!" Because of how OCD is viewed, for example videos captioned "this \*insert satisfying thing here\* will help your OCD" or people saying things like "oh, my OCD is just acting up" when they feel the need to move a pencil to be in line with others beside it, I often feel pretty crappy and invalidated. In fact, there have been multiple times when I've gone to other people's houses and they ask me to help them clean because "I must be good at it."

Thankfully, at the moment, I'm in a place where I have more control over my compulsions, though I sometimes find that they're controlling me instead of me controlling them. Oops. It can get really dark at times and it can drain all of my energy but I know that by working through them, everyday I'm getting better at redirecting my negative thoughts into productive activity and am having more good days than bad, which is what keeps me going.

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## Trojan's Love Playlist

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Emmalea H. (She/Her), Grade 12

What's up Trojans, it's your girl Emmalea! If you didn't already know, we are in the month of February. February is the month of love and romance, and as we know, that means blasting love ballads. But, have you ever wondered what Mr. Atchsion's favourite romance hit is, or what is Ms. Benoit's most loved love song? Well, I took it upon myself to reach out to the staff of Thom Collegiate and make what I am honoured to call the **"Trojan's Love Playlist."** Enjoy!

🎵 Playlist w/ the songs : <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0FiThrYZBZEbvUu8MEv0Ju?si=j5aQFrgIQkWYPWC3-aMfXA>



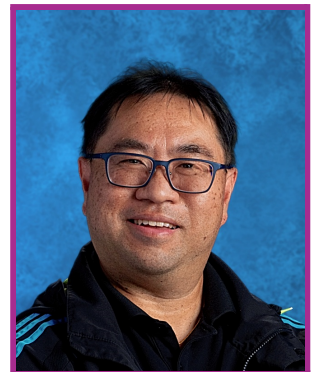
**Mme. Merk :**

*"My favourite love song is 'Iris' by the Goo Goo Dolls because it is the song my husband and I danced to at our wedding."*

**Mr. Pon :**

*"I LOVE love songs, and because I'm old, I have more than one favourite... 'Total Eclipse of the Heart', Bonnie Tyler : reminds me of high school dances. 'Je l'aime à mourir', Francis Cabrel : The first French love song I ever heard, and*

*I saw this singer's concert live in Quebec. 'The Colour of My Love', Céline Dion : My wedding song! 'Butterfly Kisses', Bob Carlyle : If you're the parent of a daughter you'll get it.*



**Ms. Lenihan :**

*"Favourite love song. Hm. It's a tie between 'Rivers and Roads' by the Head and the Heart and 'Tree by the River' by Iron and Wine. I like them because they're love songs without being overly sentimental and sappy. They're also ones you can listen to again and again without getting tired of them because they're also lots of fun to sing along to, as well."*



**Mr. Terry :**

*"Our wedding song was 'Can't Help Falling in Love with You' by Elvis. My wife, Denise, and I will always remember this song together as it was our first dance at our wedding."*



**Mr. DeRosier :**

*"I have 2 favourite 'love' songs. One is 'Your Song' by Elton John. This song was played for our first dance at my wedding with my beautiful wife, Jeanne, 25 years ago. The other is 'Circles' by Post Malone. Although this may not be seen as the traditional love song where a couple is happily in love and can stay/be together, this is one of Jeanne's favourite songs and therefore also one of mine!"*



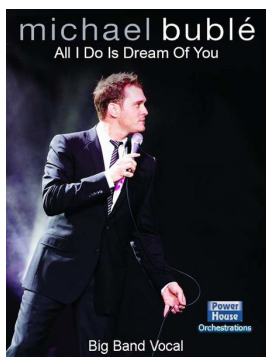


**Mr. Bridgeman :**

*"I like 'Then' by Brad Paisley, that was my wedding song."*

**Mr. Neufeld :**

*"As a singer and musician, I have heard and sang PLENTY of love songs, and a lot*



*of them are awesome! Some of my favourites include 'All I Do is Dream of You' by Michael Bublé. 'It had to be You' by Harry Connick Jr. 'Perfect' by Ed Sheeran. 'I Choose You' by Sarah Barelles. 'All of Me' by Frank Sinatra. 'You Don't Know Me' by Ray Charles, and many more. But my absolute favourite is a song by a guy*

*you probably never heard of -it's called 'How I Will Say I Love You' by Tony Desare. I love it because it's really not all flowery, but speaks to how love is shown in little ways, every day. I also love it because I practiced it to sing at my daughter's wedding. Great song!"*



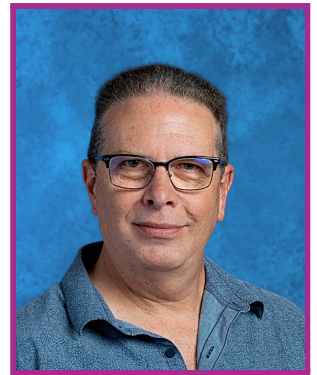
**Mr. Houston :**

*"'Love is' by Adam Cohen. The message contained in the lyrics expresses the ideal that, love is what brings joy and acceptance to your life and the world around you."*



**Mr. Kozack :**

*"My favourite love song is..... 'Dream Come True' by Frozen Ghost. It was my wedding song."*



**Ms. Keir :**

*"I am not much of a mushy love song type person, but I do love the song 'Then' by Brad Paisley. This was the song my husband chose for us to dance at our wedding. This is when the song became so very special to me. The words in that song, our wedding day, him, it was all enough to make me feel like the luckiest person in the world."*



**Mr. Atchison :**

*"I like 'Layla' by Eric Clapton or 'Wonderful Tonight' by Eric Clapton. Why (pardon the idolatry) CLAPTON IS GOD! A close third is 'Love Story' by Taylor Swift.. because she talks about Shakesphere."*

**Ms. Yarnton-Peterson :**

*"A contemporary song that I adore is 'Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa' by Vampire Weekend. The sound that I love is reminiscent of the Talking Heads, and overall it has a really 'up' feeling to the overall work. I like the genre of 'island the indie rock' with crisp lyrics. Also, there is a Tim Burton element to the music video, in which the band reinvents their image as goths wearing pastel colours."*





**Ms. Back :**

*"Wonderful Tonight" by Eric Clapton."*

**Ms. Edey :**

*"I like 'Just the Way You Are' by Billy Joel."*



**Ms. Armstrong :**

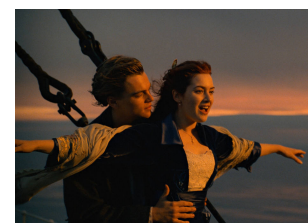
*"One favourite song is called 'Change the World.' So, this song is one that my husband and I both associate with a very happy time. We dated for 12 years, yes you read right, 12 years before we got married. Of course we felt pressure to get married for many years, and lots of people asked us why we even bothered after all of that time. I can't explain it, but things were different after actually getting hitched. It was something that we felt, and it is this song that always takes me back to that feeling. This is why... We received some money as wedding gifts, and decided that since we both LOVE music, that we would buy a good stereo system. Keep in mind that this was long before Bluetooth and the internet, so a good sound system was a must! We went to Audio Warehouse and listened to our system in a*

*separate room where you can decide if the purchase is for you before you buy it. This is the song that they cranked up, and I loved the song. My husband loved it too. We both commented on the song as being a reminder of 'us', the new married us, and that everything just felt different, but also so perfectly right. We will have been married for 25 years this summer, and that song can still take us right back to that time."*

*(NOTE: Ms. Armstrong also has a personal love song for herself - ask her about it in person!)*

**Mr. Dumba :**

*"My Heart Will Go On" by Céline Dion."*



**Mr. Babcock :**

*"Easy... no I mean that's my favorite love song, 'Easy' by Lionel Richie and the Commodores. It always puts me in a good headspace. Take the good with the bad and enjoy everyday like it's an easy Sunday morning."*

**Ms. Henderson :**

*"My favourite is 'Loving Wings' by Dave Matthews Band. It was the song I walked into my wedding to. I also really like 'Forever and Ever Amen' by Randy Travis because my parents would always start dancing in the kitchen when it came on. Great memories!"*



**Mme. Mme Campbell :**

*"You're going to laugh but my favourite love song is 'Ice Cream' by Sarah MacLachlan for very sentimental reasons! My husband had me listen to it when we weren't dating and it had me pondering exactly his*



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*intentions. However, it was whimsical enough that I didn't give it too much thought- that was 27 years ago and I'm still with him."*

**Ms. Williams :**

*"Ohh, tough one. I think my favourite is 'Unconditional' by Freya Ridings. She is a very talented artist!"*



**Ms. Benoit :**

*"Hmmm.. Well an important song to my husband and I is 'Time of Your Life' by Green Day, but I'm not sure you'd really qualify it as a love song. Also, I'm pretty*



*old so the student body likely won't know it. We have been together since tenth grade and this song recurred at many special times for us since we were teenagers. The videographer at his graduation even started playing that song in the video right when we got out of the limo, which we thought was so cool since it had already become 'our song.' We have danced under the stars to it while camping and countless times in all of our kitchens as we built our life and had a family together moving from our very first tiny apartment and through each of the three homes we have owned. We even played it when we walked back into our reception at our wedding. To this day, each time I hear it, I smile. This song reminds me that while we never know what the future will hold, nobody can*

*ever take away all of the memories and all of the experiences (good/bad) that we have shared with each other. No matter what happens it was very well worth the journey!"*

**Mr. Moore :**

*"'Wannabe' by the Spice Girls because good friends are more important (that sounds so cheesy)."*



**Mr. Koroluk :**

*"This is an excellent question. Although there are many I enjoy, I will tell you my favourite has to be 'All of Me' by John Legend. This one speaks to me, but the one line in particular I really love is when he appreciated all of his lover's perfect imperfections. I believe no one is perfect, but someone is perfect for you. Call me a romantic, and I will bite you."*

\*\*editor's note, please do this\*\*

**Mr. Blondeau :**

*"One of my favourite songs is called 'Long Way To Go' by the Snake Oil Salesman. I love it because it is written and performed by my little brother to honour our late father."*



**Mr. Flood :**

*"Favourite songs are tough for me to choose as I spend so much time listening to music. I'm sure that most would answer this question by choosing a love song that is attached to a romantic moment or memory. For me though, my favourite*

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love songs are the songs that promote the value of love. There are so many great songs about love. Of course The Beatles 'All You Need Is Love' is great, but I also think of Neil Young's 'Peace and Love', 'Love and War' and 'Love and Only Love.' Ziggy Marley's 'Love is My Religion' is up there, but I'm going to go with Brant Bjork's 'Love is Revolution'. Yep, that's my favourite love song... 'Love is Revolution' it's such a great lyric. What all of these great love songs have in common is that they all promote the idea that in order to live your life to the fullest and to get the most value out of life, then you need to make love a priority. We need to make conscious decisions to choose to love- love and only love-everyday."



**Ms. Kuntz :**

"I love music, so it is really hard for me to pick just one! But, one love song that means a lot to me is called 'This I Promise You' by Ronan Keating. Other love songs that carry significant meaning to me are 'Home' by Chantal Kreviazuk, 'Halo' by Beyonce, and 'I Think I Got it Right This Time' by Keith Urban. Also, 'You Raise me Up' by Josh Groban is beautiful. Although this one is more about the love for a parent, I've always felt that romantic love should always be about mutually bringing each other up. I also get goosebumps every time I listen to 'Perfect' by Ed Sheeran... all of these songs discuss different types of love and I think they are all equally important to foster. Ok, I'll stop now!"

**Ms. Peters :**

"One of my fav sappy love songs is 'Grow Old With You' by Adam Sandler. I love it for its simple message (& sweet acoustic melody). When you care deeply for someone, you demonstrate it through your daily actions and gestures. It's habitual acts of consideration and selflessness that grow love in a relationship. The desire & pursuit to grow and age alongside another is beautiful."



**Ms. Nicholson :**

"My favourite love song is 'Falling Slowly.' This was my wedding song so it means a lot to me."

**Mr. Bekker :**

"I really love Peter Gabriel's 'Book of Love.' I heard it in some Jennifer Lopez movie, and although the movie was mediocre, I loved the song! I really appreciate the orchestral elements, and also loved the way it describes love in more than the usual cliché ways."



**Ms. O'Donnell :** "My favourite love song is 'Your Song' by Elton John. It was part of my wedding ceremony and I rocked both of my babies to sleep while singing it."

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## Cue Sappy Movies... oh wait, sorry - cue Valentine's Day

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*Emmalea H. (She/Her), Grade 12*

I was curious to know if I'm the only one who spends Valentine's day covered up with blankets, and eating like it's my last day, all while watching romance movies. So here are some of the things to do (or not do!) on future Valentine's days, for years to come:

- Watching movies with my family and dogs
- Crying, being lonely and being sad
- Sitting in loneliness
- Homework
- Eating clearance chocolate

It's ok to feel sad and lonely on Valentine's Day. Just don't let it take over. Think of the good things. Whether that be eating a record number of chocolate kisses or feeling pretty today. It's the little things.

## Trojans LOVE Love!

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*Emmalea H. (She/Her), Grade 12*

If you need some love songs to add your playlist some of the student body got you covered. Here are some of the recommendations from Thom students:

- Hannah H., Grade 9
  - "Dusk till Dawn" by Zayn Malik
- Matt R., Grade 10
  - "Come and Get your Love" by Redbone
- Kaden, H., Grade 11
  - "One Less Lonely Girl" by Justin Bieber
- Emmalea H., Grade 12
  - "Wanted" by Hunter Hayes

