

Investor's Business Daily

FOR PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE TO SUCCEED

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COMPUTERS MADE PLAIN

Let Your Love Light Shine — Over Web

By Pete Barlas

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Unsure of how to celebrate Valentine's Day this year? Maybe it's time to embrace the Web.

Using the Internet, surfers can send balloons, flowers, candy, perfume, lingerie or free cybercards with just a few mouse clicks. The Web also can help you evaluate your mate or find a significant other through online matchmaking services.

Millions use the Web every day to meet new people, says Dan Bender, Webmaster for American Singles, in San Rafael, Calif. The nonprofit group operates a Web site for singles.

"Valentine's Day is always the crazy time for this industry," he said. "It's the time when most people think about finding a romantic partner."

American Singles signs up more than 500 new members daily around Valentine's Day. To date, it has 210,000 members with personal ads on the site.

To draw more attention to its Web site, American Singles is sponsoring a live Valentine's Day cyberparty on Feb. 14. Visitors can attend by logging on the Internet from home or by visiting a participating cybercafe in 19 cities throughout the world.

"This is about trying to bring people closer together for love, romance and relationships," said Bender. "The Internet has made finding a date much easier."

If you're already spoken for, you may

Love Links

Valentine's Day Web addresses

HomeArts Network

<http://www.homearts.com/depts/relat/00hwdyf1.htm>

American Singles

<http://www.as.org>

Occasional Expressions Inc.

<http://www.usaglad.com>

St. Claire Associates

http://rats2u.com/calendar_tuvwxzy/calendar_valentine.htm

Prism Web Productions

<http://www.prisweb.com/vgc/valentines.html>

Newfront Productions Inc.

<http://www.MysteryNet.com/vdaymassacre>

Loveland re-mail program

<http://www.loveland.org/valentine/re-mail.htm>

need to keep the home fires burning. For that, there's always the old reliable: flowers.

Abe Wynperle, president of Flower Farm Direct Inc., an online florist in Boca Raton, Fla., expects to cash in this Valentine's Day.

"Valentine's Day is the biggest holiday for flowers — it's the highest dollar value per order," he said.

If that isn't sweet enough, there's always chocolate. Several companies are hawking sweets over the Web.

See's Candy Shops Inc. and Godiva Chocolatier Inc. both sell two-pound boxes. You also can order pretzels hand-dipped in Swiss chocolate from Occasional Expressions U.S.A. Inc.

But if your significant other is di-

eting, perfume is an alternative. Online outlets include Estee Lauder Co.'s Clinique Web site or the Fragrance Counter.

Those who have no trouble with intimacy might want to try lingerie. Several companies, including Victoria's Secret, Frederick's of Hollywood and Henry & June Lingerie, sell intimate apparel over the Web.

History buffs wanting perspective on the holiday can check out a recap of the 1929 St. Valentine's Day Massacre published by Newfront Productions Inc.

If you want to gauge your love life, there's always a love quiz on the HomeArts Web site operated by The Hearst Corp. Some go right to the heart of the relationship with titles such as "Are You Sexually Compatible?" and "How Well Do You Deal With The Ex-Girlfriend?"

Cyber junkies with little or no cash can send electronic love letters via e-mail at no charge. Online greetings companies include St. Claire Associates and Prism Web Productions.

Although e-mail is becoming more popular on Valentine's Day, many people prefer snail mail with a Loveland, Colo., postmark. For the past 52 years, Loveland's chamber of commerce has stamped its name on Valentine's Day cards and letters free of charge. Last year, it stamped 300,000.

But it too has found the Web, and is advertising its service online.

"People seem to like the romantic connotation of Loveland," said Julie Farnam, manager of the chamber's visitor center.