



Photo by Jorja Smith - Staff Photographer

On Valentine's Day, the crowd gathered despite the cold and downtown traffic to express their Valentine's Day feelings in a pillow fight.

Anti-Valentine's Day pillow fight unifies Asheville on holiday

Pritchard Park carries on the Valentine's Day tradition for another year

Alex Milstein

amilstei@unca.edu - Staff Writer

Asheville locals carried pillows around downtown this Valentine's Day, rather than the traditional rose bouquet, as they participated in an annual anti-Valentine's Day ritual.

A massive pillow fight raged on in the middle of Pritchard Park between young and old alike dressed in costumes, war paint and pillows. **Clyde Toney, III, Asheville resident and participant in the pillow fight**, said this event brought out a fun side of Valentine's Day.

"It's a really great alternative to the Hallmark stereotype that is Valentine's Day," Toney said. "This is the most love I have seen people show toward each other on Valentine's Day in a really long time. Everyone is just smiling and throwing pillows. This is a really fun event to just come together and have some fun on a day that you may ordinarily look at as sad or boring."

He said he heard about this event from a friend and had no idea how it would actually turn out. After he went inside the pillow fight pit, he admitted it was more fun than he expected.

"It was chaos. Playful chaos," Toney said. "It's a place where everyone can get along, throw pillows around and play like little kids. Some were little kids, some were adults."

Nathan Adams, a junior literature student at UNC Asheville, recommends everyone go out and give this pillow fight a try on Valentine's Day.

"I heard from a friend that it was going to happen, so I decided to go with them," Adams said.

Adams, who enjoyed the pillow fight pit, said it was definitely something to experience.

"This was my first pillow fight, and it was really crazy being in the middle of it all. It was also very bizarre. I have never really been hit from so many angles at once, and I think I probably hit everyone at some point."

Adams said he thinks the unique gathering gave everyone a fun way to spend Valentine's Day.

"It was neat how it almost seemed like a flash mob just came together for a pillow fight. It's a good community event because it's a fun way to bring people together in a sort of violent way, but still have fun and be safe. Pillow fighting is still a thing, but people don't really ever do it anymore, especially in public, and so doing it was a fun experience for me," Adams said.

Joshua Reeves, an Asheville local, said he decided to have some fun with this event.

"I pretty much just stumbled upon this," Reeves said. "I had some buddies who were really excited to just throw some pillows around, so I decided I would go see what it was all about. It was interesting to see this many people fighting with pillows, and it's definitely not something you see everyday."

Reeves, also a participant of the pillow fight pit, said being in the pit guaranteed a wild time.

"I got my chocolate war paint on and just decided to go hit a few people with pillows. It's insane in there. Pillows fly at you left and right and you just swing around trying not to get hit. Everyone here is so friendly though. They all help everyone else have fun."



Photo by Jorja Smith - Staff Photographer

Nathan Adams dodges pillows in the name of St. Valentine.