

What do we really know about St. Valentine's Day?



Valentine Post Card - This card was used in 1909. It was printed by the pre-eminent postcard manufacturer in Great Britain, Raphael Tuck & Sons. It is listed as no. 139 in their series of Valentine Post Cards.

by Charles Taws

CLARINGTON MUSEUMS
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Valentine's Day will soon be upon us. That most romantic of special days. How did it start? When does it date back to? And, who is St. Valentine? Not surprisingly, many sources give a highly romanticized origin to this day.

The conventional story goes that St. Valentine's (or just Valentine's) Day was established by Pope Gelasius I in 496 AD to honour the memory of Valentine, a priest of Rome when it was still a pagan state. Emperor Claudius II (the Cruel) need-

He found that single men made better soldiers than married men so he forbade all engagements and marriages. Valentine, seeing the unfairness of the Emperor, secretly married young couples in Rome's growing Christian community, but was soon found out and was martyred on February 14th 269 AD (or 270 AD). While in prison awaiting his sentence he helped other Christians to escape and is even said to have fallen in love with his jailer's daughter. Before his death, he wrote her a farewell letter and signed it "From your Valentine". When Rome became a Christian Empire he was made a Saint.

What a nice story? It has

ter, but is it true? Does it hold up to cold historical analysis? The short answer is, sorry to all you lovers and romantics out there, no. But, the historical reality of this holiday is very interesting if only because so little is known about it.

First of all, there are many St. Valentine's out there (at least fourteen) and it is not clear who Gelasius was honouring when he declared the holiday. Three are at the top of the list as candidates because they are reputed to have died on February the 14th. By far, the best candidate is Valentine of Rome. He is known to have existed and is buried on the Via Flaminia in Rome. His relics can be found in the Church

Church in Dublin, Ireland and in the village church of Balzan, Malta. The next one is Valentine of Terni. Terni is a city in Central Italy and this Valentine lived around 197 AD. He was martyred by the Emperor Aurelian and also lies buried on the Via Flaminia. His relics are kept in the Basilica of Saint Valentine in Terni. Almost nothing is known about the third claimant who was martyred, along with his companions, in Africa (some say Ethiopia) on February the 14th. It is not clear whether St. Valentine's Day is to honour one, or some, or all of these saints. For this reason the holiday was deleted from the Gener-

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St. Valentine's Day

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al Roman Calendar of Saints in 1969 by Pope Paul VI.

So how did this holiday, set aside to honour a martyred saint(s), become attached to love and romance? Again, the short answer is- we don't really know. Historical scholars can see the examples throughout history but not the reasons behind them. Let's look at the most prominent incidents in history that show Valentine's Day progression toward romance. For the first one we have to jump to the year 1260 when "Legende Aurea" was very popular. This book recounted the lives of the saints and it adds some details to the St. Valentine's story. It states that Claudius himself interrogated Valentine and had a discussion with him. He tried to convert Valentine to paganism, but when Valentine refused and tried to convert him to Christianity the

that the "Legende Aurea" was written at the time when the idea of medieval courtly love was popular. This may have had an influence on the holiday.

The first reference to Valentine's Day in literature comes in 1382 and it has no precedent. In Geoffrey Chaucer's "Parlement of Foules" he writes (converted to modern English):

For this was Saint Valentine's Day,

When every bird cometh there to choose his mate."

This is the first reference to link Valentine's Day with the idea of love and romance.

The poem was written to commemorate the first anniversary of the engagement of King Richard II of England and Anne of Bohemia. It was a common belief that birds began mating on February 14th, but any naturalist today will tell you that is too early.

Now we jump to 1415 and Charles, Duke of Orleans, having lost at the Battle of Agincourt begins his lengthy stay in the Tower of London. He spends his time writing poetry in French. Among his works is a rondeau in which the following lines are found:

"Je suis desja d'amour tanne
Ma tres douce Valentinee."

This poem is regarded as the earliest surviving valentine and is preserved in the British Museum. Next we jump to Shakespeare's play "Hamlet". It was written in 1600-01 and St. Valentine's Day is mentioned in a romantic way by the character Ophelia. It seems by this time that St. Valentine's Day is widely regarded as a day of romance and love.

We see the romantic references through out history, but not the "why". Some scholars believe we have to look to earlier pagan festivals celebrated in pre-Christian Rome to find the an-



Valentine Post Card - circa 1915, Again, printed in Germany as were most of the postcards of the early 20th Century, as the Germans had the printing equipment to produce brightly coloured cards cheaply.

cards by the early 1800's. Later they became colourful mass-produced cards such as we are familiar with today. Also, it has become the custom, especially with school children, to send Valentine's Day cards out to practically everybody. So, it has become a day to send a special Valentine wish to all we know and love. A billion Valentine cards are given each year and in 2010 15 million e-Valentines were sent over the internet.

Factory made Valentines were popular in England from the 1840's onwards. As the middle class acquired wealth and leisure time throughout the 19th Century many old ideas were reborn- among them St. Valentine's Day. Fancy Valentines made with real lace and ribbons were cheap to

buy and popular to send. In America, Esther Howland (1828-1904) of Worcester, Massachusetts created the Valentine Card Industry there. Inspired by a British Valentine she received from a business associate of her father she imported ribbon, lace and colourful printed scraps and began producing her own Valentine Cards. Before she sold her successful business in 1881 it was grossing over \$100,000 per year (a considerable sum for those times). She is known as the "Mother of the American Valentine" and since 2001 the American Greeting Card Association has been giving an annual "Esther Howland Award for a Greeting Card Visionary".

Today, candy, chocolate, flowers and even gifts are often added to our Valen-



This Valentine Card was made in Canada and dates to the early 1960's

tine wishes. It is the one day reserved for lovers and for people to send friendly greetings to those they know and love. While its history is not well documented, that doesn't make it any less important to us.



This Valentine Card is the more elaborate die-cut style that folds out to make a 3-D effect, printed in Germany and very popular from about 1910 to the early 1930's.

enraged emperor ordered his execution. While in jail he performed a miracle by healing the blind daughter of his jailer. The part where he falls in love with her and leaves a note signed "From your Valentine" is believed to be a very recent addition to the story created by an American greeting card company. One does have to wonder if priests were allowed to marry at that time. It is interesting to remember

swer. Mid-February was the Festival of Lupercalia. It was dedicated to the goddess Juno who represented women and marriage. In pagan Rome boys and girls were raised separately. At Lupercalia the young women wrote their names on slips of paper and placed them in a jar. The young men would reach in and pick a name from the jar. Each resulting couple would spend Lupercalia together (about 3 days). If things worked out they could stay together for a year until the next Lupercalia Festival. If, in that time they fell in love they could become a couple. This festival was abolished when Rome became Christian as it was deemed improper to choose a mate by luck. The early Christians often Christianized older pagan festivals to make conversion of the masses easier. Perhaps the romance of Lupercalia mingled with the imposed story of St. Valentine to give us the holiday we have today.

One aspect of the holiday must be touched on and that is the Valentine's Day card. Originally two lovers might send each other a Valentine note on February the 14th. These involved into elaborate homemade

Thermometer Rising at Townhall !



by **Jim Abernethy**, Editor

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You will be pleased to know that the volunteer fund raising efforts for the Valleys2000 Fish By-Pass Channel continues to snowball.

Many hands do make light work.

On behalf of the entire volunteer committee, I would like to thank those of you who have made the effort to make a donation or become involved in this very important project.

Please know your donations made in person at the Valleys2000 office, by mail, and paid online via the PayPal system posted at www.valleys2000.csa are all greatly appreciated.

But there is more work to do, and collectively we will do it.

For example local residents Erin O'Toole and Steve Kay recently proposed and received approval from the Valleys2000 Committee to coordinate a Gala Fund Raising Event to help raise those thermometer readings.

Erin and Steve quickly organized "A River Runs Through Us" Gala Committee, and thanks to the sponsorship by TD-Canada Trust, General (Ret'd) Rick Hillier will headline the Gala Fund Raising Event scheduled to take place on Saturday, March 2, 2012 @ 6 PM at the Garnet Rickard Centre.

You can purchase tickets online with your credit/debit card, or call 905-697-1900 Royal Service Real Estate Inc., for ticket enquiries and pick up.

Seating is limited to the first 200 tickets sold, so I suggest you buy your tickets soon.

A River Runs Through Us Gala Dinner promises will be a wonderful night of entertainment with lucky draws, silent & live auctions and of course General (Ret'd) Rick Hillier who is a very powerful speaker and has a passion for fishing. See event details in the Valleys200 advertisement on **page 10**.

Here is another innovative way for you to help raise funds for Valleys2000 from the comfort of your home, and it will not cost you any money.

Molson Coors is donating up to \$1,000,000 to support

more than 20 worthy community projects across Canada.

You can go online to www.ourcommunitycheer.com and "cheer" for our local community project. On that website the Clarington local community project called "A River Runs Through Us."

The level of community support is measured by the number of "cheers" each community project receives.

The communities showing the most support for their local community project will receive a share of the \$1,000,000.

So far, Clarington is doing very well in this competition and is in a good position to receive a share of the \$1,000,000.

You can read more about this program in the Valleys2000 advertisement located on page 10 of this issue.

The Gala and Molson Cheer Program are two more examples of our community spirit helping "A Miracle in the Making" happen right here in Clarington.

A milestone event is about to happen in our community.

This year, Clarington will receive \$10 Million from the Federal Government for hosting, in perpetuity, a long-term low-level waste management facility in Port Granby.

This money is a wonderful opportunity to create a legacy project, one that will benefit all of the people of our community for generations to come.

The Clarington Promoter would like to stimulate public discussion about this \$10 Million Dollar windfall.

In your opinion, what should Clarington do with this \$10 Million legacy money?

Send me your thoughts and ideas as individuals, groups or organizations.

We will post them in the next issue of the ClaringtonPromoter and on our website located at: www.ClaringtonPromoter.ca website.

Think bold! Your ideas should add quality of life for everyone living in our community for generations to come.

Send your emails to: Jim@ClaringtonPromoter.ca

Mail your letters to: Jim Abernethy, Editor ClaringtonPromoter.ca 23 Lowe Street Bowmanville, Ont L1C 1X4

Or just pick up the telephone and call me @ 905-261-7788 Remember this is your community, so get involved and voice your opinion!

It Is Time To Put Money Into An RRSP!



by Peter Hobb
HOBB & COMPANY
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
www.hobb.ca

The ads have been running for a while. It is RRSP season! So act now! Or should you? The answer depends on your personal financial situation. If you do make a contribution, it should be made as part of a comprehensive financial plan that is going to help you reach your retirement goals. It is not only about the income tax deferral, which will either provide you with a refund or

reduce the income taxes you would otherwise have to pay. An RRSP account should be one element of a comprehensive retirement plan. An RRSP strategy alone may not provide you with the resources you will need in retirement. A financial plan will help you set realistic goals. Also, the more you understand what you need to do to secure the retirement you want, the better you will be able to balance current financial needs with future financial needs. It probably doesn't need to be said but the earlier you develop and implement your plan the more likely you will achieve your financial retirement goals. It is never too early OR too late to put a plan in place. Your financial advisor should be able to help you develop such a plan.

The decision of where to invest your RRSP contribution

is as important as the decision on whether to make the contribution. In my experience people do not give enough thought to who they invest with and how the money is invested. The reason for this is they may not have the time, the interest or the financial understanding. This is why it is important to have a financial advisor you feel comfortable with and who will take the time to explain things to you in a language you understand. You must remember that it is your money and if the portfolio does not do well you will be the one to suffer. Some people feel it is a good idea to have more than one person managing their investments. They feel this will reduce risk because they are diversifying investment managers. However, this may actually increase risk if the various individuals managing

your investments are not collaborating to ensure that your portfolio is properly diversified. Normally having one investment manager is a better way to go. Diversifying your portfolio, not the number of investment managers, is the best way to mitigate risk. Your investments, for example, may be diversified between stocks, bonds, treasury bills, guaranteed investment certificates and cash. The weighting of how much is invested in each category will depend on your age and risk profile. A more aggressive investor may have a greater percentage of their portfolio in stocks. A younger investor can also afford to take more risk because they will be investing for a longer time horizon. The closer you are to retirement the less risk you should be willing to take because you will not have enough time to make up any

shortfall caused by a sudden reduction in the value of your investments. You also must remember that as you age your risk tolerance will change and your portfolio should adjust accordingly. Your investments need to be continually monitored.

As well, you need to monitor the performance of your investment manager.

As you can see there is more to just making an RRSP contribution and waiting for a refund cheque at tax time. The real gain is the growth in your wealth that will occur in your RRSP investment account and the amount that will be available to you when you retire.

