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Elaborate or plain, silly or sad, valentine cards retain popularity

By Cami Swanson
Of the Emerald

On Valentine's Day, about 900 million valentine cards will be exchanged by sweethearts across the country. Some cards are romantic, some are funny, and some are downright vulgar.

The tradition of exchanging verses on Valentine's Day is believed to have originated by frenchman Charles, Duke of Orleans. During the battle of Agincourt in 1415, Charles was captured and put in prison in England. On Valentine's Day, he sent his wife a rhymed love letter from his cell in the Tower of London.

The first commercial valentines were not made until the 1800s. They were painstakingly handpainted and decorated with such things as paper flowers, feathers, imitation jewels, sea shells and lace. The price of these elaborate cards sometimes reached as much as \$10.

During the mid-1800s to early 1900s, a valentine card called the "Penny Dreadful" became



popular. Selling for only a penny, these cards contained sarcastic and insulting remarks, and were usually sent as spiteful jokes.

Today, Valentine's Day is the second-largest card-sending occasion in the country. It is surpassed only by Christmas.

In 1983, Hallmark introduced a line of musical cards that played such romantic hits as "You Made Me Love You" and "Everybody Loves Somebody" when the card was opened.

However, Rhonda Mobley, an employee of Tiffany's Hallmark Shop in the Springfield Mall, said Hallmark received no new shipments of these musical cards this year due to their lack of sales in 1986.

"The fad seems to be over," she said.

Children's valentine cards now carry the likenesses of such cartoon celebrities as Garfield, Ziggy, Scooby Doo and the Centurions. However, other valen-

tine cards are specifically aimed at adults

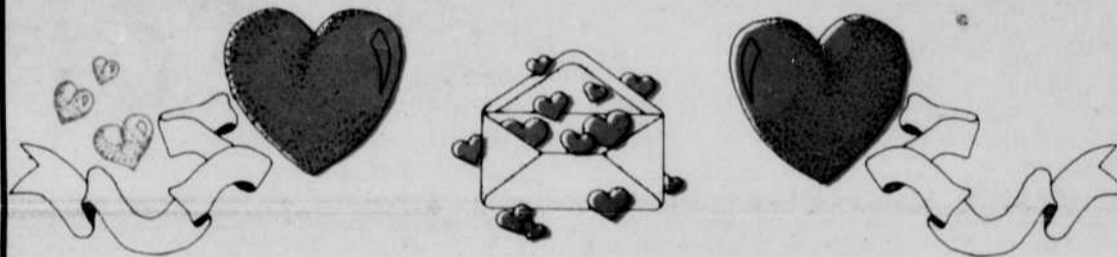
"We try to stay away from the crude ones," said Vicky Leppmann, one of the owners of Jabberwocky Cards and Gifts. She added that the "crude" ones do not seem to sell as well on Valentine's Day.

According to Leppmann, the most popular cards during Valentine's Day are "the general ones. The ones you can send to your mother's friend."

Mobley estimated that the average price of a valentine card is between \$1 and \$2, with the price ranging between \$3 and \$5 dollars for the nicer cards.

In the future, there are plans to develop a valentine card that will allow people to record their own valentine messages. Another item that may become popular is the video card, which contains a four- or five-minute taped message to be played back on a video recorder.

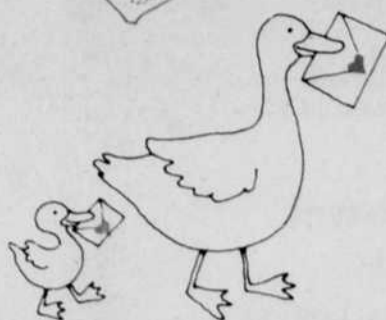
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LAFS Continued from Page 2B

confused and frustrated, I had become obsessed with an obsession that perhaps didn't exist. Both sides presented convincing arguments, so it was impossible to make a sound decision.

In one last, desperate attempt to discover the truth, I searched the eyes of every female student in Sundberg's class. I waited for bells, kazoos, elephants frolicking, even a food processor.

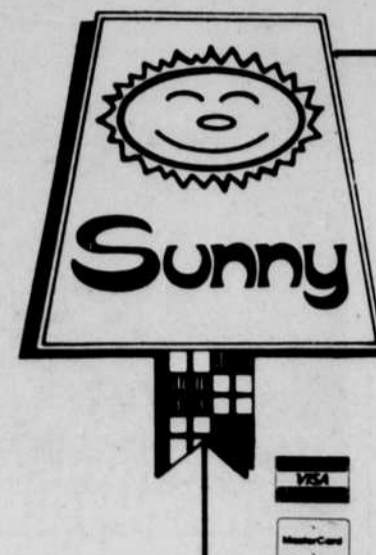
Instead, I received blank stares, and my stomach began to turn.

Defeated, I headed to Taco Time to ease my mental anguish

and upset stomach. A young, inattentive girl, looking quite lovely in her attractive uniform, took my order. While reaching into my wallet to pay for my feast, she dumped the whole plate on my shoes.

Looking up to admonish her carelessness, I froze. She was staring at me with her jaw dropped. Her eyes looked like silver dollars. I thought I heard the distinct sound of a blender go off in her chest.

It was time to make a decision. "Forget it," I said handing her the money. "You're just experiencing a temporary case of lust at first sight."



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