



**Valentine messages**  
will publish in the Oregon Daily Emerald on **Thurs., Feb. 14th**

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# Schmaltz, tchotchkes make Feb. 14 one overdone pink nightmare

Valentine's Day, ah, Valentine's Day. The day on which you give your significant other a box of chocolates and a card that the local stationery and confectionery outlets make sure you have to take a small loan out on.

Rather than wooing our mates the old-fashioned way, we have been suckered into a morass of cutesy graphics, sickening chocolates (that have probably been sitting on some shelf in Pennsylvania since July) and music that can only be described using the phrase "the horror ... the horror ...". And we are subjected to this terror every 14th of February because someone, most likely connected with a major department store, came forth from Mount Sinai and decreed that it shall be "romantic," and that thou shalt buy lots and lots of crap thou dost not need.

And what exactly *did* happen on the 14th of February that makes this day so romantic anyway? Some guy gets crucified in Ancient Rome, and on a Feb. 14 much later down the line, a bunch of Bugs Moran's gangsters get air-conditioned stomachs, thanks to Scarface Capone. *Real* romantic, that. Ol' Pops Time is trying to send a message here, says I. Then again, I guess if you care enough to send the very best ...

Yet, you ask, who could be so heartless, so low and depraved as to hate Valentine's Day? You did read the byline, right?

I can wait ... Now that we've gotten that cleared up, you ask: "Why would this completely horrid monster hate Valentine's Day?"

That was a low blow. We columnists have feelings too (sob).

For one thing, it's the schmaltz. We in America have this insistence



Pat Payne  
Columnist

on decorating every spare piece of real estate with a heart when St. Val's comes around. As we get closer and closer to Feb. 14, every town looks increasingly like it's the set for a revival of "The Dating Game," "The Love Boat," or "Love, American Style" or maybe some other thoroughly nauseating '70s TV show.

I mean it—you can't swing a stunned Cupid without hitting some schmaltzy tchotchke! Do you *need* a pair of plastic, heart-shaped handcuffs with a velvet lining, or a pink teddy bear with a book of third-rate doggerel attached?

And why would anyone think a heart is romantic anyway? Have you ever seen one of those things in person? I'd think a plate of frozen fish sticks (mmm ... Yes! They're even better when they're raw!) would be more romantic than a spasming piece of muscle that's spitting red goo all over. I saw "Temple of Doom," so I oughta know what I'm talking about! When Mola Ram reached into that guy's chest and plucked out his heart, I'm pretty sure that the sounds in theaters all across the United States in 1984 were not romantic purrings, unless you were those high schoolers in the back row to whom I say—*get a room!*

Now, I like seeing wreaths and other Christmas decorations, and New Year's glitter and glitz is cool.

However, whichever demented Osmond came up with the decoration scheme for Valentine's Day ought to be locked in a small room with a 24-hour loop of Captain and Tennille, even though their music has been declared a direct violation of the Geneva Convention. And while we're on the subject of decorations, who decided that everything in creation had to be colored pink? While I am not by any means antagonistic to the color, there are some things which are better left in their natural colors. Like damn near everything!

And Cupid. Poor Cupid. Anywhere else, a butt-nekkid infant could make a good living in diaper commercials and comparisons to certain brands of leather recliners and down mattresses, but our boy Cupid comes out, shoots his arrows, and then it's back into whatever seasonal dungeon they exile him, Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny.

Finally, I despise this rotten holiday because of my childhood memories. Of course you all remember when you were in elementary school and the kids went and gave each other valentines, holding them in those cheap lunch sacks with the by-now obligatory valents. Although I came armed with valentines enough for everyone, even the guys, I ranked behind the scabby, chain-smoking janitor and the boys' toilet in numbers of valentines received.

Now then. Here endeth the rant. Go about your business and sin no more. But please, no Captain and Tennille. The sanity you save may be your own.

E-mail columnist Pat Payne at patpayne@dailymerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

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