

Cupid takes aim...



...but targets shoot back

By Kelly Laughlin
Of The Print

"Well, well, don't we look glum today."

"Oh, it's you again. Sorry, Cupid, I'm not in the mood to talk about the broad, philosophical basis for Valentine's Day."

"Are you kidding? I wasn't gonna ask you about that. I wanted to let you know that Valentine's Day is tomorrow."

"Wow, you know, you're right, and I almost forgot."

"It's no surprise to me."

"How's that?"

"Beat's me. Usually this time of year, I don't have any trouble finding people to shoot love and kindness into. I mean, it's really making my job hard when people ask me 'not to shoot them.' Every year, there are a few; you know, the winos, the misers, the old maids and the like. They send me letters a day before Valentine's Day, warning me not to darken their doorsteps. But this year, it's incredible...people trying to cut my wings off, and steal my bow and arrow. What is it? Are people starting to forget Valentine's Day altogether? Is it my after shave? Come on, buddy, help me out."

"Yea, I guess I owe you one. I'd like to know, first, where all this bad stuff is happening."

"Oh, you mean the wings and that?"

"Yea, and all the people asking you not to shoot them."

"Well, let me see. I remember the thing with the wings and arrow happening in a place called Tehran. I was sleeping on top of the American Embassy, waiting to visit the hostages, you know, give them an extra dose of love, when all of a sudden these two bearded guys with guns and stoic looks about them grabbed me and sent me up to another bearded guy, who thought I was an American spy, and wanted to take away my bow and arrow, and put me on trial. Well, sir, before they could pluck my wings, I sped out, still in enough time to finish my delivery to the Americans."

"That's unbelievable."

"Yea, I was almost a goner."

"Well, what about the people asking you not to shoot them?"

"Most of it was in a place called the U.S.S.R. You know where that is?"

"The boundaries change all the time."

"Well, I was taking it easy, relaxing on a chandalier, inside the Kremlin office, you know, ready to do my stuff, when a group of men, about middle forties, looked up at me and started pointing. I heard

strange hissing noises, a few hollers, which didn't bother me that much. That is, until they started throwing ash trays, pencils and plastic missiles at me. Then I knew it was time to cut out."

"Then I figured my best bet was to go South, maybe to a nice quiet Moslem country. You know, where everyone loves one another, there are no bars, and it's generally peaceful. But it was almost like I hadn't flown a mile out of Russia that I was back in Russia again. I'd always remembered Afghanistan to be a pretty mellow country, at least it was last year. This time, the landscape was totally different. Oh, yea, there was still sand, but the ground was covered with tanks, guerilla fighters, lots of explosion and very little praying."

"Boy, you really got your work cut out for you this year."

"You're darn right."

"Well, is that it? Are you finished?"

"No, I have one more country."

"Well, let'er rip."

"You know this country pretty well, maybe even better than I do. Here is where I find the most love and togetherness of any country on the globe, yea the U.S. People here generally are good to each other, and Valentine's Day is usually remembered in pretty good faith. Oh, we have our share of domestic violence, child molesting and murder, but what country doesn't?"

"But I don't know. This year, flying through all the cities and towns, there's been a different feeling. People seem a little down and out, like they could use a lift. Some people I talked to said, 'I don't want a shot from you, what this country needs is another war, to boost the economy.'

"Well, sir, I didn't take his opinion as general fact. I went to a college campus in California. There, I got a different opinion: 'Hell no, we won't go!' But really, it was no dif-

ferent to me, because they didn't want a shot, either. They said they were too busy being mad. Well, these were mostly guys, and college guys, well, they tend to be wishy washy on love. They say they don't want to get tied down, that they'll wait till they graduate to settle

down. So I thought I'd try the girls. They're a bit of an easier mark than the guys. But what do ya know, the girls were almost the same. They, except for a few, didn't want a thing to do with me. Said, since they might have to go to war, that love can wait. Well, sir, I can't wait! I got a job to do."

"Don't get all hot and bothered, you must have been having some luck, right?"

"You want to know how many arrows I had left this time last year?"

"Not very many, I take it?"

"You got it, buddy."

"Let me see if I can explain. First of all, when the possibility of war arises in our country, you know, people having to go to a distant land to fight for something-or-another, everybody tends to forget about Valentine's Day, at least this seems to be the case coming from you. They tend to think about themselves a lot, worry about where they're going. And when all this introspection is about a possible war that may

have catastrophic consequences, Valentine's Day is probably the least of their worries. Added to that the possibility that women might have to go to war, and that 50 of our citizens have been held hostage 102 days...do I make my point?"

"Then Valentine's Day isn't very important right now, right?"

"I didn't say that."

"Well, what do you mean, then?"

"If you want my opinion, I think a good healthy dose of love would really perk me up. But for everyone else, I think Valentine's Day can come at a good time, or a bad time, depending on how you look at it."

"Yea?"

"Well, I already told you how it comes at a bad time, with all the doubt and worry going on. But at the same time, it comes at a right time, because people can find an excuse to forget about what's going to happen, or what might happen, and get on with loving someone."

"Isn't that my line?"

"Let me do the talking, Cupid. You'd better get rid of some of those arrows."

"Right. Oh, before forget..."

"Ouch! Ya got me again, you rat."

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