

VALENTINE'S DAY TRADITION TRACED THROUGH YEARS; BE PREPARED MEN

Sentiments Range Widely; Dan Cupid Comeback Seen

Comes Tuesday, it's Valentine's day. It's not anything to joke about, either, brother. We know a guy who got married the following day.

And—according to the Press Information Service of the National Association of Greeting Card Publishers—"Cupid has staged a dramatic comeback as a symbol of tender romance."

As a warning to romantically inclined but reluctant swains, it is only fair to warn that this Valentine's day business has been going on for a long, long time. And, since the so-called gentler sex is undoubtedly determined to keep it going on for another long, long time, it might be just as well for you to be prepared with some vital statistics.

Actually (again thanks to the Press Information Service of the NAGCP) Cupid began enchanting lovers 2,000 years before the first romantic valentine appeared. According to Roman legend, he was the son of Venus, goddess of love, and Mars, god of war. Back in the fourth century, B. C., Praxiteles carved the oldest known statue of Cupid. It showed him as a beautiful little boy with wings, carrying a bow and arrow.

Young Priest Starts It

The first valentine wasn't penned until 270 A.D., by St. Valentine, at that time a young Roman priest (also according to the PI section of the NAGCP). On the eve of his execution for refusing to renounce Christianity, he sent a note of cheer to his jailer's blind daughter, signing it "From Your Valentine."

Valentines remained strictly messages of friendship for the next thousand years. But Cupid started changing them into love letters during the middle ages. To elude vigilant fathers, the billets-doux were hidden in hollow trees that served as trysting places.

Frenchmen Allies

Cupid's staunchest allies were Frenchmen. The Duke of Orleans was captured by the English at the battle of Agincourt in 1415. Imprisoned in the Tower of London, he composed the oldest existing valentine, and bribed a guard to smuggle it out.

Valentines reached a peak of size and elegance in the royal court of Louis XIV. Cupid appeared in the designs for the first time, surrounded by cutout hearts, paper fountains, tiny birds and flower reproductions circled by expensive Venetian lace.

"Dan" was an ancient title of honor, so Shakespeare christened the winged cherub "Dan Cupid" in his plays. Lesser poets, busy composing amorous verses that tongue-tied lovers might copy, gratefully incorporated the name into their rhymes. One such handbook for amateur valentine writers was frankly titled "The Quiver of Love."

Popularity Peak

Cupid reached his all-time popularity peak in the frilly, fussy valentines of the Victorian era. But public taste was already swinging toward the comic. John McLaughlin, a Scotsman with a book and printing business in New York City, introduced "Vinegar Valentines" in 1858. By 1890, the sarcastic verses and crude, insulting drawings were outselling sentimental valentines.

Valentines with clever illustrations and whimsical verses caught the public fancy in the early 1920's. In the reaction against Victorian traditions,

"Vinegar Valentines" and extremely sentimental missives both went out of style. Cupid began his long descent into oblivion.

Tenderness Returns

Last year, however, tender verses started climbing in popularity again. (We're still quoting the PI section of the NAGCP.) This year's valentines are as lacy and sentimental as any grand-mother ever sent. And Dan Cupid, diminutive god of love, is back on his famed pedestal, taking careful aim at unguarded hearts on February 14.

So says the Press Information Section.

Now let's take a quick glance at some of the cards available from the clients of the Press Information Service.

There's one which, when opened, has two cardboard lips leap out on a spring to kiss your startled lady love. (Isn't that revolting?) Another pops a tiny figure skyward with the notation "you hit me like something ATOMIC." (If you think that's bad, read on.)

Faintly suggestive messages also are allowed to appear. Here's one:

"Wish you'd stop teasing and listen to reason, because it's more pleasin' to get in some squeezein'."

And for pure corn, check this one:

There's a picture of a bathing-suited girl, under the title "If you want me for your valentine, inside is a two-tone whistle—capable, the manufacturers say, of being heard for four blocks."

Newest Thing

Newest thing, it is said, is a series of 20 nursery rhyme greetings portraying Little Jack Horner, the Queen of Hearts, and other Mother Goose characters.

The cards run from a nickel up to several dollars. The more expensive ones brim with ribbons and lace, and are ornamented with strings of pearls, simulated orchids, ruby lockets, rhinestone lapel pins or detachable corsages of artificial violets.

Wonder what St. Valentine would think if he could see what he started.—E. A.



WILDLIGHT OF THE GOD—Cupid used to be a god. He still had some of the appurtenances of godhood in 1850, but by 1900, he'd become a tailor. In 1950, he's an iceman yet. The illustrations above show minor twinges in the trend which valentine cards have taken in the last century. It is estimated that about 300 million such cards will be exchanged in American alone this week.

Medford Firemen To Start Tours of Familiarization In Downtown Area

Medford fire department will soon embark on a system of pre-fire planning surveys or familiarization tours aimed at acquiring vital information on buildings, according to Acting Fire Chief Leo Weidner.

He said these surveys will prove helpful by providing added inspections and information essential for fighting fires. They should assist in securing and maintaining a low rate on fire insurance, Weidner declared. The surveys may begin late this week.

Building Each Day

Each day, according to Weidner, a building will be selected. The firemen on duty that day will have a brief discussion about the structure to be toured, using maps or whatever other information they have concerning it. They will look up technical or related data that will be helpful.

Weather permitting, all but two men will leave the station about 1 p. m. for the objective. On the tour one man will be left with the apparatus to tend the radio and give the alarm if a fire occurs. Firemen will have an inspection form to fill out which will require two hours on the average building. On extremely large plants a second visit may be necessary.

Will Study Structure

Upon return to the station, Weidner said, the crew by use of a blackboard and sketches, will prepare a general plan for

fighting a blaze in the structure surveyed. An action card will be compiled and placed in a file in the chief's car where it will be quickly available.

This or similar plans have been adopted in several cities with splendid results, Weidner reported. "We think," he said, "this plan will produce the fire facts concerning our city, the problems confronting us, the recommendations necessary, the solutions to some of our problems, and the action to be pursued in case of fire."

This plan can be put into effect with very little added expense to Medford, adding to the plans attractiveness, he pointed out.

He stressed that objective of the tours is familiarization for the men who must fight the fires and for those responsible for the protection of the city against fires.

The survey, Weidner stated, does not replace regular fire prevention inspection by a regular inspector and no citations will be issued for violation of state or local laws except for imminent life hazards.

Weidner brought out that many lives are lost and much damage caused by fire each year and that in many instances disasters could have been prevented by elimination of fire hazards.

public education regarding fire safety and good laws relative to carelessness and negligence.

Postal Committee Receives New Bill

Washington, Feb. 11—(U.P.)—The senate post office committee had a double-barreled reminder today that President Truman wants more postal revenues.

The committee received a new postal rate bill from the house and filed it with a similar senate measure already pending on its calendar.

Chairman Olin D. Johnston, (D., S. C.), said the committee will consider them when it meets again on regular business. But he said no meeting will be called until republicans return from their Lincoln day engagements.

Mrs. Max Peirce Reelected to Committee Post

Mrs. Max Peirce of Medford was again named vice chairman of the state sponsoring committee for social hygiene education at the annual conference held in Portland last week. Mrs. Peirce's selection for the office is in recognition for the work done by the social hygiene committee of the Jackson County Public Health association during the past four years. The Rev. William H. Genne of Pacific university was again named chairman, and presided at the meeting, which was attended by approximately 200 representatives from health associations, teachers, school leaders, doctors and law enforcement agencies.

Attending the conference from Medford were Mrs. Peirce, Mrs. Frank Conner, vice-chairman of the local committee, Dr. A. E. Merkel, county health officer, and Mrs. Chester Gueches, publicity chairman for the health association.

Agencies Cooperate

Cooperating with the Oregon Tuberculosis and Health association in the conference were the Oregon state board of health, the Mental Health association, the American Social Hygiene association and the E. C. Brown trust. Dr. Ralph G. Eckert, psychiatric consultant for the California state board of education, was principal speaker, and Fred G. Scherer, Portland, was in charge of arrangements.

Local residents will be interested to learn that Mrs. Sadie Orr Dunbar, president of the Oregon Tuberculosis and Health association for the past 35 years was awarded an honorary life membership in the American Social Hygiene society in recognition of her accomplishments in this field. Presentation of the award was made at the opening luncheon by Mrs. Walter W. F. May, Oregon City.

Purpose of the conference was to form a coordinated program through parental education, schools, the medical profession and law enforcement agencies in the state of Oregon.

MOTORMEN END STRIKE

Hong Kong, Feb. 11—(U.P.)—Two thousand motormen and conductors returned to their jobs on Hong Kong street cars today, ending a seven-weeks strike.



REAL SHARP CHRISTIAN—Actress Colleen Townsend (left) sings "I'd rather have Jesus" from the pulpit of the Punxsutawney, Pa., First Presbyterian Church. She told a jam-packed church congregation the inside story of how she became "a real sharp Christian" and gave up a \$750-a-week movie contract and a chance at stardom.

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