



THE HR UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2011

Valentine's Day originated in the third century of Rome when a young priest defied the Roman Emperor's dictate that no young soldiers would be allowed to marry based upon his belief that single men who perform better in war. Valentine was thrown into jail and while in jail fell in love with the jailor's daughter who regularly visited him. Just before he was executed, Valentine sent a letter to the girl and signed it, "From your Valentine" an expression we still use today. He was executed on February 14, 270 AD. Around 496 AD, Pope Gelasius declared February "St. Valentine's Day".

Today, we continue to honor St. Valentine and recall the history of Valentine's Day each year on February 14 by celebrating our love for significant others, friends, and family. I still remember making Valentine boxes to take to grade school. We had to decorate them with paper hearts or lace doilies and the teacher would line them up around the room for your classmates and friends to fill with valentines. It was always exciting to see if you received cards from a "secret admirer". When I was in the fifth grade at Westside Elementary in Claremore, a little boy bought me a huge box of chocolates. He wasn't really someone I was interested in so I ignored him. True love is persistent so he followed me home and put his offering in our hedge. My little sister said, "If you don't want to be his valentine, I will 'because that is one big box of candy!" (Her affection was easily bought!)

Now days, we expect to get flowers from our significant ones. Valentine's Day is the best sale day for florists followed by Mother's Day-not surprising because for many of us our Moms were our first valentine. The tradition of sending flowers started in the 18th century when Charles II sent non-verbal messages with floral bouquets. Each type of flower had a special meaning, making it possible to have an entire conversation using only flowers. I wonder what sending ragweed means.

Whatever the message, Valentine's Day is a day that you can get away with being more openly affectionate than usual. Here are some suggestions to help you remember your valentine on the 14th:

- Buy funny or romantic re-usable mugs and fill with conversational hearts or other candy. Wrap the whole gift in inexpensive "heart" material or wrapping paper.
- Pick up basic pillar candles, sheets of colored beeswax (from a crafts store), and heart-shaped cookie cutters. Push cutters into sheets to create hearts; press hearts onto candles to make customized candles.
- Make free formed heart pancakes and top with strawberry topping for a Valentine breakfast treat.
- Make or buy Valentine "heart" cookies, insert Popsicle sticks or skewers into them and arrange as a cookie bouquet.
- Take old clean, glass jars and fill with Hershey's kisses. Then decorate with stickers or ribbons.
- Make a personalized coupon book with coupons redeemable for special services like a back rub, dinner and a movie or one week of taking out the trash. Use your imagination to come up with unique ideas that will show your true love just how much you think of them.



Did you know?

*A virus can survive on surfaces for two to eight hours after being deposited.

*Your cell phone is one the “germiest” items you use. You lay it down all over the place and pick up whatever germs live there. You can develop a condition similar to swimmer’s ear from using your cell phone without disinfecting it frequently.

*Kitchen sponges are convenient and they are also great hosts for bacteria that cause food borne illness.

To really sanitize sponges, experts recommend that you replace them frequently and in between microwaving the wet sponge for two minutes. Don’t microwave any sponge that contains metals!



OBSERVATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS

February has a whole more going on than Valentine’s Day! Take note of some other important days to celebrate:

2- Groundhog Day	14-Valentine’s Day
4-Thank a Mailman Day	14- Stop the Violence-dedicated to stopping violence against women
5-Weatherman’s Day	19-Chocolate Mint Day
6-Superbowl Sunday	23-Banana Bread Day
12-Paul Bunyan Day	27-National Polar Bear Day

How to Help Stop the Spread of Germs

1. **Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.** Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

2. **Clean your hands often.**

When available, wash your hands with soap and warm water, then rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all skin surfaces. Wash for 15 to 20 seconds. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. If using a gel, rub the gel in your hands until they are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in the gel kills germs that cause colds and the flu.

3. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth. Germs can live for a long time (some can live for two hours or more) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables.

4. **Stay home when you are sick and check with a health care provider when needed.** When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed. Remember: keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick. Common symptoms of the flu include:

- Fever (usually high) • Headache • Extreme tiredness • Cough • Sore throat • Runny or stuffy nose • Muscle aches
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

5. **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food. Practicing healthy habits will help you stay healthy during the flu season and all year long.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu or call the CDC Flu Information Line at (800) CDC-INFO.

TRIVIA TIME:

Who was the “Queen of Hearts”? a. Stevie Nicks b. Juice Newton c. Kiki Dee