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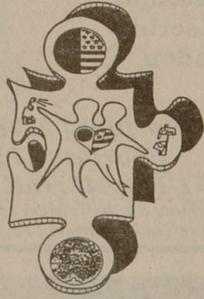
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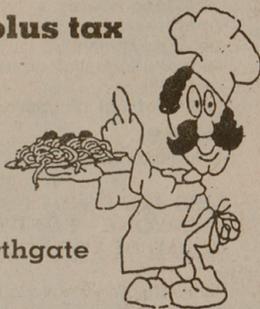
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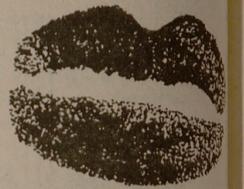
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Love & Kisses



Kissing customs endure throughout millennia

By M. ELAINE HORN
Of The Battalion Staff

Kissing is a favorite Valentine's Day activity, but it could soon lose its popularity, says an expert on the history and customs of kissing.

Dr. Vaughn M. Bryant Jr., head of the Texas A&M anthropology department, has studied the history of kissing for several years and has watched recent trends in kissing customs.

Bryant says one of the biggest changes today in kissing is the invention and widespread use of the "air smack." Instead of actually kissing lips, people will kiss the air in front of each other's faces, making a smacking noise.

He says this form of greeting originated in California. "The reason you do this," Bryant says, "is so you don't mess up their makeup ... or mess up your makeup."

Another reason some people have adopted the air smack may be a fear of AIDS. Bryant says that although AIDS can't be transmitted by kissing, people still fear contracting the disease.

He compares this mistaken belief with the fears of kissing which spread throughout London in the mid-1600s during the Great Plague.

Bryant says he is unhappy to see the rise in popularity of the air smack, because it could bring a demise to something which he believes has been one of the more pleasurable experiences of western civilization.

Although Bryant has done extensive research in the history of kissing, he says it is not his main interest, but more of a hobby. Some day, he says, he may write a book on the subject of kissing, but until then he plans to concentrate on his other research fields, pre-historic diets and forensic paly-

nology (the study of pollen and plant spores in relation to solving crimes).

Both of these fields, not to mention the kissing field, have few people working in them. Bryant says he prefers it that way because it is difficult to make new discoveries in an overpopulated field. He says it is more exciting to work in an area that is new and unexplored.

"I'm a maverick," he says. "I tend to work in areas that are non-conventional."

Bryant says he likes to use his research in kissing to teach students about cultural diffusion. It

"You will never ever see anyone kissing in a Godzilla movie. In that culture (Japanese), it's not polite to show kissing or to kiss in public."

— Dr. Vaughn M. Bryant,
anthropology department head

keeps them from falling asleep, he says, and kissing is an example of how one country's custom can spread throughout the world from one culture to another.

Bryant says that kissing probably originated in India with the custom of rubbing noses across cheeks and lips to smell perfume. In the first or second century A.D., a book on Hindu religion which included instructions on kissing was written. This book, the *Kama Sutra*, contains more

than 200 passages describing kissing customs. Bryant says the Greeks adopted kissing from India, and from there it spread to Rome. The Romans established three types of kisses.

- The *osculum* — a friendship kiss; for example, kissing a relative on the cheek. Today, people in France, Spain, and Latin America greet each other with kisses on the cheek, while Greeks and Russians kiss lips.

- The *basium* — an affectionate kiss between lovers. This word is the basis for the word meaning "to kiss" in most languages today. The English word "buss" which is synonymous with "kiss" is also derived from this word.

- The *savium* — a kiss similar to the modern "French kiss".

By the Middle Ages, kissing became popular throughout Europe. However, European Christians developed a system of kissing based on rank.

Kissing on the lips was reserved for people of equal rank. As the difference in rank increased, the less personal the kisses would become. Depending on rank people would kiss the cheeks, hands, feet, and finally, the ground.

By 1492, Bryant says, kissing customs were limited to Europe and the Mediterranean. As the great age of exploration occurred, kissing customs diffused throughout other cultures.

Today, kissing is a widespread activity, but it is not accepted in all countries and cultures. Americans and Europeans are very kiss-oriented. Bryant says, but some Asian cultures such as China and Japan do not approve of kissing.

"You will never ever see anyone kissing in a Godzilla movie," he says. "In that culture, it's not polite to show kissing or to kiss in public."

Business blooms during Valentine rush

By M. ELAINE HORN
Of The Battalion Staff

A sea of tightly packed red ribbon bows covers the back wall of University Flowers. The shelves under the counters contain rows of boxes filled with pink order slips, and the counters are covered with stacked wax paper and clusters of leatherleaf.

Everything is in quiet preparation for Valentine's Day, the biggest holiday of the year, at least for Bryan-College Station florists.

"We can double an entire month's volume in the couple of days around the 14th," says Rose Ash, manager of Chimney Hill Florist & Gifts.

In a majority of American cities, Mother's Day is the biggest holiday for florists. Ash says the reason Valentine's Day sales surpass Mother's Day sales in College Station is because 36,000 students leave in early May.

Jimmie Walston, owner of University Flowers, says 90 percent of her customers are college students, so when they leave town much of her business leaves with them.

Planning for the Valentine's Day crunch began weeks ago. Ash says flowers were ordered from wholesalers in January to ensure that she would have a sufficient supply. She says that after all of the ordered flowers are sold, she will be unable to get more.

"I can't call up the day before Valentine's and say, 'Send me 600 roses,'" she says.

One of the biggest problems with Valentine's Day, Ash says, is that people don't realize the time crunch involved. Some people will come in on the 14th and expect to have their order delivered the same day.

"But we just can't do it," she says. Even people who come in the day before will have difficulties getting their orders delivered. She says that the earlier people order, the better chance they will have of getting exactly what they want.

Walston says that people are learning to order early, which helps florists out a great deal. She says that they put up a sign outside their store about a month ago, reminding peo-

ple to order early. The sign has helped, she says, and they have had many orders.

People who want to have flowers delivered out of town really must plan in advance, Ash says, because the wire services stop guaranteeing orders 48 hours before special occasions.

Ash says that they have been trying to get much of the assembly work done beforehand. Bows, vases, and baskets with candy are already prepared. All that needs to be added are the flowers, she says.

"As the orders come in, we pull out the supplies and attach them to the order ... so that everything is re-

ady to go."

On the 14th, they will divide the town into zones, Ash says, and each delivery truck will have a particular section to work. Deliveries will increase by 50 times the normal volume, she says.

Ash expects the four delivery trucks to run from 7 a.m. until about 7 p.m. Walston says that last year her shop made almost 700 deliveries on Valentine's Day.

Ash says the hundreds of orders to be delivered Wednesday will include about 2,000 roses, the most

popular flower.

Although roses are the number one item sold, Ash says there has been a big increase in balloon orders by women for men. Walston says some of her best-selling gifts for men are yellow roses and candy with balloons, especially candy.

Other popular items are mixed spring collections from Holland and European dish plants (green plants in baskets). Ash says many people send these to offices and businesses because they can be placed on a counter or desk.

Profits don't increase with the **See Florists/Page 8**

Say it with flowers: a symbolic guide

By M. ELAINE HORN
Of The Battalion Staff

A red rose symbolizes deep love and desire — a perfect gift for a Valentine's sweetheart. But what do you send to say "farewell"? Try an anemone or a michaelmas daisy.

Flower language can say a variety of things. Some type of plant exists for whatever someone wants to say — anything from feelings of high regard or fascination (daffodils or ferns) to "your looks freeze me" (an ice plant) to hatred and disdain (an orange lily).

One factor to consider carefully is the color of the flower selected. Some flowers just have one meaning regardless of their color, while other meanings depend entirely on color.

A white carnation symbolizes pure and ardent love, a red one suggests admiration and worldly sentiment, and a yellow carnation voices disdain and rejection.

If you're not well versed in the language of flowers, you can acci-

dentally tell someone to take a hike when you meant to say "I love you."

Listed below are some common meanings for flowers which may be helpful on Valentine's Day:

- Friendship — In general, acacias symbolize friendship, but yellow acacias are sent to a secret love. Other flowers for friends are blue periwinkles and oak-leaved geraniums.

- Beauty — American Cowslip is for someone of divine beauty. For those not that beautiful, a white hyacinth means unobtrusive loveliness, a burgundy rose is for those of unconscious beauty, a lady's slipper praises capricious beauty, and a kenedia praises mental beauty. But if beauty is someone's only attraction, send them a Japan rose.

- Jasmine can mean many things. White jasmine symbolizes cheerfulness and amiability, yellow means grace and elegant modesty, while red means folly. Depending on the type of jasmine, the meaning varies as well. Indian jasmine means attachment

and commitment. Spanish jasmine means sensuality.

- Jonquils symbolize violent sympathy and desire. They also demand a return of affection.

- A lotus flower is appropriate for the estranged lover; a marigold for the jealous one.

- Most tulips symbolize the perfect lover. A red tulip is a declaration of love, but a yellow tulip means hopeless love.

- Honeysuckle symbolizes generous and devoted affection.

- An iris sends a message of faith, hope, and promise.

- Creeping willow means love forsaken, ambrosia means love returned, and a yellow chrysanthemum means slighted love.

- A white rose symbolizes charm and innocence, and a white and red rose together mean unity. However, a yellow rose symbolizes infidelity and jealousy.

- If you want your flower arrangement to say faithfulness and fidelity, send ivy, veronica, lemon blossoms, or blue violets.

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