

# HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

## Origins of a day of love

By Pamela Lee

It's Valentine's Day again. People are kissing, receiving chocolates and exchanging cards. But why? Who started this stuff anyway?

There are many theories, but three remain prominent today.

One theory goes back to an ancient Roman Festival called Lupercalia. During this festival, celebrated on Feb. 15, young men would go around the town striking people with strips of animal hide. Women who were struck with the hide were to become more fertile.

Other historians associate Valentine's Day with an old English belief that birds follow their mates on Valentine's Day.

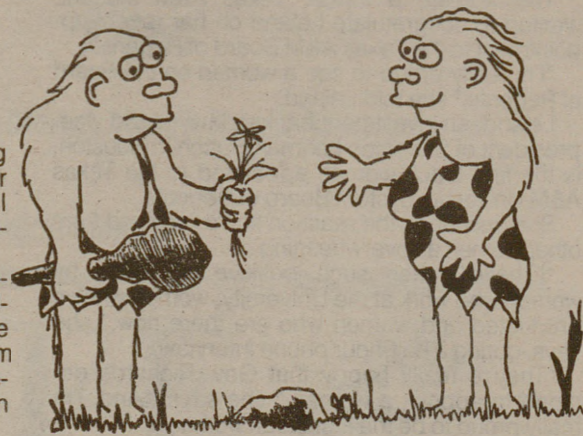
Finally, there is the story of two saints of the early Christian Church, each named Valentine.

One was a priest who secretly married young couples despite the wishes of Roman Emperor Claudius II in the 3rd century A.D. Claudius II wanted to keep the men single because he believed it made them better soldiers.

The other Valentine was imprisoned when refusing to worship the Roman's gods. Little children would toss Valentine love notes through the prison bars because he had been so nice to them before his imprisonment. Valentine was beheaded Feb. 14 on the Flaminian Way at Rome in 269 A.D.

Saint Pope Gelasius I named Saint Valentine's Day after the prisoner.

Whether or not any of these theories is true, Valentine's Day has become a popular unofficial holiday.



HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY?

## Hot dates on Valentine's Day

By Donna Banse

It's Valentine's Day and love is on the menu. If you're looking for an extra-special place to take your Valentine for dinner, here's a few suggestions to get you started:

The Brazos Stock Exchange, 222 North Main in Bryan, is an American Bistro restaurant with a unique presentation and setting. On Valentine's Day, call ahead for reservations.

The restaurant is also having a Vinter's Dinner on Sunday, February 17, featuring the Messina Hof Winery. To make reservations for the Vinter's Dinner, please call by Friday, February 15. 822-1576

Ferreri's Italian Cuisine, 1804 Valley View Drive in College Station, will have a special menu in honor of Valentine's Day. The special menu will consist of an appetizer, green salad, your choice of an entree, tea, coffee and dessert. Ferreri's will also have two dinner seatings on Valentine's Day, 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Please call for reservations. 693-0054

Oxford Street Restaurant and Pub, 1710 Briarcrest Drive in Bryan, fea-

tures hickory grilled steaks, shrimp and red snapper. Please call ahead to make reservations. 268-0792

Red Lobster, 813 Texas Ave South in College Station, will have dining tables decorated with Valentines and will feature special drink prices in honor of Valentine's Day. Call ahead before you leave in order to get a number and spend less time waiting in line. 764-9310

If your Valentine has a sweet tooth, this event is one you don't want to miss. A St. Valentine's Dessert Celebration will be held on Thursday at the College Station Community Center from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The event is sponsored by DANZA, Bryan-College Station's premiere dance ensemble. Guests will sample desserts and beverages from the Brazos Valley's finest restaurants and bakeries. Entertainment will be supplied by the DANZA performing artists.

Tickets are \$5 each and are available at the door or at StarTel, Brazos Blue Ribbon Bakery and the Arts Council of the Brazos Valley. For more information, call 268-ARTS.

## Roberts saves mediocre thriller

By Kevin Robinson

In "Sleeping With the Enemy," Julia Roberts finally has received a large scale starring vehicle. This time she doesn't have to share the spotlight with Richard Gere or Kiefer Sutherland. This is definitely Roberts' picture, and she manages to pull together a film that otherwise would have been only a mediocre psychological thriller.

Roberts plays Laura Burney, a young woman who to others seems to have it all. A beautiful waterfront home on Cape Cod, a wealthy and attentive husband and free time to wander on the beach make Laura's life seem like something out of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." However, this idyllic lifestyle has become for Laura a living hell.

Laura's husband, Martin Burney (Patrick Bergen) is a wealthy broker whose need of perfection and order borders on the psychotic. In Laura, he believes he has found his perfect spouse, a woman who will have the house spotless when he gets home, a perfect meal cooked and served and be willing and passionate for sex at any time. If Laura, who of course is only human, fails in her perfection, she is punished and beaten severely.

Laura, however, has been planning her escape. She has secretly been taking swimming lessons at the YWCA and stashing clothes and cash in the rafters of the house. During a storm that breaks out during a sailing trip with Martin and a neighbor, she pretends to have been washed overboard, swims back to the house while Martin searches for her, and catches a bus to a new life.

Laura adopts a new name, Sara, in the tiny town of Cedar Falls, Iowa. This is where her mother resides in a nursing home and Laura/Sara soon finds her niche in this pastoral little town. She becomes friends and eventually lovers with Ben Woodward (Kevin Anderson), the drama professor next door.

Back in Cape Cod, however, Martin has found out about her secret. It's not long before he knows where she is. And now it has become an obsession that he get Laura back, no matter what the cost.

"Sleeping With the Enemy" certainly doesn't bring anything new to the screen in the way of plot. The concept of an obsessed former lover was probably done most effectively in "Fatal Attraction." However, here the mistake that Laura makes is not a one-night affair, but four tortuous years of married life. Likewise, the concept of the film is not the threat of past sins, but the threat of the past on a new life.

Director Joseph Ruben plays his hand well for the first 45 minutes of the film. He only gradually lets the viewer discover the dark side of Martin's personality. By the fateful boat trip, we completely understand Laura's anxi-



Julia Roberts falls in love with the wrong man and takes desperate measures to escape in "Sleeping With the Enemy."

ety to escape from this psychopath. Patrick Bergen as Martin Burney really does seem likeable on the outside, but incredibly dangerous within.

Once Laura begins her new life in Cedar Falls, the movie starts to fade. Ruben constantly uses cliché devices to build suspense. The old "is he in the house or was it the wind?" has been played to death in various old slasher films and by the third unjustified time, gets rather tedious. When Martin finally made his entrance, I almost didn't care.

There are some fairly clever scenes, though. The scene of both Martin and Laura in her mother's nursing home is one of the most suspenseful in the film, and Ruben pulls it off beautifully. Likewise there's a shot of Martin lapping water out of a hospital fountain that captures his predator-like personality at once.

Kevin Anderson as Ben Woodward is not given a whole lot to do. I understand that as Laura/Sara's new love, it is his character that helps to pull Laura

out of her shell. I can't help but think, though, that it would have been even more interesting to have had this character be a woman, perhaps someone that had also suffered as an abused wife. For once, I'd like to see a suspense film heroine that doesn't need an inept love interest (John Carpenter's "Halloween" is the only one that comes to mind).

"Sleeping With the Enemy," while certainly nothing new, is a good, suspenseful thriller. If for nothing else than the great performances of Julia Roberts and Patrick Bergen, it's worth your time. It's certainly the work of these two performers that makes this film better than ordinary.

While few of the suspense sequences worked for me (except for the hospital scene), they obviously worked for others, judging by the screams in the audience. If one thing is proven, however, it's that Roberts can hold together a movie all by herself.

## Valentine's Day? I'm gonna puke.

Valentine's Day. Bah humbug.

I know, that's a phrase reserved for Scrooges at Christmas — but I can't help it. Valentine's Day (which I'll refer to affectionately as VD) is an inane holiday for couples who are already sappy enough.

Ever since New Year's, I haven't been able to walk into a greeting card store without cringing. I finally forced myself to go buy a VD card the other day for my mom (she always buys me one — I'd feel guilty). The rows of unbelievably cheesy "For You, Sweetheart" and "For My Darling" cards were outdone only by the *really* gaudy cards on the top shelf. These cards were so big they came in boxes and were covered in red velvet and were about 25 pages long and cost about \$8.

There are many theories about the history of Valentine's Day (see above), but I think it was all invented in a grand marketing scheme by Mr. Hallmark. They say Christmas is commercialized, but *nothing* is more commercialized than Valentine's Day. From silver chocolate kiss pendants to my personal favorite, heart-shaped pizzas. Modern lovers have an endless array of meaningless gifts to choose from today.

Love is great. Expressing your feelings is great. Getting presents is great. But let's face it — we're still paying for Christmas, we hate shopping for overpriced greeting cards (you can't convince me they *really* cost \$3 each) and maybe we don't *feel* like expressing our love on Feb. 14.

For those saps who insist on celebrating VD, go for broke (you may actually go broke). Me? I'll celebrate love when I feel like it. Tonight, I think I'll just have a beer.

—C.L.M.