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Tomorrow is the day when all New Bernians who are young, or young at heart, should be on the look out for guided missiles. Not bombs or rockets, but arrows aimed by that most destructive of all marksmen, Dan Cupid.

Better stay indoors, if you want to avoid romance, for never are mortals supposed to be more vulnerable than on St. Valentine's day. By the same token, if you're fed up with keeping your heart in an isolation booth, you might go meandering and jump in front of the first arrow headed your way.

Speaking of guided missiles, we thumbed through countless Valentines at a downtown counter, and couldn't find a single one that made reference to atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs, or even rockets to the moon.

Either the samples we saw were left over from other years, or the manufacturers of these paper hearts don't read the papers, listen to radio, and watch television. Maybe they're too busy printing their outmoded gooey rhymes to keep tab on current events.

We can understand, of course, why they might steer their presses away from anything that smacks of warfare, but these moon rockets ought to be a natural. For example, the rhyme could read "With hearts in tune, we can head for the moon."

Or perhaps "You are such a wondrous sight, won't you be my satellite? Your eyes, your smile and hair well curled, add up to something out of this world." That ought to be far fetched enough for anybody.

There weren't any of those old-time comic Valentines on the counter either. You know, the penny cartoons printed on a sheet of cheap paper that could be sneaked on the porches of folks you didn't like.

A generation or more ago, they were as plentiful as ants at a picnic. Just about every sort of character was included among the subjects too. It was a cowardly way to get folks told—as cowardly as an anonymous letter—but the odds are heavy if you're past 40 that you distributed quite a few of these yourself in days of yore.

Not only are the comic Valentines gone, but apparently extinct too is the grand old practice that kids had of making their own Valentines. All you needed was a box of crayons and some tablet paper. For weeks you could work on the things, until you had a cigar box crammed full.

They weren't very pretty, perhaps, but when somebody received one and decoded the numbers that spelled your name, they knew you had gone to a little time and trouble to fashion it. After all these years, we can vividly recall the awful looking violets we included on each and every Valentine we made.

Terrible though these violets were, we found through sad experimenting that they were much better than the roses and tulips we tried in vain to draw. Anyhow, our heart was in the right place, even if the paper hearts we cut out were deplorably lopsided.

In this day and time, a kid can't be bothered with home-made Valentines. Television keeps the average youngster almost completely occupied, and there are other distractions too—some good, some bad.

However, in at least one respect the Valentine celebrations in New Bern have improved. Just like on Halloween, the juveniles of old thought the occasion was ideal for vandalism. Fences were ripped from their foundations, porch chairs and swings were battered with glorious abandon, and inno-

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FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL—Margie Morris, Larry Toler and Helen Gaskins have something in common, as they shop carefully for Valentines at a well stocked counter in New Bern's business district. Those smiles reveal that they've found the sweetest possible verse for that certain someone.

Incidentally, they just happened to be around when The Mirror's photographer stopped by, but he couldn't have found three cuter subjects anywhere. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be as young and happy as they are, when Valentines Day draws near.—Photo by Billy Benners.

## A New Day Is Now Dawning For City's Retarded Children



IN LIMELIGHT—Roland Verrone, 13, of Troop 50 was a happy youngster last night when he received the coveted Eagle Scout badge at the annual Scout Banquet held in the recreation room of Centenary Methodist church. A seventh grader at Central Elementary, he is the second Eagle Scout in the Irvin Verrone household. Richard earned the same high honor while he was in Troop 13.—Photo by Billy Benners.

Nothing more significant has ever happened in New Bern's public schools than the special attention now being given trainable retarded children.

We've still got a long way to go, but here as elsewhere the trend toward helping the child of limited mentality to achieve his potential has definitely set in.

It is no credit to any of us who profess to have normal intelligence that we waited this long to do right by such youngsters. Blame school officials if you care to, but in the final analysis the bulk of the blame belongs to the general public.

Taking the attitude that mental incompetence in a child was just one of those unfortunate things that nobody could do anything about, we piously thanked our lucky stars that such "shame" had not been visited upon our own family.

Parents of retarded children, well aware of an attitude that they too shared in most instances, reacted accordingly. Some of them kept their handicapped offspring hidden, or at least as inconspicuous as possible.

Under the same circumstances, it is quite likely that almost every reader of the Mirror would have behaved in identical fashion. Embarrassment would be our lot, day in and day out, and though we loved our retarded youngster we would feel a sense of shame.

Now, at long last, this ridiculous viewpoint is being challenged by citizens who are tardily making

full use of their own intelligence. The truth is finally sinking in that a mental weakness in a child, or an adult, is no more of a disgrace than the misfortune of weak eyes, faulty hearing, a rheumatic heart, or a million and one other physical flaws that mortals are subject to.

Given a fighting chance, the mentally retarded child improves through proper training. And by proper training, we don't mean this hopeless business of being in a crowded classroom with other children who have greater capacity. Teachers in such classrooms have enough to worry about without concentrating their time and

### Crate of Sea Gulls Was Shock to Them

Two old men standing on the loading platform at the bus station here got eyes as big as saucers, when they saw a crate of sea gulls on a Seashore Transportation Company bus from Beaufort.

Told that the sea gulls were headed for Durham, they shook their heads in disbelief. "All I've got to say," one of them muttered "is those folks up state must be hard up for meat."

What the two old codgers didn't know was that the shipment wasn't for eating purposes, but intended for laboratory use at Duke. Anyhow, it's a pretty good bet that the loitering pair went home to appreciate collards and fatback as never before.