

Celebrating Valentine's Day is a time-honored tradition

By JO LEE CREDLE
Staff Writer

It's that special time when red is in style, candy prices go up and love is in the air. Feb. 14 is just around the corner, and students are preparing for the historical day of roses, kisses, secret love notes, dinners for two and Cupid's arrow.

It is difficult to tell exactly where Valentine's Day customs began. The cherub Cupid was the son of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Greek poetry described Cupid's arrow hitting unsuspecting people and making them fall in love.

What about that word "Valentine"? It's derived from the Latin word "valens," which translates into both "valiant" and "gallant," because the letters "v" and "g" are interchangeable in Latin speech. If we look at the Norman language, the word "galantin" was often written as "valentan" or "valantin," which meant "lover of the fair sex."

The Old English definition of the word "Valentine" reads, "About this time of the year — the month of February — the birds chose their mates and probably thence came the custom of the young maidens choosing Valentines or special loving friends on that day." Others say Feb. 14 was just the first hint of spring, and the birds chose their mates at that time.

In Shakespeare's time, it was the custom to say, "Good morrow, 'tis St. Valentine's Day." The young lady or young man who said it first

upon meeting a person of the opposite sex was supposed to receive a gift.

In Scotland on Valentine's Day, the first person of the opposite sex that one met in the morning was supposed to become one's Valentine for the day.

There were actually three St. Valentines associated with Feb. 14. Each of these men died a martyr's death.

One was a Roman priest in the third century, St. Valentinus, who was jailed for "giving aid and comfort," which was a crime under the reign of Emperor Claudius II. More than a year later, Valentinus was taken to Claudius II, where he tried to convert the pagan emperor to Christianity. The emperor was supposedly so impressed with the priest's sincerity that he took pity on him and tried to convert him to worship the Roman gods. Valentinus refused and told Claudius the Roman gods were mortal and full of sin.

This refusal was said to have made Claudius II furious. Valentinus was condemned to be beaten with clubs, stoned and finally beheaded outside the Flaminian Gate. He was buried in what is now the Church of Praxides in Rome.

Legend says that while in prison, Valentinus restored the sight of his jailer's blind daughter. They became good friends during his year in jail, and the little girl would send him notes and cards through the jail cell.

On the eve before his death, it is rumored that Valentinus wrote a farewell message to the little girl and signed it, "From your Valentine."

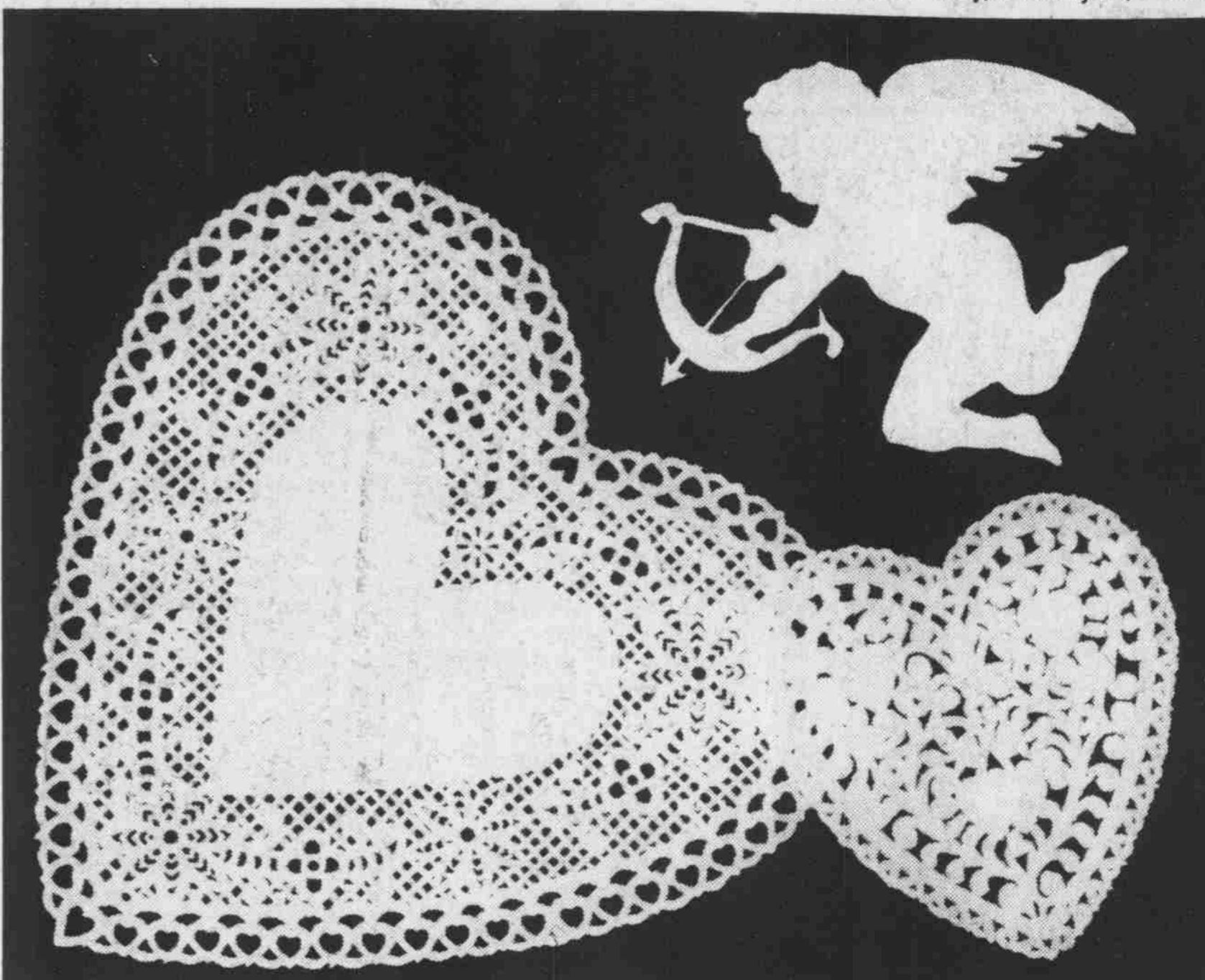
The second St. Valentine was said to have been the Bishop of Inter-anna (which is now Terni), who married couples against the Roman Emperor Claudius II's wishes. This St. Valentine was supposedly buried at the same Flaminian Gate where the other St. Valentine was beheaded. Many believe this St. Valentine could have been the same man as Valentinus.

The third was also a martyred saint, but much less is known about him than the other two.

St. Valentine was martyred on the eve of the Roman feast of Lupercalia, which was a pagan feast celebrating Faunus, the patron god of herding, hunting and husbandry. When Christianity spread throughout Rome, this feast was changed to honor the good deeds of Valentinus, the saint of love.

Originally, during the Roman feast the men and women put their names in a box and drew the name of their lover for the next year. But when the Christians came to power the names were substituted with the names of saints, and the people would pay homage to that particular saint for the year. In England, this custom changed back into drawing the names of mere mortals. More often than not, these two young people would eventually marry.

The tradition of giving Valentine's



DTH/David Minton and Charlotte Cannon

Cupid, son of the goddess of love, is one of the oldest Valentine's Day symbols

cards dates back to 1850, when Esther Howland made the first fancy card. The cards were posted by hand and folded and sealed with a wax seal, and men left them on ladies' doorsteps. Today, many people find it easier and more economical to send cards than to buy flowers, candies or gifts.

Because 1988 is a leap year, Valentine's Day could take a peculiar twist. Custom says that on leap year, it is permissible for a woman to ask a man to marry her.

No matter how this holiday began, it is an age-old custom that couples throughout the world have

enjoyed for centuries. The cards, roses and signs of love are merely signals that this once-a-year holiday is at hand. Remember to watch out for Cupid's arrow, notes from your Valentine and leap year proposals, but don't forget the birds — who just may have started this whole thing.

Campus Calendar

Friday

6 p.m. Carolina Students Credit Union will hold its first annual meeting in the Union. Check the Union board of the Credit Union office for details. All members are strongly encouraged to attend.

7 p.m. Baha'i Club will hold a discussion on the equality of men and women in the Frank Porter Graham Lounge in the Union.

Saturday

10 a.m. Anglican Student Fellowship will serve its Saturday morning breakfast at Chapel of the Cross. Breakfast is \$1.

9 p.m. Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association will host a Valentine's Day Dance, "Prom night the way it should have been," in the Ball Room of Carmichael Hall. Admission is \$2. Semi-formal attire is optional.

Sunday

11 a.m. UNC Gaming Club will

meet in 210 Union until 5 p.m. for open gaming.

Items of Interest

Student Government Tutoring Program applications are available in Suite C of the Union or at the Union desk. Deadline is Feb. 19.

Study Abroad is now urging students interested in studying

abroad to visit their office in the basement of Caldwell Hall. Programs are available to Brazil, China, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Scotland, Spain and Russia.

Student Part-Time Employment Service of Student Government is an all-volunteer organization providing job listings for students interested in part-time jobs. Come by Suite E 217 of the Union for

more info.

Intervarsity Christian Fellowship presents "Explode Evangelism," a teaching and training conference this weekend. Friday at 4 p.m. in Hamilton Hall will be "Why Evangelize?"; at 8 p.m. will be "Vizi Vangelism," with John Lotz. Saturday in Gerrard Hall at 8:45 a.m. will be "Evangelistic Bible Studies," with Pastor Seymour, and at 11:45 a.m. will be "Evangelism as a Lifestyle," with Tom Camacho.

VARSITY SPECIAL ADDED SHOWS AT 11:45 FRI. & SAT!

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the Serpent and the Rainbow

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"A unique and unforgettable film, Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep are two of the greatest actors on the planet!"
-Peter Travers, PEOPLE MAGAZINE



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TODAY SHOW, Gene Shalit



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7:00 • 9:30

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