

The Mysterious History of Valentine's Day



On February 14th, people around the world celebrate romance and love by giving gifts, flowers, cards, and candy in honor of St. Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint? To understand the customs surrounding Valentine's Day, you need to look back further in history.

In ancient Rome, February was the official start of spring. The pagan festival of Lupercalia was celebrated by cleaning and purifying homes. It was also a time for matching up the city's bachelors with unmarried young women. The young ladies would put their names in a large urn. The men would choose a name and be paired up with that woman. This was done with the hope that a marriage would result. Thus, for centuries the month of February was associated with love and romance.

It wasn't until 498 A.D. that Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day. This day commemorated the martyr Valentine, a priest during the third century in Rome. According to one account, at that time, the Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage for young men after deciding that single men made better soldiers. Valentine felt this was unjust and continued to marry couples in secret. When this was discovered, he was put to death. But not much more is known of St. Valentine, and there is some mystery surrounding the exact year of his death.

In Europe, St. Valentine's Day became a popular celebration around the seventeenth century.

Tokens of affection began to be exchanged by friends and lovers. By the end of the eighteenth century, greetings cards were being printed. It wasn't until the 1840s that people could purchase mass-produced valentines in America. Today, there are over one billion valentine cards sent each year.

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FEBRUARY SPECIALS!

Thoughts from Richard Steed

Because February is the month when Cupid floats around depositing flowers and candy into our arms, we tend to mist past the other big draw. What about Mardi Gras?

Though most of us won't be privy to the crazy fun on Bourbon Street, why not learn a bit about some of the traditions that are honored there while we're here?

Take King Cakes, for example. King Cakes are made from cinnamon laced dough and shaped like a massive doughnut, all gooey-glazed with goopy frosting . . . complete with a plastic baby hidden somewhere inside. These traditional cakes come in three colors: Purple (representing justice), green (for faith) and gold (representing power). Tradition decrees that whoever gets the select slice of King Cake with the baby inside must buy the next King Cake—or throw the next party.

People might think it's only adults who celebrate Mardi Gras but that's not the case—certainly not in New Orleans. Children hold their own parades at school and build floats, often utilizing a decorated wagon or some small vehicle they can tug along with them. The kids also enjoy a three-day respite from school each Mardi Gras season.

A more recent tradition is for party-givers from around the continent to concoct ideas that allow Hurricane Katrina victims to benefit financially from their Mardi Gras celebrations; great fun for an even greater cause.

Oops, looks like I just grabbed the select slice of King Cake with the plastic baby inside. We have a modified version of this age old tradition, which states that we must continue to keep your data secure. No, wait—that's just our tradition no matter what slice of cake we eat! Your records management needs top our list, so you can simply relax, kick back, enjoy Mardi Gras . . . or kick off a celebration of your own. Either way enjoy your February!

Richard

Have A Question For Us?

We love to hear from all our good friends and clients who enjoy reading our monthly newsletter. If you have a question related to off-site document storage, shredding, media vaulting, or document imaging, please feel free to give us a call or send us an email.

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Essential Nutrients for Healthy Brains

A recent study published in the journal *Neurology* has shown that seniors who include more certain essential nutrients in their diets were less likely to have brain shrinkage associated with Alzheimer's disease. They were also more likely to score better on tests of mental performance.



What are those essential nutrients? They include omega-3 fatty acids, B and D vitamins, and antioxidants C and E. Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D are found in fish and some plant and nut oils. Vitamins B, C, and E are primarily found in fruits and vegetables. The essential nutrient B12 comes from animal

products and fortified breakfast cereals.

Talk with your doctor about including more of these nutrients in your diet. You can get a blood test to check the levels of these chemicals in your body. To increase your intake, eat a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and fish. Before supplementing, speak to your doctor about safely increasing your intake of these nutrients.

Organizing Tip

A hanging shoe bag can help organize your cleaning closet. Place scrub brushes, cleaning utensils, sponges, and bottles of cleaners in the pockets. You can also store cleaning rags and towels in the pockets. Not only will you have everything organized, but you can see at a glance what needs to be replenished.

How to Ruin a Garbage Disposal

Your garbage disposal is a hard working part of your home. It can seemingly chop up anything put into it. But it does take some care to keep your garbage disposal from becoming damaged or broken. To keep your garbage disposal running at its peak, keep these tips in mind.

- Never run your garbage disposal without also having a strong flow of cold water going. After the grinding has stopped, continue running the water for another 30 seconds.
- Do not allow silverware or other small utensils to drop into the garbage disposal. If one does, use long-handled tongs to remove it.
- Never put your hand into your garbage disposal, even when it is turned off. Do not lean over the garbage disposal when it is running.
- Do not grind large bones or fibrous materials like corn husks, celery, asparagus ends, etc. Do not put liquid fats or grease into the garbage disposal.
- Do not let food sit in your garbage disposal. Run it each time food is placed into it.

February Events

- 1 National Girls and Women in Sports Day
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 2 Hedgehog Day
- 3 National Wear Red Day
- 5 Super Bowl XLVI
- 7 Wave All Your Fingers at Your Neighbors Day
- 8 Laugh and Get Rich Day
- 11 Satisfied Staying Single Day
- 12 Man Day
- 13 Employee Legal Awareness Day
- 14 National Donor Day
- 14 National Have a Heart Day
- 14 Saint Valentine's Day
- 17 World Human Spirit Day
- 20 Presidents' Day
- 21 International Pancake Day
- 21 Mardi Gras
- 23 National Chili Day
- 25 International Sword Swallowers Day
- 26 For Pete's Sake Day
- 28 Floral Design Day
- 28 National Tooth Fairy Day
- 28 Spay Day
- 29 Bachelors Day
- 29 International Underlings Day
- 29 Leap Year Day



Astrological Sign:

Aquarius (Jan 21-Feb 19)
& Pisces (Feb 20-Mar 20)
Flowers: Violet, Primrose
Birthstone: Amethyst

February is also:

- Library Lovers Month
- National Bird-Feeding Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- National Mend a Broken Heart Month
- National Time Management Month
- Relationship Wellness Month
- Return Shopping Carts to the Supermarket Month
- Youth Leadership Month

Home Tip

If the hoses that connect your hot and cold water supply to your washer break, you can have catastrophic flooding in your home. Over time these hoses can become brittle, so it is important to check them periodically for kinks, cracks, brittleness, or stiffness. If a hose does need to be replaced, choose stainless steel-clad hoses or those wrapped on the ends with mesh. To prevent any future problems, move your washer at least four inches away from the wall so the hoses don't become kinked.

See how nature—trees, flowers, grass—grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence...we need silence to be able to touch souls.

— Mother Teresa of Calcutta

FEBRUARY SERVICE AWARDS

Celebrating Pacific Employee Anniversaries

16 YEARS
Lori Ornellas

14 YEARS
Tony Silva

12 YEARS
Ellen Clare

7 YEARS
Tim Hoskins

6 YEARS
Justine Brown

Internet Tidbit

If you love to travel with your pet, the website PetsWelcome.com is for you. Here you will find lists of pet-friendly lodging, pet sitting services, and other pet-related travel information. You can choose hotels, inns, campgrounds, and bed-and-breakfasts by state and city. Plan your road trip by searching by route to find pet-friendly places along the way. There is also a forum to ask questions and get advice from other pet travelers. You can download pet-friendly hotels onto your GPS, and if you are traveling abroad, you can access their international listings. Best of all, the information is all free.

Do You Want To Win A \$25 VISA Gift Card?

Each month we'll give you a new challenge of some type. All those who reply with a correct answer are eligible to win. At the end of the month we'll draw a lucky name.



Here is this month's challenge:

Riddle: There are four girls, and four apples in a basket. Every girl takes an apple, yet one apple remains in the basket. How is this possible?

Last Month's Answer to: *What is the longest word in the dictionary?*

SMILES

(there's a MILE between the two S's)

Last month's Winner:

CHERYL WALTER
CHW

Email your answer to info@pacific-records.com

Moving Your Fish

If you are moving to a new home and have fish as pets, you may find it challenging to make it a successful and stress-free process. If you are moving a long distance, you probably will not be able to take your fish with you. In that case, it is best to find a new home for them before you move.

If you are moving closer, you will be able to transport your fish by car. The most crucial thing when moving your fish is to try to keep the water temperature as stable as possible. If your aquarium is small (one to five gallons), you may be able to move your fish in that. Otherwise, you will need to remove them from their aquarium. The best transport vessel is a large bucket with a lid. Poke holes in the bucket top. If you do not have a bucket, you can place your fish in a leak-proof plastic bag closed with a rubber band. Place this bag in another outer bag and then into a Styrofoam picnic cooler to help maintain the temperature. Fill the bag only about one-third full of water to provide the fish with adequate air. You will need to open the bag every four hours to replenish the air.



When emptying your aquarium, save as much water from the aquarium as you have room for. When you set up your aquarium in your new home, use this water and any additional tap water you may need. Add a water conditioner before adding your fish to their new home, and make sure that the water temperature is at the correct level before adding the fish back in.



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Keeping the Weight Off

“Keeping off a large weight loss is a phenomenon about as common in American medicine as an impoverished dermatologist.”

– Calvin Trillin



If this is the year that your New Year’s resolution finally worked, and you’ve lost the weight, then congratulations! But don’t forget the next step—keeping that weight off. Only about one in twenty dieters who enjoy initial success can keep from regaining those pounds, but there are ways to make this easier.

One of the easiest ways to blow all of your weight loss is to try to continue to follow a diet plan that is not nutritionally or medically sound. The diet industry makes \$30 billion a year with “lose weight fast” plans. Unfortunately, the majority of these programs are doomed to fail. If you have lost weight using a fad diet regimen, you may already be seeing the pounds creep back on. Starvation diets are particularly bad for your health. Also diets that promise that you will lose “14 pounds in 2 weeks” usually rely on weight loss from the water that you lose in those two weeks.

Now is the time to make a realistic plan to keep off the weight you’ve lost, or if your weight loss needs a boost, this is also a great approach to starting a weight loss program. Focus on replacing unhealthy foods with foods that will give you the energy you need without adding back on the weight. It may be time to sit down with your doctor or a nutritionist to go over your nutritional plan. You will want to eat smaller portions, and include a wide variety of foods. Add in foods rich in fiber, including fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains. Reduce the fat in your diet and get plenty of exercise, at least 20 minutes three times a week.

Make sure that your plan is realistic and healthy. Your goal should be to lose about one pound a week, and when you reach your target weight loss, to keep it off.

Get an Insurance Checkup



Just as your body needs a checkup once a year, you should consider giving your insurance the once over occasionally as well. People’s lives can change very rapidly. But one thing many of us forget is to adjust our insurance coverage along with these changes. If it has been several years since you’ve sat down and reviewed your insurance coverage, now is the perfect time.

Start with your life insurance. If the number of dependents you have has increased due to a new birth or a marriage, you will need to consider both the amount of life insurance you have, and who is named as beneficiary. If your children have grown, you may find that you no longer need the same type of insurance that you had before. If you are approaching retirement or are already retired, consider sitting down with an insurance professional to determine whether you have the right coverage for you—you may find that the type of insurance you have is no longer necessary.

Next, take a look at your auto insurance. You probably obtained collision insurance when you bought your new car. It makes sense to carry this type of insurance on newer models of cars. But as your car ages, this type of insurance may no longer be necessary. The value of a car decreases as time goes by. To gauge whether this type of insurance makes sense, compare the value of the car, and the cost of repairing it, to the cost of the collision insurance premiums. The most cost effective solution may be to assume the risk of repairing your car yourself.

While evaluating your renter’s or homeowner’s insurance, be sure to consider whether you have added any items of monetary significance to your home in the past few years. If you have purchased expensive jewelry, furs, or other big-ticket items, you may need to add some insurance coverage for these items.

Make it a habit to review your insurance coverage whenever a policy comes up for renewal. You will save yourself from being underinsured in certain situations and will save money by eliminating unnecessary coverage in others.

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