News Item:
On the Calendar

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day started in the time of the Roman Empire. In ancient Rome, "February 14th" was a holiday to honor Juno, the Queen of Heaven and goddess of women and marriage.

The Feast of Lupercalia covered the period from February 13 - 15.

On the festival of Lupercalia the names of Roman girls were written on slips of paper and placed into jars. Each young man would draw a girl's name from the jar and would then be "partners" for the duration of the festival with the girl whom he chose.

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Lupercus was the god of shepherds, and is the equivalent of the Greek god Pan. Lupercalia was celebrated on the anniversary of the founding of his temple in Rome. His priests were completely nude except for wearing goatskins. The "Lupercal" is the cave where Romulus and Remus supposedly were suckled by a she-wolf. At this cave on February 15th, a goat and a dog were sacrificed, and salt mealcakes prepared by the Vestal Virgins were burned.

Valentine's Day

According to tradition, a Christian priest from Rome, Valentine, was martyred on February 14 for performing marriage ceremonies for Christian couples, c. 269 CE.

In c. 495 CE, Pope Glaseius banned Lupercalus, and to "Christianize" this holiday, the names of Saints were used instead of the names of girls, and the name of the holiday similiarly changed to "St Valentine's Day."

Valentine's Day

"For this was on Seynt Valentynes day, Whan every foul cometh theere to chese his make [mate]…" Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Parliament of Fowles*, c. 1380)

Geoffrey Chaucer (1342/43–1400) brought together the imagery of blooming spring and the tradition that birds choose their mates in spring to describe the courtship of King Richard II and Anne of Bohemia. In *The Parliament of Fowles* Chaucer also chose Saint Valentine as a patron for that marriage, which is the first mention of Saint Valentine in a love poem.

Valentine's Day

The reinvention/commercialization of Saint Valentine's Day began in the 1840s. The first mass-produced Valentines of embossed paper lace were produced and sold shortly after 1847 in the US, but the practice of sending Valentine's cards already existed in England. Today, Valentine's Day is the 2nd largest card-sending holiday of the year behind Christmas.