



# Singles celebrate V-Day

BY BETHANY COURY  
Columnist

After 1,740 years, St. Valentine's unyielding devotion to the plight of lovers still inspires a day dedicated to love, but who determines the confines of this love or its expression?

If all the unattached persons would consider how many incredibly special people are already in their lives, Hallmark's infamous obsession with that "special someone" on Valentine's Day would become obsolete. To paraphrase Beyoncé, to all my single ladies (and fellas), maybe he didn't like it — he didn't put a ring on it — but the club is full of other options ... As is this article.

First things first — the elementary

"Be Mine" valentine cards are a must, and the heart candy accompaniment is recommended. Label this day "Significant Others Day" and treat those who are significant in your life. Order a Cookie Break delivery for your roommate — then it's conveniently in the same room — or buy an "I Love You" teddy bear for your friend across campus. Serenading never goes out of style and origami flowers are nearly priceless (literally). No matter how you do it, show the love to those you care about.

Singles should go home, eat their favorite dinner, watch a TV show and be grateful "you have the remote all to yourself," according to AskMen.com. This is why it can be risky asking men. Valentine's Day is a holiday dedicated to love, and as such should not be spent reveling in your sole ownership of a living-room appliance, but celebrated with those you love. Excluding the narcissists, this means partaking in some social interaction — like a

guys'/girls' night out (it's good to run in packs — it's a scary, lovey-dovey world out there). Kirksville offers a few amenities: Leisure World Lanes, the local bowling alley, also features a skating rink and pool tables. Kirksville's theatre, Downtown Cinema 8, currently is playing romantic options such as "Dear John" and "Valentine's Day," or if you'd rather see action, "The Book of Eli" and "Avatar."

Although AskMen.com didn't strike gold with its staying home alone suggestion, it advises you to use this day to treat yourself — not too shabby. This could include getting your nails done, going to a spa, getting a haircut or a massage, etc. The point is you feel good — walk on sunshine, so to speak. Now that you feel like royalty, finish the day with a Disney-themed movie night. "Aladdin" and "Toy Story" are recommended, but good friends and popcorn are essential. If staying in isn't your style, after you've spent the day indulging, host a singles Valen-

tine's Day party. Invite all your single friends and give it a theme such as famous ex-couples (i.e. Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt) or couples that should be, but aren't (i.e. Taylor Swift and Kanye West).

No matter what you do, make sure you celebrate with those you love. The life of a college student is no Jane Austen novel — singleness is not a cause for mourning. We have way too many friends to be alone, and romantic is not the only type of relationship we experience. Valentine's Day is the perfect day to realize and celebrate this. It's amazing how little information we have about St. Valentine — we're not even completely sure who he

was — yet we've christened a day after him, dedicated it to love and have clung to this tradition for 15 centuries. I think this proves the Beatles right: "All you need is love." Valentine's Day is no exception for singles. All we need to do is keep listening to those Beatles and "get by with a little help from [our] friends."



Illustrations by Antionette Bedessie/ Index

# Myths, legends of Valentine's Day

BY JENNIFER LEWIS  
Staff Reporter

St. Valentine huddles in a cold, dank cell in the prison of Emperor Claudius II. Aware of his impending execution, Valentine spends his remaining time penning one last love letter to his sweetheart, signing it "From your Valentine," and the very first Valentine card is born just as its originator is about to die. This is one myth of many, both historical and contemporary, that surround the holiday known as St. Valentine's Day.

### The myth of St. Valentine

Kathryn Brammall, a Truman history professor specializing in medieval Europe, said there are many variations on the story of St. Valentine. She said most versions agree he was a martyr arrested for preaching Christianity and marrying couples in love. Emperor Claudius II, leader of a pagan empire, had issued an edict forbidding marriage because it made his men more reluctant to go to war.

The act that helped elevate him to sainthood, Brammall said, was healing the jailor's daughter. In some stories, she was blind, and he miraculously gave her back her sight. She is sometimes depicted as the recipient of St. Valentine's legendary love letter.

However, Brammall said none of the stories about St. Valentine can be proven historically.

"Basically anything that has anything to do with the foundation of Valentine's Day or who St. Valentine was is a myth, because there is absolutely nothing known about him,"

Brammall said.

Brammall said it is not even clear there was only one Valentine. The original story of the martyr St. Valentine was first published in a 14th-century book called "The Golden Legend," although this version makes no mention of a love letter. St. Valentine's Day also is mentioned in Geoffrey Chaucer's book, "Parlement of Foules," but noted it as being in May instead of February.

Brammall said the basic story of St. Valentine and his martyrdom was embellished by greeting card companies in an effort to romanticize the holiday.

"The modern holiday seems to be an outgrowth of 19th century domestic card-giving, and then an American woman by the name of Esther Howland started a mass production of Valentine cards," Brammall said. "So it really was a commercial venture of the mid-19th century."

Brammall said the Feast of St. Valentine was added to the Catholic calendar in 496 to coincide with a pagan holiday that celebrated fertility. It was then taken off the calendar in 1969, losing its status as a Catholic holy day because there was no proof to verify Valentine's existence.

Myth Status: Unknown.

However it was established, Valentine's

Day is actively celebrated in the United States and has developed some of its own myths of acceptable social behavior.

### Only singles hate Valentine's Day

People who openly hate Valentine's Day are common this time of year. Groups of friends plan anti-Valentine's Day parties or wear all black on a day filled with red, white and pink. Are all of these Valentine-haters single people who are painfully aware of their lonely status on this date, or does the dislike sometimes run deeper?

Junior T.J. Faust said he used to hate Valentine's Day but changed his mind after he had a significant other.

"Back in high school I didn't have a steady relationship, so it was really pointless," Faust

said. "Now that I have a girlfriend, I appreciate it more."

Senior Joanna Russell has had a significant other on Valentine's Day, but said she has never lost her intense hatred of the holiday.

"I just hate it," Russell said. "First off, everyone expects something on Valentine's Day. And if you don't get something for Valentine's Day, everyone asks you all day, 'What did you get?' and you have to say, 'Nothing, nobody cares about me.'"

Russell said she did not mind when her boyfriends attempted to celebrate the holiday

with her, but she hates the feeling that the gifts were given only because they were expected.

"Society is putting this pressure on them, and if they want to get me chocolates or something, that's fine, but I don't want them to get them for me because it's Valentine's Day," Russell said. "I would be more happy if they got me something out of the blue."

Myth Status: False

### Traditional gifts are appropriate

What kinds of gifts are appropriate to give your loved one on Valentine's Day? Is it better to stick with conventional flowers and chocolate, or is it acceptable to think out of the box?

Truman alumna Kayce Swigelson said she received a pink pocketknife one year and loved it.

"It was very nice and better than traditional gifts, certainly," Swigelson said. "I think if the people are special, the gifts are naturally special, and I now have something practical and yes, bizarre, as a memory from that year, where chocolate would be long gone and forgotten. Long live creativity and death to cliché."

Cindy Wooldridge, another Truman alumna, received the unusual gift of an iPod paired with the more traditional offering of a dozen roses but said she did not consider the iPod the superior gift.

"In my opinion, the non-traditional gifts are great so long as they are still paired with something sentimental," Wooldridge said. "The day is all about knowing that they love you, and for me, an iPod doesn't express love. I very much appreciate the gift, but I'll probably remember the roses for longer."

"Society is putting this pressure on them [men], and if they want to get me chocolates or somethings, that's fine, but I don't want them to get them for me because it's Valentine's Day."

Joanna Russell  
Senior

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