



John Luttman's Joke of the Week

A. Is that you coffin?!

Question on page 20

Arts

Valentine's Day and your pet

According to a recent national survey by Purina, more than 60 percent of those pet owners' queried plan to include their pets in some way in their Valentine's celebrations.

Interestingly, almost half of the men surveyed said they would prefer to spend the holiday just with their pets, reasoning that their pet lowers their stress. Most women opted for companionship, although one-third of the females surveyed did feel their pets were more in tune with their feelings than anyone else.

While you're pondering the perfect way to romance your partner, whether with a candle-lit dinner, champagne, flowers, chocolate or jewelry and thinking of ways to express your special affection for your pet, it might be interesting to take a look at why this day in the middle of February is earmarked for romance.

The origins of this holiday are ancient and intertwined with fanciful legends. In early Rome, a fertility rite, Lupercalia, was celebrated annually on February 15. Around 490, Pope Gelasius I recast this pagan festival as a Christian feast day, declaring February 14 to be St. Valentine's Day.

Exactly which St. Valentine the Pope honored becomes confusing because there were numerous early Christian St. Valentines known at that time, although three were believed to have been martyred on February 14. The most commonly accepted honoree is a priest in the time of Claudius II, around the year 270.

According to one legend, Claudius ordered Roman men to remain single in order to grow his army, believing that married men did not make good soldiers. So Valentine, the priest, performed marriage ceremonies in



secret. When discovered, Claudius had the priest arrested and put into jail. In another version, Claudius tried to get Valentine to convert to Roman paganism to save his life. Valentine refused and instead tried to convert Claudius to Christianity, which led to his death sentence. In either case, before the priest was executed, he reportedly per-

formed a miracle by healing the blind daughter of his jailer, then left behind a note for her that read "From your Valentine."

Geoffrey Chaucer is credited with linking love to this holiday with his poem, written in 1381, honoring the first anniversary of the engagement of Richard II of England and Anne of Bohemia. In the poetic tradition of the time, Chaucer connected the occasion to a feast day, choosing St. Valentine's Day, "when every fowl cometh there to choose his mate."

In England, by the 18th century, gift giving and exchanging handmade cards were commonplace. It wasn't until 1850 that Esther A. Howland, a Mt. Holyoke graduate and native of Worcester, Massachusetts, took inspiration from an English valentine she had received and began mass-producing valentines of embossed paper and lace in this country. Today, according to the Greeting Card Association, 25% of all cards sent each year are valentines.

Until 1969, the Catholic Church formally recognized eleven St. Valentine's Days. When it revised its liturgical calendar, saints with questionable historical origins were removed and St. Valentine was omitted. Now we celebrate plain old Valentine's Day.

But it doesn't have to be plain. You can send fanciful e-cards customized with your very own dog or cat. Purina's unique e-card technology called DOGGIE-MAIL and KITTIE-MAIL is accessed through

www.petcentric.com to create a personalized puppy-love or kitty-love card for that special someone. For every card sent before Valentine's Day, Purina will donate 50 cents to help homeless animals across the country.

Concerning the other traditional trappings of this holiday, exercise caution. Chocolate can be extremely toxic to both dogs and cats. Our pets are much smaller than we are, so they metabolize substances differently. Alcohol, even in small amounts can be dangerous. Some flowers are potentially hazardous, including certain lilies that are highly toxic to cats. Other plants that often appear in mixed bouquets such as tulips, daisies, chrysanthemums and baby's breath can be dangerous as well.

Receiving jewelry is fabulous, but curious pets can be attracted to sparkling gems, so put the gift on or put it safely away. Balloons, cellophane, ribbons and other wrapping items are not good for your pets to play with or sample.

The gift of a pet toy or treat will be enthusiastically received, but for an extra special loving touch on Valentine's Day, your time with your pet is a precious gift indeed. Take your dog for a long walk, or make room for some one-on-one time with a gentle brushing, massage or bath for your pet. And for that ultimate gift of love, visit your local animal shelter, or go to www.petfinder.com and open your heart and home to a homeless animal. Have a Happy Valentine's Day! ■

Jan Jaeger is owner of Geronimo's, Ltd., Nantucket's pet supply and gift shop, and is a member of DWAA and CWA (Dog and Cat Writer's Associations of America). Her pets at home are Junior, a Chesapeake Bay Retriever, and two cats. At the shop are cats Messrs. Fish and Chips, Flower bunny, Millie guinea pig and two budgies. Send e-mail to jan@geronimos.com.

Conducted by Marcia Hempel, 508-228-3802.

NANTUCKET HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

In Search of Giant Squid

Giant squid specimens, tentacles, the myths and legends of the giant squid, comparison to other squids and mollusks, how they hunt, move, and defend themselves, and their anatomy and behavior. Exhibition by the National Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, in partnership with the Discovery Channel. Supported in part by the Egan Maritime Foundation and Novation Media. Peter Foulger Gallery, 13 Broad St. February 1 through April 20. Open Fridays and Saturdays, 11 am to 4 pm; **Sundays**, noon to 4 pm.

Hours

•Whaling Museum: Friday through Sunday, 11 am – 4 pm through April 24. Also Martin Luther King Day, January 21, and Presidents Day, February 18, 10 am – 4 pm. •NHA Research Library: Monday, Thursday, and Friday from 10 am to 4 pm, and Tuesday, 11 am – 4 pm.

NANTUCKET LIGHTSHIP BASKET MUSEUM

49 Union St. Open Fridays from 10 to 4, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 to 2.

Exhibition: "On My Own Time"

Basket weaving demonstrations every **Saturday** from 10 am to noon. Show runs until April 27.

Valentines Day Party

Thursday (14th), 3 to 4:30 pm.

I Love Lightship Baskets Day

Visitors will receive a free "I Love Lightship

Baskets" bumper sticker with admission to the exhibit, and ladies will each receive a Valentine red carnation while supplies last. **Friday through Sunday**, February 15 - 17.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Listings are printed only when changes have been made. Complete listings when space permits.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

20 Fair St., 228-0916. The Rev. William Eddy, Interim Priest. Sunday Holy Eucharist: 8 and 10 am; Wednesday Mid-Week Eucharist: 8:30 am; Church School: Sunday at 10 am during the service. *Continuing throughout Lent (until Sunday, March 19), there will be one service at 9 am. Church school will begin at 9 am in the Parish House with the children returning to the service before the Eucharist. Events for Epiphany 2008: Lectionary Group (On-going weekly) - Tuesdays at 9:30 am at the Parish House. Women's Bible Study (4 week session) - Parish House, Friday, 8, 15 at 9:00 am.*

SALTMARSH SENIOR CENTER

Clip and save for the month of February. Closed Martin Luther King Day (18th).

- Blood Pressure Clinic: Thursdays 2 to 3
- Bridge: Mondays at 12:30
- Bridge (Beginner's): Mondays at 1:00
- Bridge (Duplicate): Tuesdays at 1:30
- Bridge (PM): Mondays and Fridays at 12:30
- Congregate Lunch: Daily 12 noon
- Cribbage: Fridays at 1:30
- Exercise Class. Mon, Wed and Fri with Nancy Swain: 8:45 am; with Joe: Mon, Wed and Fri at 10 am
- Exercise (Armchair): Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:15 am
- Hearing Care: Monday (4th) at 1:30 pm
- Internet instructions with Tom McGlenn: Tuesdays 10 am to noon
- Judy's Writing Class: Wednesdays, 1:30 pm
- Knitting: Mondays at 1:30 pm
- Laughing Club: Wednesday (6th) at 1 pm

- Legal Services: Thursday (7th) at 1:30 pm
- Mah Jongg: Wednesdays 1:30 pm
- Movies: Tuesdays 1:15 pm
- MMA Comet Lecture with Dr. Strelnitzki: Thursday (21st) at 1 pm.
- MSPCA Pet Talk: Thursday (7th), 12:45 pm
- Organizational Gems with Wendy Watts: Thursday (21st) at 1:30 pm
- Quilting: Tuesdays 9:30 am
- Rx for Your Health: Wednesday (6th), 11:15 am to 12:15 pm
- Sherburne Commons Info with Phillip: Thursday (14th) at 1:30 pm.
- Social Security, Wednesday (20th), 10 to 12 and 1 to 2:30
- Star Stuffers: Tuesday (19th & 26th), 9 am
- Strength Training: Tuesdays at 8 am
- Tai Chi with Doug Baier: Thursdays 9 am
- Veteran's Services: Thursdays 9 to noon
- Yoga with Barbara: Tuesdays 9 am, also Thursday (7th) at 8 am.

THEATER

"Cupid's Nightmare" (Short Play Festival)

Four short plays presented by Nantucket Theatrical Productions and the Theatre Workshop of Nantucket. \$10. Upstairs at Methodist Church, 2 Centre St. February 14, 15, 16, 22, 23 at 7 p.m.

TOWN GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

This is neither a comprehensive nor legal posting of meetings, but for informational purposes only. Meetings are subject to change of time, venue and date. Please check the meeting board for official postings at the Town Building, 16 Broad Street.

BEACH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Land Bank Conference Room. Every Thursday at 4 pm.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN: Courtroom. Wednesday (13th and 20th) at 6 pm. (Televised on Comcast PlumTV Channel 22 beginning at 7

pm same night.)

C.C.W.G.: BOS Conference Room, 16 Broad St. Tuesday (19th) at 10:30 am.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE: 3rd Tuesday of each month (Feb 19th) . 2 Fairgrounds at 3:15 pm.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING FOR FY 2009 BUDGET; 2008 ATM WARRANT: NHS Cafeteria. Wednesday (13th) at 6 pm with Selectmen. High School Cafeteria, Thursday (14th) and Tuesday (19th) at 4 pm.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION: 3rd Monday (18th). Town Annex Conference Room, 4 pm.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION: Cyrus Peirce Cafeteria. Tuesday (19th) at 5 pm.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES ADVISORY BOARD (HDC): 37 Washington St. Conference Room. Monday (18th) at 3 pm.

MADDAQUET ADVISORY BOARD: 37 Washington St. Wednesday (13th), 2 pm.

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION: Town Building Annex. 2nd and 4th Thursday (14th and 28th), 6 pm

'SCONSET ADVISORY BOARD (HDC): 37 Washington St. Conference Rm. Thursday (14th) at 4 pm.

Please e-mail your event listings to:
events@nantucketindependent.com
 or fax to 508-228-1079
 by Friday at 5 pm
 for the 8 days beginning on the
 following Wednesday.

Compiled and designed
 by Gene Mahon