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“Valentines Day”

Romance is a modern thing

By Shawntelle Moncy

Will you be my valentine? In the modern world, when these words are spoken, the history of these words does not generally come to mind, but the truth is, love and romance are pretty modern concepts that are often taken advantage of.

               A valentine is not just the person asked to be a date on Valentine’s Day. This concept came from around 200 A.D., when Saint Valentine was marrying Christian couples illegally.

Couples who could marry were married strictly for wealth and politics for the survival of their families. According to The History Channel, love was not a factor in any marriage. This was because the current emperor, Emperor Claudius, believed single men made better soldiers for war in ancient Rome and so banned marriages for young lovers. Valentine was then sent to prison for his illegal actions.

               In prison, Valentine fell in love with a woman who visited him on a regular basis, he signed the letter “Your Valentine.” This is still a familiar term used during Valentine’s Day today.

               There are several myths about Saint Valentine; one includes that his lover had been raped and on the letter he sent to her were his tears. With those tears, she wiped them on her own face and her virginity was restored.

               According to Georgia Bazemore, ancient history and Greek mythology professor at Eastern Washington University, valentine translates to “salvation” in Greek. This means person who wishes you well.

               Valentine was beheaded on Feb. 14, but he gave the people inspiration to keep loving. “The Secret Poetry of Flowers” was created by the people of Rome. This is when people who had lovers but were already married would send red roses to their lovers in secret.

According to Henry-York Steiner, a literature professor at Eastern Washington University, red has always been the color of love and affection because of the way women blush, in turn, making red roses the romantic flower to give. The giving of roses sometimes from a secret admirer, and the romantic color of red are traditions that have been passed down throughout the years.

“When you’re stricken with love it’s like, umph,” Steiner said as he slammed his hands to his heart. “It’s like an arrow in your heart for longing to love.”

The hearts and arrows have not been around forever, they came from the legend of Cupid, a Roman god created from the goddess of love, Venus. Venus created Cupid when the Greek gods lessened her powers due to the fact that she was a woman.

Cupid would shoot his arrows at people and have them fall in love at first sight with whomever he pleased, sometimes good, sometimes bad. From this, the term cupidity -- meaning naughtiness -- was formed.

“We tend to take love for granted,” Bazemore said. “Love is a very modern concept.”

The meaning of Valentine’s Day is the celebration of love, because love was not always a thing that people could express to the person who they truly loved.

               “People tend to spend more money than they can afford,” Steiner said. Especially for college students, Valentine’s Day can be expensive, but there are ways to make it not as expensive.

               “I’m going to Seattle to visit my boyfriend,” Lexi Cooper, a student at EWU said. “He’s making dinner and I’m making dessert.”

               Students can make homemade meals, homemade cards, homemade anything. It is the thought that counts.

               “I think it’s a great holiday to make the meaningful gesture to your loved one,” Professor Steiner said. “Whether it’s the beginning of the relationship or your 50th anniversary, it shows you’re thinking about the other person.”

               Romance and love was once never even a concept people could truly express how they pleased, take this Valentine’s Day to celebrate love with your partner and remember how difficult it used to be just to love who you truly loved in the past.