



ISOLATED M



February 2020 - Volume 47 Number 2

Wit and Wisdom Spanning More Than Forty-Six Years

Why Do We Celebrate Valentine's Day?

April May

Do we celebrate Valentine's Day because we want to support the greeting card, chocolates, flowers and jewelry industries? If you are a Mensan, I sincerely doubt the answer is yes. After all, we aren't notorious for being compliant just because!

Actually, the story of how we came to celebrate St. Valentine's Day is quite romantic—and a bit rebellious to boot. The holiday is generally attributed to one or more Roman Catholic priests allegedly beheaded by order of Emperor Claudius II (aka "Claudius the Cruel") for performing Christian marriage ceremonies at a time when they were forbidden. Hence, the rebellious romantic! There are no firm facts to support which Saint Valentines was the one martyred (perhaps more than one).

The order forbidding Christian marriages really had a more practical purpose—Claudius the Cruel needed young, healthy males to join the Roman army, and married men weren't motivated to join the army since they had to support their families.

There are other St. Valentines, but I focus here on the patron saint of romance, engaged couples and happy marriages. St. Valentine is also referred to as the patron saint of bee keepers, epilepsy, fainting, the plague, and travelers.

The dude must keep pretty busy, and that's why the greeting card companies, florists, chocolatiers, jewelers, fine restaurateurs and others stepped in to help with February 14th celebrations.

OK, so I don't know that for a fact, but it sounds pretty generous of them to step up, if you think about it! Actually, there is a touch of *déjà vu* here, because Claudius the Cruel died from the plague. Talk about karma!

[continued on page 2]

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

SIG membership on Jan. 5 was 373. In addition, the February LGR will go to 702 Direct International Mensans. Twelve new members this month.

Welcome new and returning members!

Laura Hill-Roseville MN	Caroline Verdonk– Reykjavik, Iceland
Bette Leal–Las Vegas NV	Elisabeth V. Virden–Rome GA
Rebecca Kurzendoerfer–Slinger WI	Frank S. Virden–Rome GA
Walt Pilcher–Greensboro NC	Dee Wells–Alamosa CO
Garrett Prehatney–Minneapolis MN	Richard E. Willer–La Luz NM
Devin J. Starlanyl–Brattleboro VT	Daniel Zaretsky–New York NY
Joseph M Tabacheck Jr–Aurora CO	

February Birthdays

Sandra Brown	Gerald Pearson
Ronald Allan Charles	Sabine Reuter
Jack Crone	Eldon Romney
Ann Kathleen Flynn	Anita Russell
Norman Johnson	Carolyn Smith
Kathleen Kohagen	Brent Edward Vallens
Stanley Korn	Roger Vesely
Jacobus Louw	Alan Zirkle
Donna J MacDougall	

Why Do We Celebrate Valentine's Day? (cont.)

Along with celebrations surrounding the St. Valentine martyred in the name of love, on February 13 or so, early Romans also recognized a pagan feast called Feast Lupercalia, with roots in animal sacrifices, matchmaking, and all kinds of revelry, possibly including rumored clothing-optional dancing among adults. Christians celebrated St. Valentine's Day a bit differently in those days—choosing to focus on love and marriage, and building families.

Geoffrey Chaucer, the English poet, wrote in his poem "Parliament of Fowls:" "For this was sent on Seynt Valentyne's day / Whan every byrd cometh ther to choose his mate." He likely set the tone for future February 14 celebrations of romance, love and marriage. In 496 A.D. Pope Gelasius declared February 14 as the First Feast Day of Saint Valentine, thus forever marking it in our hearts and on our calendars.

April May, Desoto, TX

Mailbox

Living With Disaster in California

Dear Friends,

You and I are probably accustomed to seeing and hearing, on the news, reports of terrible disasters, sometimes of human origin, sometimes “acts of God.” But thankfully they are usually far away, often in foreign lands, and don’t directly involve anyone we personally know or care about. By the time the next disaster comes along, the people still suffering from the previous ones have been pushed to the back of our consciousness. There is, after all, a phenomenon called “compassion fatigue.”

I plead guilty to those same feelings—or lack of feelings. But it so happened that one of those disasters occurred, not far away, but virtually in my own community, a year and a half ago—and I am only now becoming really aware of it, because one of its victims is a person who has recently become very important in my life.

I live between a range of mountains and the Pacific Ocean in the city of Santa Barbara, which immediately adjoins Montecito, a sort of upscale suburb. Distances being what they are in an area where most other people depend on their cars, I rarely go there, although, as you may know, the weekly *Montecito Journal* carries my column.

On January 9, last year, as a result of fires followed by heavy rains, there occurred, mainly in Montecito, what is called a “mudslide,” which hardly describes the effect of having a whole mountain slide down on you. Hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed. More than a score of people lost their lives. The people most affected were those whose homes were highest up the mountain.

Meanwhile, however, I was having my own calamities. In that same year, 2018, my longtime helper, Peggy Sue, had just retired, my wife Dorothy died in May, and in October, I was seriously injured in a fall from which I’m still recovering. So, although Montecito was so close, since I didn’t know anyone there, I wasn’t curious or concerned enough to even go there and see the new landscape.

But now I do know someone there, who has in recent months become an important person in my life. She is Susan Robles, the Assistant to Stacey Wright, the Fiduciary who has been administering the Trust Dorothy set up in her will. Stacey herself has been extremely helpful to me in many ways, and in the process, she has become a very good friend. But it’s Susan I want to tell you about here, because, as I’ve just recently learned, she and her husband have been among the many victims of that mudslide disaster. They had been evacuated to a hotel when the horror struck, but their home was one of those high up the hillside, and they returned to find it still standing, but virtually inaccessible!

I don’t yet know all the details—and it was only yesterday that, at my request, Stacey and Susan took me for the first time to the site—or as close to it as I

could get, which wasn't very close. But as I understand it, the only approach to the house was entirely washed away, leaving quite a deep ravine.

After driving as far up as you can go, the only way of reaching the house is by stumbling along a rough narrow trail, then climbing down into the totally rock-strewn ravine, making your way some distance along it, then climbing up the other side. I got no further than the near edge of the ravine.

But the remarkable—almost incredible—fact is that Susan and her husband Chris, and Susan's mother Mary Sheldon, though they all have jobs in town, have continued to live in the house, making that arduous trek every day, and carrying on their backs everything that needs to go in or out.

Why haven't they moved? Apparently, there's a deep family attachment to the house, which belonged to Susan's grandmother. And they all know the area is disaster-prone. (The same sort of thing actually happened in 1965, the year Susan was born.) Now there are terrible complications with insurance. And there is a bridge under construction—but at great cost, of which each family using it (there are several others) will have to pay a large share.

This whole story, of which I have so far had only a glimpse, seems to be just one more object lesson in how close Paradise can be to Hell.

All the best, Ashleigh Brilliant, Santa Barbara, CA

Thanks so much for sharing. This is a good example of the resilience and determination of ordinary people who are actually not so ordinary after all.

Memories of Up North

Every Friday night my parents, my three brothers, and I headed on "Up North" to our rustic, woodsy, secluded cabin on a lake, near Tawas (in Michigan's northern lower peninsula).

We packed clothes, canned goods, etc. and crammed all of us in the car for the 200-mile trip north on the two-lane blacktop highway, turning east at Pinconning, then north on M-65, through Whittemore, stopping in Hale to see the live bear in a big cage, with the High Banks of the Au Sauble River on our left, past the Lumberman's Monument on our right, then over the Five Channels' Dam bridge, then straight past Glennie to our cabin in the woods 4 miles away. No expressway then, and the last leg on bumpy one-lane dirt roads with grass in the middle. My brothers never let me sit on the "window side." (Awwww!)

This tradition carried on from when I was born and for 16 more years. Even in early winter. Our own "Walden Pond" to commune with Nature. Lots of trees—pine, oak, birch, aspen, etc. Nature at our doorstep—birds, deer, ducks, raccoons, fish, etc. My dad taught me the names of all the trees. We picked wild blackberries, blueberries, huckleberries, and raspberries. My mom made homemade pie from them on a small camp stove.

We roasted hot dogs on the outdoor grill my dad built, toasted marshmallows, and watched the fireflies around us. My dad would play his harmonica at

night at the campfire, and it could be heard across the lake, our neighbors told us, when we “went to town” for supplies and to get ice cream cones.

No noise of “civilization” intruded on our inner-peace – only the sound of the wind rustling trees, and an occasional whip-poor-will or jaybird, calling (Jay, Jay, Jay). My mom used to whistle back to them, realistically imitating their call. She didn’t imitate the numerous frogs that serenaded us around the campfire at night. Our dog liked them. One day he swallowed a tree-frog in one gulp, one day. You could hear it croak in his throat as he swallowed it. My brothers laughed. My mom threw up! Urp!

No TV, phone, or radio. Outside well-water, campfire cooking, the lake to bathe in, and an outhouse up the hill. Army blankets, camp cots and tents, and kerosene lanterns. The lake was 20 feet from our doorstep—nice for swimming and rowing our boat. Seven years later my dad hand-built our cinder block cabin and finished after a couple of years. We helped, turning the hand-driven cement mixer to seal in the blocks. He wired in electricity and propane heat (and REAL beds) for “Mom’s creature comfort.” No indoor plumbing ever! Rustic outhouse built by my dad, complete with half-moon. Handy, except at night in cold weather, with only a flashlight to guide us. Brrr!

We headed on back home Sunday afternoons for the five hour drive (in those days) through the Saginaw traffic and past the Bay City Bridge, finally arriving at our home in Detroit—tired, cranky, and hot—even with the windows open. (No air conditioning in our “fragrant” car). My parents are gone now, living in the Happy Hunting Grounds in the Sky. Those were the days. A much simpler time, without the stress of technology, traffic, and my suburban life. It was glorious!!! I don’t miss the lack of indoor plumbing, though!

Allegra Louth, Sterling Heights, MI

P.S.: Our first cabin burned down to the ground. Squirrels had blocked the chimney with nuts, etc. which started a fire in the potbellied stove’s chimney. Darned squirrels! The new cinder-block two-room cabin was a lot nicer.

Thanks for taking the time to write and share your memories. You conjured up images of peaceful days gone by. ::sigh::

Visitor Attractions in Clear Lake, Iowa

Nineteen years ago I moved to Clear Lake, Iowa, famous for the Surf Ballroom and as well as the memorial to Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and the Big Bopper—all of whom died in a plane crash shortly after their last performance at the Surf. The memorial is in the field where the plane crashed shortly after takeoff.

At the fire station there also is a memorial to 9/11 which features a section of a steel girder from the ruins of a tower. In town there is a large boulder which is painted on all sides with patriotic scenes apropos to this area.

“When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.”

~ Lao Tzu

And, of course, Clear Lake itself, which is seven miles long.

There is an old-fashioned City Park which is complete with a band shell, a yacht club, and a beach. The park borders the east side of lake with North Shore Drive going around the lake toward the north then west, and South Shore Drive going around to the south then west.

I would definitely take a visitor to all these places but for me the best of all is the library. There are 5 beautiful murals on 4 walls and a ceiling that were done by local artist Sandra Quintus. The ceiling is my favorite. There was a small dome as part of the ornate original ceiling, and she has painted it so it looks like a skylight with blue sky, clouds, and flying birds.

At first glance everyone comments how wonderful it is to have a skylight in a library, and we agree. It's only after they realize the birds aren't moving that they take a better look, and are very impressed with the skill of the artist. A close second is the long mural in the children's library that even goes around a corner to make it longer. The water level of the marsh is about four feet from the floor so it shows a wondrous variety of fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and plants both above and below the water line. What fun!

Clear Lake is on I-35, about half way in between Minneapolis, MN, and Des Moines, IA, where two of my children and all nine of my grandchildren and three great grandchildren live. My third child is in Tucson, AZ, so I wasn't able to factor that in.

Eley Schmidt, Clear Lake, IA

Your historic town is a lovely slice of Midwest-America with about 7,500 folks living there. Thank you for sharing with us.

Opt Out Message?

Opt out??? Are you kidding? I live in Torrington, WY. The nearest active Mensa members are at least 100 miles away. The LGR is only one computer click away. Keep it coming.

Bess Carnahan, LOC SEC Wyoming Mountain Mensa, where almost everyone is isolated.

Thanks for the thumbs-up, Bess. We definitely will keep it coming.

Hmm. Looks like the population of Torrington is about 6,700. The Fort Laramie military post is open to the public nearby. There's Pioneer Park camping and the Homesteaders Museum. Sounds like a place that may be off the beaten path, but could be worth a visit.

Back Issues

Can back issues be read somewhere? Online?

Michael Fogeberg, Festlund, Norway

Thanks for asking, Michael. Here are the instructions, (also located on the isolatedm.com website): More than 80 issues of the *Isolated M* newsletter are on the Mensa International website. NOTE: Mensa International requires a different password from American Mensa.

1) Log into the Mensa International website: www.mensa.org/publications/isolated-m

2) Click on the PDF you wish to download.

Have fun, Michael, and don't go cross-eyed reading too many in one session. Let us know how it goes.

Uniquely Personal Gift

Around 2016 I received a non-traditional gift from my sister. It was a piece of family heritage and totally unexpected. She had a napkin in a cheap 8 x 11 frame in her house; I always admired it. On the napkin was a list of names and committees from a family reunion in 1912.

It seems that when she was going through family memorabilia, Lynn found a pristine identical napkin. It was a very unexpected and welcome gift. I took it to a framing shop, to a professional paper preserver, and back to the shop. My historical gift became a costly 500-dollar acquisition under special glass. Recently, I passed this 100+ year-old wonder to a nephew interested in genealogy. It now resides in his 1728 home in New Jersey.

Gail McGrew, Loganville, Georgia

Finding this family genealogy keepsake is quite amazing. Many of us have little or no 100-year-old memorabilia we can touch.

From Al Lubran Dec. 20, 2019

Re: trivia question number seven. President Harry S Truman had no middle name, just the letter, and he preferred to write it without a period.

That matter recalls the old story of R. B. Jones. For some inexplicable reason, he was never given a first name at birth, just the letter R. and similarly, he had no middle name, just the letter B.

When he enlisted in the Navy, there were many forms for him to fill out and where they asked for first and middle names, he wanted to make sure they would understand that he had none, just initials. To do so, where it asked for a first name, he would put in the letter R and in parentheses, add the word 'only' so people would know that was his only first name, the same with the middle name B.

Naturally, he went through his entire Navy career being known as Ronly Bonly Jones.

"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage." ~ Lao Tzu

As for the first two trivia questions, I'm reminded of the following story.

A native American tribe in upstate New York was having a problem. It seems that nobody had the necessary skills to make moccasins that would fit the various foot sizes of the tribe members and be comfortable.

Finally, one member cleverly constructed a device that could be used as a form to make moccasins and was adjustable to accommodate different foot sizes. The results were moccasins that were properly sized and were very comfortable for all tribe members.

The device, of course, became known as the last of the Mohicans.

Happy holidays (anyhow), Al Lubran

Follow-up from Al Lubran Dec. 20, 2019

My pleasure. Here's one last one (for now). I actually wrote this myself although I'm generally ashamed to tell anyone because I don't know if they'll praise or curse me.

Booz Allan Hamilton (BAH), a large consulting firm, was hired by Volkswagen to help them design a new electric car shaped like their most famous model.

They provided the needed assistance and soon the car was ready to be brought to the show rooms. When VW realized they had no name for the new vehicle, they asked the consultant for assistance.

The firm decided the name should combine characteristics of both firms. The suggestion they offered included their name, identified that the vehicle was electric and added the car's long-standing nickname.

And so it was called the BAH Hum-Bug.

Answer to Beth Rainbow's query in the January 2020 LGR

Below is my response to Beth Rainbow's question about things we love. I hope it is worthy of being included in readers' responses. Thank you for all you do.

Kathy Leonard

My love is music, hearing it and singing it. There was no formal musical training in my family, but there was always singing for as far back as I can remember. It all stemmed from my Mom. Her theatrical streak surfaced early in life, and she fondly reminisced about being the fairy who jumped out from behind the piano in the high school play. When she was fifteen, she would climb up in the hayloft overlooking a grazing field and sing opera to the cows. When she was pregnant with me, she would play the piano and sing; she listened to classical music for hours in the hope that I would be musical.

I grew up listening to the Ames Brothers, Patti Page, and Perry Como, and watching "Mitch Miller," and even Lawrence Welk, where I learned all the old "standards." In college, while the other students were absorbing Motown, I was listening to Norm Jagolinzer on WLKW, where I heard Big Band music and

learned to appreciate Vera Lynn, Doris Day, and Glenn Miller. Mom taught us four girls how to harmonize. At birthday parties they would line up the four of us to sing “Que Sera Sera.” (Because our last name was “Leonard,” I think my father hoped that we would end up famous, like the Lennon Sisters.)

Throughout the years, harmonizing the songs we knew was often our entertainment. While we were in junior high and high school, Mom sang with the East Providence Community Chorus. In our teens and twenties, after Dad died, we all spun off in different directions, but the music continued. I sang for several years with the RI Civic Chorale (I still really miss performing the entire “Messiah” with them!) and about ten years ago I joined the Chorus of East Providence. My sister Jeannie sings with “Heritage Harmony,” a women’s barbershop-type group. Ruthy will only sing by herself, but she loves all kinds of music. My youngest sister Sue inherited Mom’s theatrical bent, and in her teens could make up a dance to any music she heard. She sang with her own kids at Invitation Sundays at her church and has been teaching her ten-year-old granddaughter tunes from Broadway musicals since Darcy was two. (You really have to hear a three-year-old belting out “Oklahoma!” to appreciate this.) Thank you, Mom, for the music; it’s still going on.

Response Regarding Personal Philosophy

In response to Milton David Fisher’s quest for other philosophies [Guest Editorial; LGR Nov. 2019], I submit the following for consideration or ridicule, as you like.

Two components of my personal philosophy are:

Judgment

Lau Tzu made an interesting point that I have kept in mind for many years. In effect, the moment you apply judgment to anything or anyone, you have closed a door to further learning and truth. While it may be possible that some people will realize that their judgment was in error at some point in the future, the vast majority will cling to it in the face of all evidence to the contrary. I have found when tempted to venture into judgement, especially a harsh one, that curiosity is a very useful substitute. Often this change in direction results in new understanding and sometimes a very grateful new friend.

Fear and Joy

Outside of people who have some sort of condition that colors their view of the world, I have observed that we are almost always confronted by two choices when we experience any change in our condition. We can choose Fear, in all of its facets such as anger, isolation, division, despair, rage, misery, or hate. Or we can choose Joy, whose aspects might be expressed in love, happiness, compassion, satisfaction, community, hope, or friendship.

“Music in the soul can be heard by the universe.” ~ Lao Tzu

This is an operating hypothesis, but I have yet to find a weakness in it. You can easily observe this choice in action when you observe someone encountering that new experience. Did they laugh, or get angry? Interested or offended? The old saw about not being able to choose what happens, but getting to choose how you respond, is central to this idea.

Finally, I've had a thought somewhat related to the above. Happy, contented people seldom change the world. Angry, discontented people often change it, but very seldom does that change achieve the results they were hoping for.

Bob Hunt

Thanks, Bob. And thanks to everyone for such an interesting assortment of letters and experiences this month. Please keep 'em coming.

Cornered into Perdition

Fiction (Inspired by Actual Events)

Dom Jervis

Chapter One of Three — Conspiracy

"Nick, why don't you ask Robin out?"

Whoa, that came from the warning track in left field...or more like a treetop in Southeast Asia. Okay, think quickly. Come up with a witty, deeply philosophical retort.

"What?"

So much for that. She's not talking...second chance...

"She's such a stunningly beautiful woman! Petite, long blond hair, big, beautiful blue eyes...doesn't she have a boyfriend?"

"She's joined us for pizza and beer every Friday night for months, ever since I made her wake up and get rid of her abusive leech of a boyfriend. She's been afraid to get involved with anyone else since."

"So why me?"

"I see how you look at her, and how she looks at you. You know I swore off men after my third divorce, and the rest of our group is couples. You two are the only singles."

"What makes you think she'd even date me?"

"She and I have been close friends since junior high school. I know her better than anyone, even her family."

They've discussed this. Why do I feel like a man being led to the gallows?!

"Terri, this is such a shock. I need to think!"

"Oh? If you weren't interested, you'd have said so by now. If you were on the fence, you'd say 'Gee, I don't know, Terri.' You know you want to. I know she wants to. What's the worst that can happen?"

She doesn't want to know my answer to that.

"What if we date and then break up? Wouldn't that ruin our friendship?"

"Nick, you're running out of straws to grasp. Now come on. Do it."

"Okay, I need to talk to the bartender. Then I promise to come back to the table and ask her."

"About what?"

"That's between me and him. I'll be right there."

I wasn't lying. What had started out as a routine trip to the men's room became a hard shove to the edge of the Rubicon. I asked the bartender for a double shot of Bacardi 151, the most potent liquid courage I could think of. Maybe on my way back to the table I'll pass out and hit the floor. That would give me a stay of execution.

When I returned to the table, Terri had taken my safe seat at the other end. The only available one was next to Robin, where Terri had been. Maybe 9/11 WAS at the hands of Angry Muslims and NOT the US Gummint. But this looks and quacks like a REAL conspiracy! As I sat down next to Robin, she looked at me and smiled, but said nothing. She then turned away to hear the conversation.

At some moment I must have asked her, because the next morning I saw that she'd written her number and email address on my hand in ballpoint pen.

The latter was smudged. Had to use the phone...argh...

After a few shots of whatever high-octane booze I had in the house, I managed to force the words out with the same effort as if I were walking through knee-deep soft cheese, "Robin, may I please have the pleasure of your company for dinner and a movie next Thursday?"

"Wednesday works better for me, Nick. Is that okay?"

This is really going to happen! Showing up at her place gassed up would be bad form. Maybe I had some Valium lying around the house.

"Wednesday's fine. Is 7:00 okay?"

"Perfect, can't wait, Nick!"

Approximately 9:00 Wednesday, Terri's phone rang, Robin's ring.

"Hey girl!"

She barely managed to force out "Terri!" through her sobs.

"Robin! WHY ARE YOU CRYING?!"

[to be continued]

Call for Submissions

We have a need for flash fiction, artwork and articles (adventures, exotic places, humor, isolation woes, photo essays, travel woes), etc. for upcoming issues. Please send your submission to Lida E. Quillen publisher@twilighttimes.com with subject line Isolated M or IM. Ideally, articles should be entertaining, informative, humorous, educational or some combination thereof.

Letters to the Editor should also go to Lida with subject line IM.

History and Insight

Delegation and Decline

Colleen Criss Eagle

When Mom retired as LGR editor in 1994, she was almost 64 years old, and had been editing the newsletter for ten years. Although she had some serious health issues, she continued to work full-time as a high school teacher and head of the language arts department, and worked hard to meet the increasing demands of her volunteer work on the AMC and IBD. She was left without much extra time even as her energy levels were declining. She couldn't actually keep up with the LGR, as the following paragraph from her editorial in the May 1994 issue attests:

"I am sure that it is confusing, especially to those in countries other than the United States, to receive mail dated May, when here it is December already. The answer is simple. When I was ill, had computer trouble, etc., and got so far behind in sending out the *Isolated M*, a logical thing to do would be to update all of your subscriptions, and simply skip the ones we had missed. Unfortunately, the US Post Office will not allow us to do that. We must continue to mail out in chronological order all of the newsletters, or to lose our second class permit."

The LGR had seen a lot of changes during her tenure. Administratively, much of the LGR business was being communicated through email, although a close perusal reveals no email address listed anywhere in those last newsletters she edited. The hand-drawn red X's and (later) red hearts that alerted a member that his or her subscription was about to expire were replaced with printed expiration dates on the mailing labels. Layout was no longer a cut-and-paste ordeal, and Mom even had a layout editor who put it together electronically through the magic of word processing. In fact, she had a large group of editors helping her. The June 1994 issue listed 12 different individuals who actively worked on the LGR in addition to the 7 people listed under Artists.

In one of her last official columns as editor she announced that the LGR would be co-edited by Dan and Ruth Dozier, who had agreed "to begin a new, lasting relationship" with LGR readers. They also agreed to let her continue writing a column each month. Even in giving it up, in recognizing that she could no longer keep up with the work, Mom wasn't really ready to entirely let it go. She wrote:

"I will admit to a little jealousy. I feel a little bit as I imagine I would feel if I introduced some beautiful woman to my son and asked her to take good care of him."

So as Mom eased out of the LGR spotlight, she was confident that she was turning it over to people who would care for her "kid" as carefully and lovingly as she did.

Next month: "*Isolated M* Says Good-Bye"

Valentine Trivia

1. Who started the tradition of giving boxes of chocolate on Valentine's Day?
2. When was the first Valentine sent?
3. Who was the first company to mass produce a Valentine's Day card?
4. Who receives the most Valentine's Day cards?
5. What is considered the most romantic Valentine's Day oil painting in the world?
6. What is the most popular gift on Valentine's Day?
7. What is the most popular greeting card?
8. When was signing a Valentine's Day card considered bad luck?
9. What is considered the origins of the mid-February holiday?
10. What country celebrates a Single's People Day after Valentine's Day?
11. In what country do the women give dark chocolate to men on Valentine's Day?
12. What country celebrates Children's Day precisely nine months after Valentine's Day?
13. Which Shakespeare play features Valentine and Proteus?
14. Which symbol does New York's Empire State Building illuminate on every Valentine's Day?
15. In one country there is a tradition that girls plant onions in different pots; each pot is labeled with the name of a boy. The belief is that the girl will marry the boy whose name is kept on the pot where the first onion grew. What country has this tradition?

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[Answers on page 14]



Heart-shaped rocks on a trail

Trivia Answers

1. Richard Cadbury, in 1868. **2.** 15th century by a French duke named Charles to his wife. **3.** Hallmark, starting in 1913. **4.** Teachers. **5.** *The Kiss*, Gustav Klimt, 1909; distinctive for its heavy use of gold foil. **6.** Flowers; followed by chocolate. **7.** Christmas cards; followed by Valentine's Day cards. **8.** The Victorian Era. **9.** Lupercalia; a celebration of the coming of spring. Included fertility rites and the pairing off of women with men by lottery. **10.** South Korea. **11.** Japan. **12.** India. **13.** *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. **14.** A heart. **15.** Germany.



Crew Needed

Isolated M seeks new volunteers to perform publishing tasks as several existing volunteers have moved on. This Special Interest Group (SIG) has been going strong for 47 years. The monthly cycle of getting a 16-page *Little Green Rag* out with largely member content requires plenty of work, but we typically divide the tasks into manageable jobs.

See the openings on page 16. For further information and a discussion of tasks please email Lida E. Quillen, Editor and Co-coordinator, publisher@twilighttimes.com. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Giving Her the Bizness

Bobby Bush

I'm one of those ear-focused people who has trouble shutting out audio stimuli such as background music and nearby conversations. One time I was waiting on a microwave oven in the break room of the last place I worked. A colleague about one-third my age was in a relationship with a writer from another department, and they were standing next to their own microwave. They seemed to be getting along very well, and they eventually married.

This day he had brought up some topic or other and found she wasn't up to speed on it, and he was mocking her good-naturedly. In the parlance of "Leave It to Beaver," a 1950s American comedy TV show, he was "giving her the bizness." I knew it wasn't my place to monitor their conversation, but since they weren't discussing intimate topics, I decided to indulge myself and eavesdrop a little.

"You didn't know that?" he teased. "Of course you don't. You don't know anything."

I felt he was being a little rough on her considering they were out in public, and I suddenly couldn't resist stepping into their conversation. "I'll bet there's one thing she knows that you don't."

"What's that?"

I told him, "How lucky you are to have her."

He grinned and said "Touché, Bobby."

I'll always remember her pretty smile.

