

MENASHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

February-March 2012

HAPPY "2012" NEW YEAR

After a very enjoyable and exciting Christmas season it is now time to get "back to business". Our annual Christmas dinner was attended by 89 members and guests and from the response it was thoroughly enjoyed. Our guest speakers, and comments from the attendees, brought back many fond memories of the past when the "simpler way-of-life" was the norm even though there were some "questionable aspects".

MARCH 10th - 7:00 p.m.

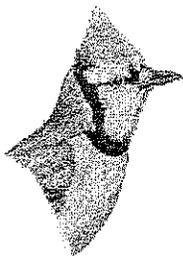
Menasha Public Library, Company E Room
(use elevator to the lower level)

Open to the Public

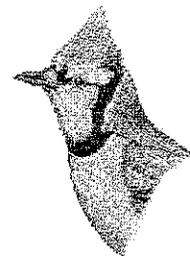
History of Menasha High School Basketball



Presenter will be Bob Smarzinski (who is also a board member of your society). He has previously published a book, with extended details, and will be available at the program or the resource ctr./mini-museum (Memorial Bldg.)



Anyone willing to furnish cookies/bars for the March meeting please contact Dolores Gear at 722-3635
Thank you.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Kathryn Babbitz, Joseph Boehlein, John Lauber,
Lil Fahrenkrug, Dean & Judy Moede, Shirley Reichelt

BOARD MEMBERS WANTED

As election time is drawing near we continue to seek anyone interested in becoming involved in your "local history" organization. It is vitally important that we preserve the past and present for future generations so our heritage will not be forgotten. This does not happen without volunteers, such as yourself. Please consider speaking to one of the nominating committee members (Katie 722-4364 or Jean 722-7349) indicating your interest.

VALENTINES DAY

Every February 14, across the United States and in other places around the world, candy, flowers and gifts are exchanged, with romance in mind, between loved ones. Who is this mysterious Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite between Christian and ancient Roman tradition?

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the 3rd century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage to young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

Another legend has it that Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl—who may have been his jailor's daughter who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed "From your Valentine", an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.



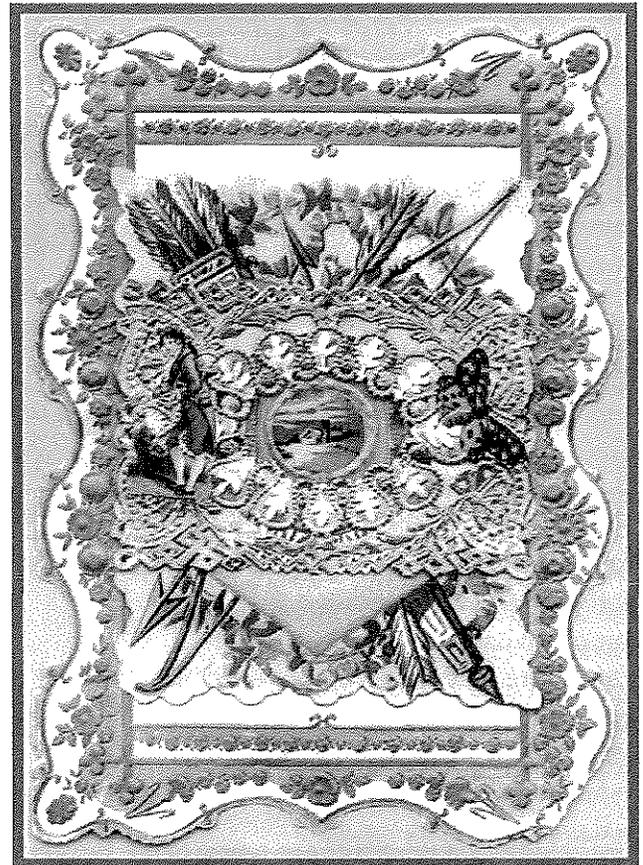
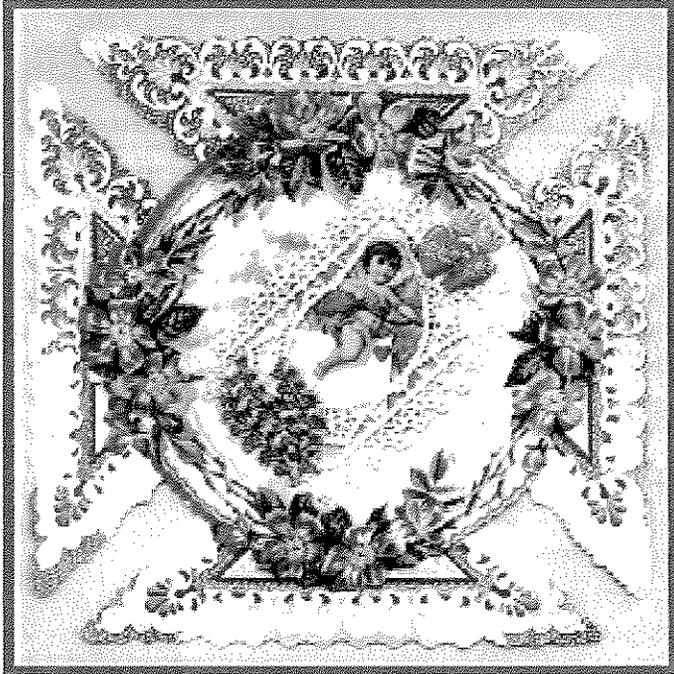
While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial—which probably occurred around 270 AD—others claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to "Christianize" celebrations of the pagan Lupercalia festival in ancient Rome. February was the official beginning of spring and was considered a time for purification. Houses were ritually cleansed by sweeping them out and then sprinkling salt and a type of wheat called spelt throughout their interiors. Lupercalia, which began at the ides of February, February 15 was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus. To begin the festival, members of the Luperci, an order of Roman priests would gather at the sacred cave where the infants Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests would then sacrifice a goat, for fertility, and a dog for purification. The boys then sliced the goat's hide into strips, dipped them in the sacrificial blood and took to the streets, gently slapping both women and fields of crops with the goat-hide strips. Far from being fearful, Roman women welcomed being touched with the hides because it was believed the strips would make them more fertile in the coming year. Later in the day, according to legend, all the young women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The city's bachelors would then each choose a name out of the urn and become paired for the year with the chosen woman. These matches often ended in marriage. Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D. The Roman "lottery" system for romantic pairing was deemed un-Christian and outlawed. Later, during the middle ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that it should be a day for romance. The oldest known valentine still in existence today was a poem written by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt. The greeting, which was written in 1415, is part of the manuscript collection of the British Library in London, England. Several years later, it is believed that King Henry V hired a writer named John Lydgate to compose a valentine note to Catherine of Valois.

The 1st commercial Valentine's Day greeting cards produced in the US were created in the 1840's by Esther A. Howland. She then began to sell the first mass-produced valentines in America. Known as the 'Mother of the Valentine', Esther made elaborate creations with red lace, ribbons and colorful pictures known as "scrap".

According to the Greeting Card Assoc., an estimated 1 billion valentine cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the 2nd largest card-sending holiday of the year (An estimated 2.6 billion cards are sent for Christmas.) Approximately 85 % of all valentines are purchased by women. In addition to the US, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the UK, France and Australia.



Haply this little simple page,
 Which I with love now send to thee,
 Maynow and then a look engage,
 And steal a moment's thought for me.
 But, oh! In pity let not those,
 Whose hearts are not of gentle mould,
 Let not the eye that seldom flows,
 With feeling tear, my song behold.

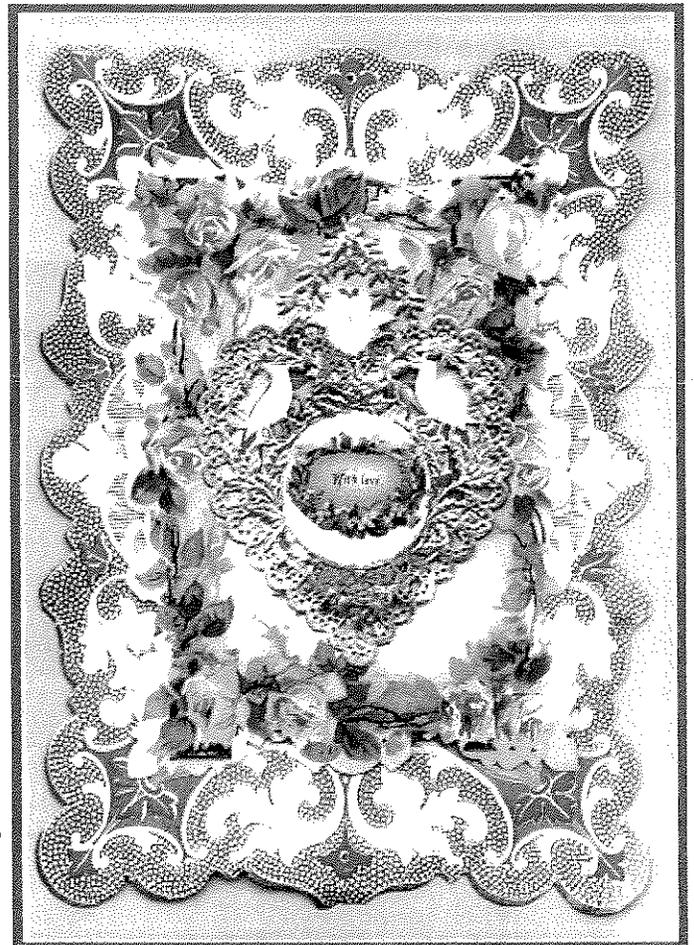


Never, oh! never, while life is mine,
 Will I repent that my heart is thine;
 The chain that binds us in one sweetlie,
 Will growbut the brighter as years go by.

*These valentines,
 from 1894 and 1897, were
 submitted by Sylvia Mattern Biebel.
 inside verse is next to card*

IF YOU LOVE ME, TELL ME SO!

Roses are not always blooming, but the winter comes anon,
 Sunbeams are not ever-shining, yet the clouds oft make day wan:
 And if Love can give us pleasure, its existence we should know:
 So through cloudy days and sunny, if you love me, tell me so!
 Tho' the flowers may be blooming, yet the breast may still be sad,
 Tho' the sun be sweetly shining, yet the heart may not be glad:
 And if love is all we deem it, its existence we should know -
 So through flowery ways or barren, if you love me tell me so!



Mark your calendars for April and May events:

April 12 – 7:00 Nancy Barker will be presenting an interesting evening regarding the history of the Brin & Valley Theatres. This meeting will be held at the Resource ctr./mini-museum located in the Memorial Bldg on Keyes Street across from Smith Park. For those newer members this will be your chance to view our newly renovated displays, pictures, and artifacts and appreciate where your organization's volunteers are actively working every week.

May 10 – "Ring World"- to be presented at the Barlow Planetarium on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley, Midway Rd., Menasha. Our discounted cost will be \$4/person (collected upon arrival). Prior to the 1:00 p.m. program we will meet for lunch at Michaels Bar & Grill, Appleton Rd. at 11:00 a.m. A tour of the new Communications Arts Center will follow the Planetarium program. The Weis Earth Science Museum is also open for viewing.

HOW MANY DO YOU REMEMBER?

Head light dimmer switches on the floor
Ignition switches on the dashboard
Heaters mounted on the inside of the fire wall
Small fans on dashboard in hot weather
Using hand signals when turning
Ice boxes with no electricity
Ice delivered to your home
Metal ice trays with handle for loosening cubes
Live telephone operators you gave the number to
Party lines
4 digit telephone numbers
S & H green stamps
Mimeograph machines and mimeograph paper
Dictaphones
Manual typewriters

Electric typewriters
Shorthand
Roller skate keys
Blue flashbulbs
45 & 78 RPM records
Phonograph

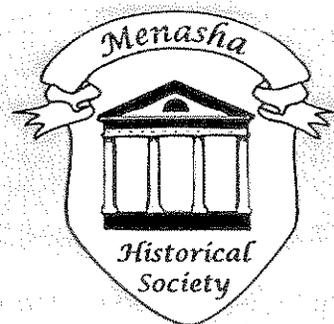
SCORING:

75% correct – "older than dirt"
25-50% "rounding the top of the hill"
If you get only a few correct, you're a
"whippersnapper"!!

(Although I think I am "so much younger" I really do remember all of them from the "good old days")

RESOURCE CENTER & MUSEUM

(Located at 640 Keyes Street)
P.O. Box 255
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menashahistorical@yahoo.com
www.menashahistorical.webs.com



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