

Valentine's Day

The Saint Wouldn't Recognize His Day

By TERRANCE J. BRENNAN

February 14th. St. Valentine's Day.

For weeks prior to this day devout lovers scurry about the shops in search of beautifully decorated greeting cards, festively wrapped boxes of candy and, of course, that famous flower... the rose.

But why? Why would anybody want to celebrate a day that means absolutely nothing to its namesake?

History speaks for itself. There was a priest back in Rome who was beheaded in the year 269 A.D. This priest was martyred under a Roman ruler Claudius the Goth. The feast day for St. Valentine is today, Feb. 14 the anniversary of his death.

Various legends have come down to us concerning Valentine. It is said that he was in prison, and while there, he cured the

jailer's daughter of blindness. The jailer became a convert to Christianity and this infuriated Claudius so much that he ordered Valentine put to death.

Another story, in an attempt to associate him more closely with St. Valentine's Day, has him falling in love with the jailer's daughter and sending her a letter which he signed, "From your Valentine".

In the search for the real origin of St. Valentine's Day, historians and writers have traced back to the pagan days of ancient Rome. An annual festival date was Lupercalia, honoring Lupercus, a fertility god. Lupercalia established a custom of young men and women drawing names from an urn or bowl to learn who their "valentine" was for the year to come. This event always occurred during February. Since the 14th of that month was

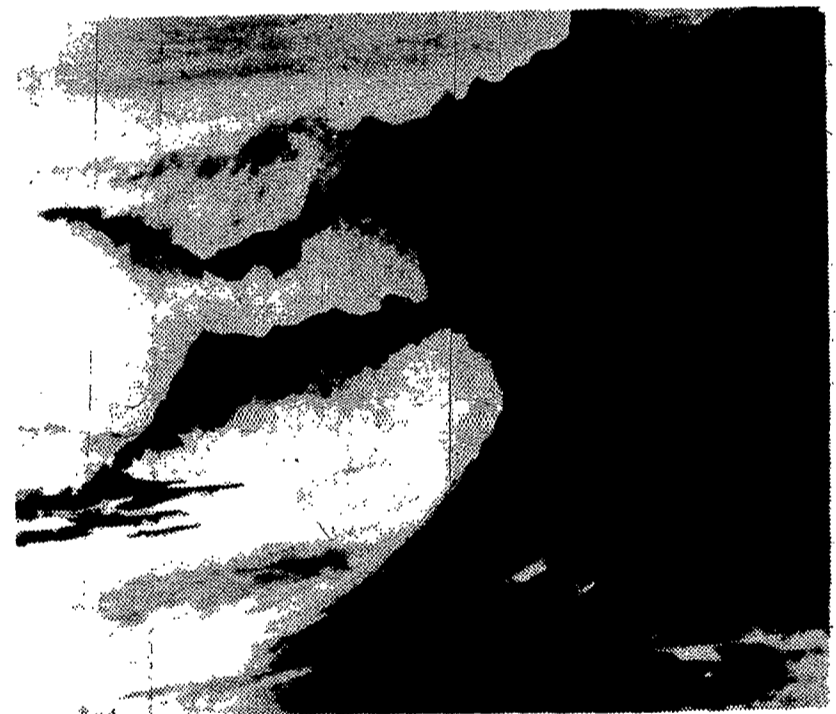
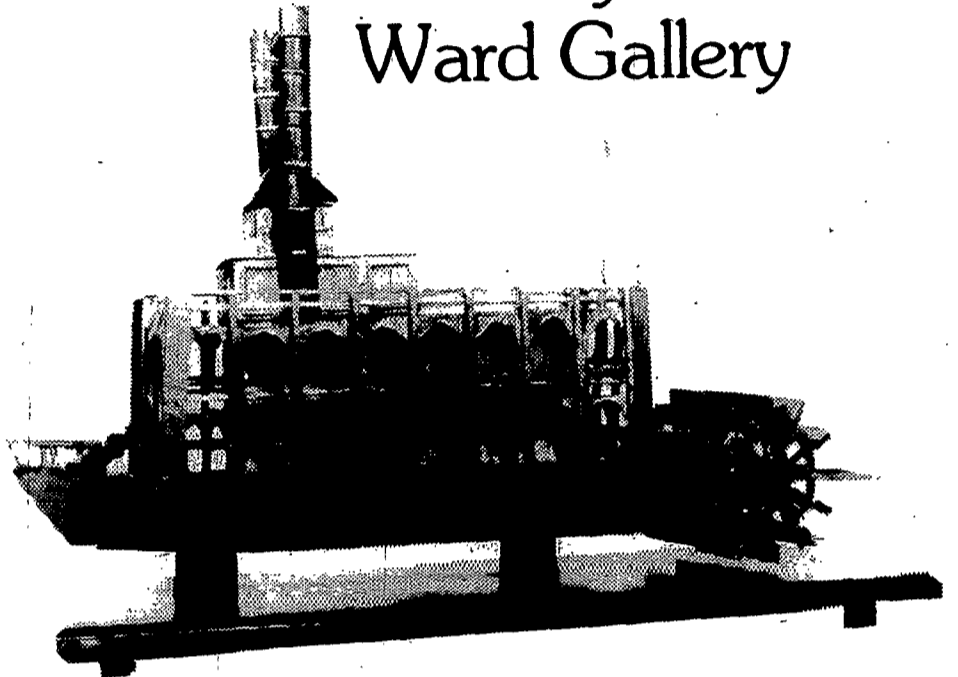
named in honor of St. Valentine, it is possible that with the spread of Christianity the drawings took place on that day.

The Church adapted pagan custom to its own uses. Therefore, at one time Christian lovers drew the names of Saints and for a year were supposed to be under the protection of that particular saint. Incidentally, this custom is not dead and is still observed in some religious orders.

In the Middle Ages throughout Europe, there was a belief that birds mated on Feb. 14. The belief that birds chose their mates on this day led to the idea that boys and girls would do the same.

Many words have been written on the subject but beyond the adoption of the date of St. Valentine's martyrdom, the holy man had literally nothing to do with the matter of sending love messages on this day.

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Photo by Susan McKinney

Scouts Decorated

Boy Scouts and Explorers in the diocese received religious awards Sunday at Christ the King from the hands of Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, who celebrated a special Mass for them. Because their parish was host for the event, the Cub Scouts of Pack 233 were given the Parvuli Dei award. Pictured here admiring Anthony Brach's Pope Pius XII decoration are Cubs Louis Alaimo, James Chodak, Todd Farnen, Michael Julian, Michael Moorhead, Jeffrey Rahn, Christopher Staub, John Sullivan and Steven Zlotkus.

Hospital Receives \$94,000

A check for \$94,000 was presented to Sister Ann William Bradley, DC, executive director of St. Mary's Hospital, by the Women's Board and Seton Branches last week during Seton Appreciation Dinner.

The money will be used in the hospital's Neuroscience Unit, soon to open.

In accepting the check Sister Ann said, "It is difficult for me to tell you how

grateful the hospital is for your hard work, your caring and your love. Your unselfish giving of yourselves enables us to carry on the work of the hospital in caring for the people in our city."

The funds were raised during the year through a number of special programs. These include the Seton Sale, directed by Mrs. Francis Kenny; Seton Ball, directed by Mrs. Theodore MacDonald; Seton Tour of Homes, headed

by Mrs. Raymond Salamone; Seton Luncheon and fashion Show, chaired by Mrs. Joseph Hammele.

Other projects such as The Marillas Gift Shop, at the hospital, headed by Mrs. Richard Mack; the Seton Next-to-New Shop, run by Mrs. William Brunson; the Women's Board Memorial Fund and scholarship fund also contributed to the total, the highest amount raised by the volunteers.