

Make it Special

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 A.D. — 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 goathide 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 his 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, dur-

ing 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 the middle of February — Valentine's Day — 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.

Charlinda
Bakery • Chocolates

Gifts for all ages
Always made fresh on the premises

This Valentines give them the Finest!

A taste beyond compare!

Special Extended Valentine Hours
Feb 10th to 13th - 10am to 6pm
Feb. 14th - 9am to 7pm
Thereafter
Tues to Thur - 11am to 5pm
Fri/Sat - 10am to 6pm

(905) 640-8089
www.charlinda.com

14811 - 9th Line, Stouffville

HANSON'S
FAMILY RESTAURANT
Chinese - Italian

You are cordially invited
to join us in our
Elegantly Decorated Dining Room
for our
20th Anniversary

Free Rose for all the Ladies on Valentine's Day

Dine-in or Take-out Reservations

3721 Aurora Rd. 905-888-1818
(Southwest Corner Kennedy & Aurora Rds)

FAME
salon & spa

It's all about You!

We have the facilities to make your Valentine "feel very special"

- Win an "Ultimate Escape" at The Spa. Value \$275.00
- With any purchase of a Gift Certificate or any Aveda Gift Basket of products!

For more information visit us at www.famesalonspa.com

Stouffville Plaza
905-640-2299
5892 Main Street Stouffville, Ontario

MON	9am-6pm
TUES	9am-9pm
WED	9am-9pm
THUR	9am-9pm
FRI	9am-6pm
SAT	9am-6pm

The Lion
Pub & Restaurant

The Lion of Stouffville invites you to join us for
Valentine's Day Dinner
Wednesday, February 14

Enjoy our Special Valentine's Menu in a Warm & Relaxed Dining Atmosphere

Regular Menu also Available

CALL FOR RESERVATIONS TODAY
5917 Main St. Stouffville
905.642.1344