

Happy Valentine's Day!

There are a few interesting tales about the origins of St. Valentine's Day. For example, some say that St. Valentine was a priest who secretly performed weddings for young lovers after Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriages for all his soldiers. Others will tell you that the Christian church simply used St. Valentine's feast day as an alternative to the pagan celebration of Lupercalia. Lupercalia was a fertility festival celebrated at the Ides of February. All the young women in a city would place their names in a big urn, and all the town's bachelors would draw the name of someone to be paired with for the year. The feast name changed, but the notion of courtship endured. In any case, Valentine's Day has always been about love and romance.

There are more than a few interesting stories about love and romance among the Destin Snowbirds.



Take Jerry and Flo Reckman from Michigan, for example. Jerry decided to join the military right out of high school. Even though he was army, he was assigned to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, where Flo happened to be working. Now, they are celebrating 52 years of wedded bliss. After a 26-year career in communications with the army, Jerry retired to Colorado to start a new career with AT&T. While there, Flo joined the Defense Department where she worked for 13 years. After both retired, they traveled extensively throughout this country and beyond, finally settling in Michigan. It was their daughter who suggested Destin, Florida as the perfect place to escape the north's bitter cold, and their new Destin neighbors, Brenda, and Dick Murphy, who invited them to join the snowbird club. They are first-time members and are looking forward to meeting new friends and engaging in all that the club has to offer.

Then, there is Renee and Larry Groom. They met the old-fashioned way – in a bar. Actually, it was a night club that Larry's uncle owned in New York. He caught a glimpse of Renee and asked her to dance, and now, they will be celebrating their 43rd wedding anniversary on Thursday, February 17. Larry was also a military man. He became familiar with the Destin area while stationed at Hurlburt Air Force Base. One of our vendors told them about the Destin snowbird club, and they have been members for the past four years. Renee also supports the club as a vendor and donates samplings of her Avon products as door prizes at every Tuesday morning meeting.





David Sandeen and Sandy Paden of Pennsylvania were high school sweethearts. David made the mistake of asking another girl out for a date, then wound up getting into a car accident with her. When Sandy heard the news - after learning that he was ok - she broke-up with him. For the next 50 years, she wanted nothing to do with him. They both settled down in the same vicinity but with different partners. David was a single man again when he heard that Sandy was caring for her ailing husband, and he reached out with words of encouragement. Eventually, they reunited.

"I called her when her husband died to offer my condolences," David said, "and she spent the first ten minutes of our conversation chastising me for taking another girl out in high school." Then they spent the next

three hours on the phone "catching-up." Now, together again, they are enjoying the Emerald Coast and Destin snowbird activities like Harbor Party cruises and Friday fish fries.

There are so many more wonderful stories. And, since pictures are worth a thousand words, I hope to illustrate many of them with pictures from the annual Valentine's Dinner Dance being held this Monday, February 14 at Lucille's Kitchen in Seascape.

If you were unable to secure tickets to Monday's sold-out dance, you can still kick up your heels on Tuesday, February 15, at the final T.G.I.T. (Thank Goodness It's Tuesday) party at Lulu's. Snowbird favorite Bobby D will be the entertainer. He will also serenade Tuesday morning's gathering at 10 a.m. in the Roost.

Speaking of the Tuesday morning meeting, nominations will be taken for positions of the snowbird board of directors. If you, or someone you know, would like to be involved, be sure to attend and submit your, or their name. While there, you will be able to purchase tickets for storage space and sign up for some of the remaining golf outings.

The Singles Friendship Club will meet for lunch at the Indian Bayou Golf and Country Club after the meeting.

Also, those who like to make plans, in advance, may want to mark their calendars for a January 21-26, 2023, Carnival Sensation Cruise. Past president Don Cooksey will chair the event, and more information will be forthcoming.

Finally, I need to correct a typo from last Saturday's article. On the photo of the Can/Am Cup, I said this year's Cup would be held on Thursday, February 27. I meant to say that it will be held on Thursday, February 17.