

The Merrill Gazette

Special Edition—March 2017



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History's Mysteries by Zoe Coffman

Valentine's Day. When you think about Valentine's, you think of a holiday filled with love, like something out of a movie. But Valentine's Day is not as loving as it seems. After all, blood has been shed on this day of love.

Valentine's Day was named after Saint Valentine. There have been many St. Valentines that the holiday could be named after. One thing in common between all the saints is that all their stories have unfortunate endings. Whether they were imprisoned for performing illegal marriages for young lovers or were killed in prison, the stories always end in death.

If you did not think the last paragraph sounded like something out of a movie, you can't deny that this next story reads like a blockbuster script.

The story starts in Chicago, in the year 1920. The opposing forces are two gangs; the all-powerful Al Capone gang, and its enemy the Irish gang. Both gangs were known for bootlegging, or illegal sale of alcohol during the prohibition era. On Valentine's Day, their rivalry came to a bloody conclusion. Known as the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, 7 members of the Irish gang were shot in the back by fake police officers, that were known to be a part of the Al Capone gang.

While the history is dark, this day of love is what you make of it. But, while you enjoy your candy hearts, remember the broken hearts throughout history on this day of love!

Gardening Tips and Tricks for 2017

by Araceli Munoz

Gardening is upon us! Now is the time for people to start their gardening journey! As gardening may be a fun thing, it isn't easy to maintain a healthy garden. Read these tips and tricks from HGTV to help make YOUR new garden thrive successfully.

- ❖ To prevent accumulating dirt under your fingernails while you work in the garden, draw your fingernails across a bar of soap and you'll effectively seal the undersides of your nails so dirt can't collect beneath them. Then, after you've finished in the garden, use a nailbrush to remove the soap and your nails will be sparkling clean.
- ❖ Little clay pots make great covers for protecting young plants from sudden, overnight frosts and freezes.
- ❖ To create perfectly natural markers, write the names of plants (using a permanent marker) on the flat faces of stones of various sizes and place them at or near the base of your plants.
- ❖ The next time you boil or steam vegetables, don't pour the water down the drain, use it to water potted patio plants, and you'll be amazed at how the plants respond to the "vegetable soup."
- ❖ Use leftover tea and coffee grounds to acidify the soil of acid-loving plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, gardenias and even blueberries. A light sprinkling of about one-quarter of an inch applied once a month will keep the pH of the soil on the acidic side.
- ❖ Use chamomile tea to control damping-off fungus, which often attacks young seedlings quite suddenly. Just add a spot of tea to the soil around the base of seedlings once a week or use it as a foliar spray.
- ❖ The quickest way in the world to dry herbs: just lay a sheet of newspaper on the seat of your car, arrange the herbs in a single layer, then roll up the windows and close the doors. Your herbs will be quickly dried to perfection. What's more, your car will smell great.



Student Council Gathers HUGE Donation for Iowa Food Bank

by Olivia Marsh & Ana Munoz



FOODBANK
OF IOWA

The Merrill Middle School Student Council sponsored a school-wide food drive to help out the Iowa Food Bank. While boasting a contest among classes, this food drive reached for the stars to help out those in the metro and the state that are in need. The drive went for approximately one month. Merrill Gazette staff sat down with student council sponsor, Barry Thomas and student council member, Makenna Dempsey to learn more about this excellent act of service.

MG: What inspired the start of the food drive?

Mr. Thomas: Somebody from Merrill's student council had brought the idea up that we should start a food drive for all the grades to participate in.

MG: How much was your goal?

Mr. Thomas: We didn't decide on a goal, but we expected around twenty boxes. Yet, thankfully we received much more.

MG: How much did you achieve?

Mr. Thomas: Around 2,000 pounds of food.

MG: Whom did you donate to?

Mr. Thomas: The Food Bank of Iowa.

MG: Did you get a lot of the items the Food Bank was asking for?

Mr. Thomas: About fifty percent was good healthy foods and the other fifty percent was fatty or unhealthy foods. But food was food and we were very happy with what the students donated.

From Student Council member Makenna Dempsey:

MG: What inspired the food drive?

MD: Around the holidays they use up a vast majority of food, so we wanted to help out.

MG: How much was your goal?

MD: Around 1,000 items

MG: Did you get a lot of items the food bank was asking for?

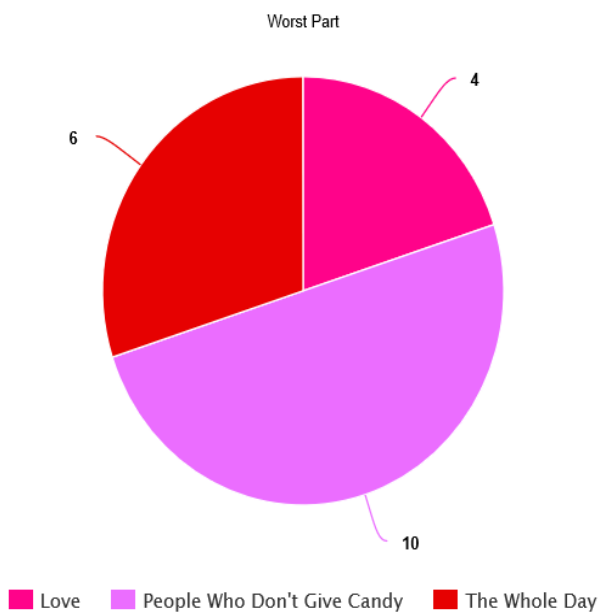
MD: We got a lot more than expected.

Mr. Thomas would like to thank the student council members for organizing such a great food drive, and that all the credit goes to them. A special thanks also goes out to all those who brought in food to make this project such a huge success!

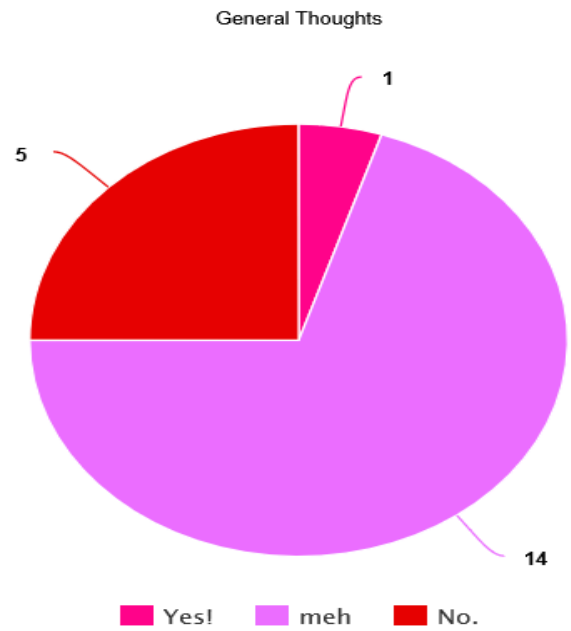
Valentine's "Day-Bate" by Phoebe Link

Valentine's Day. The strangest holiday. Hated by many; loved by many. People argue over its usefulness. Today, we answer the questions you have. It's the St. Valentine's "Day-Bate"! I surveyed many students and staff to gather the final verdict. Here it is.

So, the overall thought is meh. Not many people hate it, not many people love it. Most people at Merrill agree that the best part of this lovey-dovey holiday is in fact, the candy. Three people split the favoritism of the love and colors of the holiday.



The verdict is in. Valentine's day is meh, the candy is the best part, and if you don't give away candy or if you celebrate this holiday, you are in a small percentage. That's all to the great Saint Valentine's "Day-bate"!



Now, the easiest question for many... What is the worst part of St. Valentine's Day?

