

## An 11-month Year: The Art of Aging

*by Bob Taylor*

Some folks feel that February is a "nuthin" month (usually cold, windy and wet) and should be eliminated from the calendar. With dank and dreary weather in many parts of this great nation, February has many liabilities. On the other hand, it hosts Valentine's Day, a day that shall live in infamy, forever, in my memory.

"Why is that?" you may ask.

"Because when I was a little kid in kindergarten, and continuing through third and fourth grades, Valentine's Day broke my heart and destroyed my self image."

Each Valentine's Day there was a large box placed in the classroom in which everyone dropped Valentines. How many Valentines you got determined how popular you were among the other kids. The boy and girl with the most were declared King and Queen of their grade. I went home crying after the kindergarten Valentine party because I got no Valentines. At age 6, I was already a basket case, a prisoner of the feminine mystique and nobody loved me.

My wise mother told me, "Next year on Valentine's Day send a card to yourself." I took her advice and never drew another blank on the day of love, but I dreaded that day. I dreaded it because nearly all the girls were taller than I (still are) and the Valentines went to the tall, handsome boys--the jocks. (They still do.)

This was happening in the roaring 1920s, the decade of the Flapper, the Charleston and the Speakeasy, when everyone seemed wealthy and lawless. I missed it all because I was feeling sorry for myself. My self-pity was an attitude, and cost me many happy days until I learned attitudes can be changed ... at any age.

The mental and emotional destruction never stopped until I quit school, got a job in 1934. Because jobs were scarce, I had money when no one else did. Money was almost as good as being tall, except I had to wait for payday to have it. The tall kids waited for nothing to be tall. They were always tall.

Now, I think Valentine's Day helps make February seem much less dank and dreary because it is a day that expresses love. Love can change attitudes at 6 or 60. So we shall keep a 12-month year and include February in it. Remember - patience, understanding, courtesy, and kindness can change February into June. And a new attitude can make it happen. Life is good!