

Valentine's Day

By Hap Hansen

Valentine's Day was a very popular occasion when I was a kid. I hope it still is for kids as well as for us adults. Even though there was still snow on the ground back then, and more to come, winter was beginning to lose its icy grip. The long icicles were beginning to shorten, especially on the south side of the house. Teachers seemed to ease up on students around Valentine's Day. Perhaps they were ready for a day's entertainment as the long winter slowly turned to spring. Or perhaps they knew that semester's end was in sight, as they contemplated having a whole summer of relaxing without the constancy of screaming, racing kids.

There was a problem then on Valentine's Day. The popular, good-looking, or athletic boys and girls always got piles of cards, usually from every class member. Those of us who were pretty standard fare, with average looks or abilities, generally received a card or two, and sometimes no card at all. Part of it, of course, was that many of us couldn't afford to buy cards for every class member, so we had to pick and choose the kids we wanted to impress. And the kids we most wanted to impress were the most popular, good-looking or athletic. Many of our teachers then, and I'm sure now, were way ahead of the popularity game. They knew which kids were going to get cards and which ones weren't. So they simply made up dozens of cards to give to those less fortunate. Those courtesy Valentine cards would be signed, "From Your Friend," "To A Neat Boy (or girl)," "From A Secret Admirer," or some other appropriate message. The whole class would be smiling, because everyone got cards.

This Valentine's Day, most of us adults may have given candy or a card to a loved one, then went to lunch or dinner and ended up watching a Valentine's special on TV. It was a particularly special day for me. I hope it was for you too.