

SPOTLIGHT ON Valentine's Day

By Clint Hamblin

Despite the speculation on the origins of Valentine's Day, there is no doubt that this ancient holiday of unknown derivation has come to represent the recognition and celebration of love between two people.

Remember the little odd-shaped Valentine's Day cards that were passed around when you were in elementary school? "Hey, Johnny got a valentine from Suzie," everyone giggled. Revealing budding romances to your third-grade peers was probably an embarrassing moment when you were 8 years old, but wasn't it

great to know that Suzie even knew your name?

Exchanging love missives may have been titillating when you were a kid, but as adults this holiday can be a great reason to strengthen your relationship and say once again, "I love you."



Iory Allison and Leo Romero

"Let the world stop turning. Let the sun stop burning. Let them tell me love's not worth going through. If it all falls apart, I will know deep in my heart, the only dream that mattered had come true: In this life I was loved by you." —Bette Midler

What could be more romantic than meeting your future spouse on the Champs Elysees in Paris? Ask Sophie and her husband Gui Lunardi who actually met at what has to be one of the most romantic locations in the world.

A very French Sophie Lunardi explained, "I was selling my car and agreed to meet a potential buyer on the Champs Elysees. Gui's father bought my car for his son and then his son and I became friends — very good friends. When he moved to Utah, we continued our long-distance romance but I was certain that I was absolutely not going to move from Paris to Utah." Sophie laughed, "After two years of long-distance phone calls, I moved to Utah to be with Gui, and after four years, he was offered a great job in Boston."



Sophie and Gui Lunardi

Sophie and Gui love living in the South End, and on Valentine's Day they take the mattress from their bed and drag it in front of the television in the living room. "We eat popcorn, pizza and French candy, and we watch one action movie and one romantic movie," Sophie said. "It's very romantic!"

"Love doesn't make the world go 'round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile." —Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Beacon Hill residents Melissa and John Capuano met while working for a Connecticut radio station 14 years ago. "We started dating, and then John moved away to work for a radio company in New York City," Melissa said. "We did the long-distance relationship thing and then decided to be together and move to Boston. We married and are celebrating our 10th anniversary."

Melissa continued, "John is really great about getting me a Valentine's Day card, but my birthday is the day before Valentine's Day so I was getting one present for two occasions."

"We worked it out and now we go to dinner on the 13th and on Valentine's Day, John cooks for me," Melissa continued, "With a name like Capuano, you know that we're really big into Italian food, and for me the really perfect dinner is John's linguini and white clam sauce." Melissa said it was the first dinner he ever made for her, "And on February 14th he makes it for me as he has every year for the past 10 years."

"Love is a fire. But whether it is going to warm your hearth or burn down your house, you can never tell." —Joan Crawford

Casa Romero has been serving lovers in their hideaway location in the Back Bay for more than 35 years. Fenway residents Leo Romero, owner of this romantic Mexican restaurant and his partner, Iory Allison are thrilled to celebrate their 31st anniversary together. Last year, this same sex couple took advantage of a change in the law enabling them to marry in Massachusetts.

"Our civil wedding took place on May 10, 2007," Iory explained, "And we always work the Casa Romero on Saint Valentine's Day, and then we leave the country." This year, Iory and Leo are celebrating their Valentine's Day in Guadalajara, Morelia and Patzcuaro, Mexico.

Whether you share popcorn and pizza, linguini and clams, or a simple enchilada, let your partner know how you feel. In the words of the great Nat King Cole from the song "Unforgettable:"

The greatest thing you'll ever learn Is to love and be loved in return.



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