

## Courtin' Customs

While the word "courtin'" has been relegated to grandmother's quaint vocabulary -- the ancient ritual still takes place in up-dated style.

Until recently, the family was usually in on the courtship in varying degrees. Family involvement and approval grew as civilizations became more and more structured.

At the dawn of civilization courtship probably lasted as long as a walk to the woods with a member of the opposite sex. Later men bought, or fought for or captured the women they wanted.

Later, families realizing that in a daughter they had a marketable commodity would arrange a marriage with the highest bidder. This reached its peak when the royal houses of England, France, Russia and Spain would promise their infant daughters in marriage to establish a strong liaison with a foreign power.

This was also a prevalent practice among the Eskimos and the people of New Caledonia and Tasmania.

Only in recent years have young women from Latin countries been free to meet their lovers without being accompanied by the ever-present duenna.

The giving of gifts is doubtless a carryover from the days when man's wealth was a significant factor in his eligibility.

While courtship gifts have run the gamut from livestock to diamonds (the American Indian brought horses to his intended), flowers have always had the edge in sentimental value.

The Greeks wore a flower as a sign of being engaged and the Polynesians wear flowers behind their ears to indicate they are in love.

When the old saw "hearts and flowers" became a part of the courtship scene, it signaled the beginning of choosing a mate for his or her intrinsic worth and physical appeal rather than material possessions.



## It's Leap Year

For women who want to follow an ancient tradition, this is the year they can propose to the man.

What better moment than Valentine's Day to take an aggressive role in shaping one's future life?

If the women don't do it this year, it will be 1976 before they'll again have historical sanction for the chase.

Leap Year comes every fourth year when the year number is equally divisible by four and an extra day is added to February. The year 200 will be a bonus Leap Year because not all century years divide by four.

Just how the woman's prerogative year happened to come about, no one is sure, but it's one of long standing.

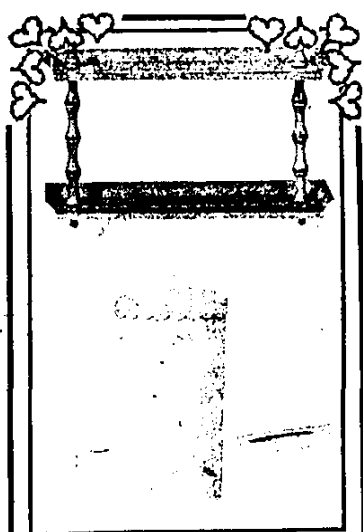
It was declared in Scotland in 1288 that if a maiden lady proposed to a man in Leap Year and he did not accept, he would be penalized--unless he could prove that he was already betrothed to another woman. Soon after, France passed a similar law and in the 15th century Genoa and Florence did likewise.

Imagine the panic that must have run through the male population in those ancient Leap Years! No wonder some men took to being hermits or joined sea-faring expeditions that committed them to several years aboard ship.

In the off years, women are allotted only one day, Sadie Hawkins Day, when they can pursue with society's blessing.

With over 300 days left in 1972, there's plenty of time available for the women to zero in on their chosen male target.

"Love and you shall be loved. -- All love is mathematically just, as much as the two sides of an algebraic equation." Emerson



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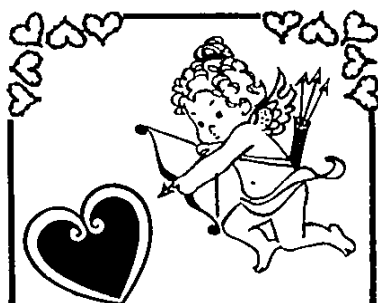
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