

# Love:

*It's almost Valentine's Day — the one day we wonder when we'll love and who we will love, the time to remember not only our own past romances, but those we idolized either on the silver screen or through fan magazines. It's also that one day when even the most unsuspecting might open their mail and happily find that somebody loves them.*

## It knows no age

By **SHELLEY EICHENHORN**

Cupid doesn't seem to pay much attention to age when he shoots his amorous arrows, and those stricken with love for someone a lot older or younger haven't seemed to mind very much.

Ever since Oedipus married his mother and Electra got a crush on her dad, young men have been falling for older women, and young women have been falling in love with older men.

In fact, May-December romances may have inspired immortal drama, great poetry and religious revivals.

The English church might still be Catholic if it weren't for May-December marriage.

Just think how dull British history would be if Henry VIII wasn't forced to marry his older brother's widow at age 18. When the young king spotted the fair Anne Boleyn, he lost his head, and later, so did she.

King Henry pronounced himself divorced from older Queen Catharine against the Pope's orders. So, Henry started his own church, England got the Anglican Church and Henry got Anne, 14 years younger than he.

**FAMOUS AUTHORS** as well as famous kings have been inspired by May-December brides. At 26, eccentric Edgar Allan Poe married his cousin Virginia Clemm who was not yet 14. She died 10 years later and Poe's "Annabel Lee" may have been inspired by Virginia's early death.

Today, age still seems to be no barrier to love. At 68, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas married his bride Catherine, 45 years younger than he.

U.S. Sen. Strom Thurmond also took a young bride in her early 20s when he was in his late 60s. Thur-

mond and wife Nancy have just had their third child.

**YOUNG MEN** also don't seem to squirm at the thought of marrying someone more than 60 years their senior. Twenty-nine-year-old Michael Wilson, a con-artist, has given serious thought lately to marrying Pennsylvania millionaire Rachel Fidler. Miss Fidler is 77.

The list of famous and infamous May-December romances goes on and on. But, you don't have to be rich or famous to love someone who's almost old enough to be your father, or mother.

In fact, that's just what Pat Koontz did in August. "I was 19 and Gary was nearly 40," Mrs. Koontz said.

"We were working together at Michigan Life-National Casualty Co. in Southfield. For some strange reason, Gary asked me out and I went."

On the first date, Koontz brought his 13-year-old son Tracy along. Koontz has custody of his son from a previous marriage.

"**THE THREE** of us went bowling and we had a great time," Mrs. Koontz said. That was in March and by June, they were talking about marriage. In August, Pat and Gary and Tracy began a family.

Mrs. Koontz says she used to think about the age difference, but now it doesn't matter.

"I don't care how old Gary is because I really love him."

The Koontzes want to have children, but Mrs. Koontz still thinks she's too young. "We're going to wait till Tracy graduates from high school and goes to college before we start a family," she said.

Koontz said when he first began dating Pat, he told her he'd never marry her. "But, I loved her so much, I just couldn't help it."

**IF YOU'RE** shaking your head and thinking about all the theory you learn in psychology 101 hold on. According to Prof. Boaz Kahana, psychology department chairman at Oakland University, if the two people are happy, what's the difference?

"There are a lot of theoretical statements about the partners not resolving their Oedipal and Electra complexes and all that."

Even if there is some strong longing for a father or mother figure, Kahana says, "To hell with theory."

Not only that, the psychology professor thinks that a marriage where the woman is about five years older than the man just might be better. "We know women live three to five years longer than men," he said.

"Usually the husband is three to five years older than the wife. This leaves her with between six to 10 years of widowhood to look forward to," Kahana said.

He thinks if women were older than their mates, the problem could be solved. "I think it would be a definite contribution to getting rid of periods of extended loneliness."

**ONE WIFE** who agrees with Kahana 100 per cent is Anita Katz of Troy. "I met Harold when I was 41 and he was 36."

"Two weeks later, we decided to get married," Mrs. Katz explained. "We didn't worry about the age difference at all."

"My four children and Harold's two sons from previous marriages were very happy."

Eight years later, the happiness hasn't faded. "It was a matter of love at first sight," Katz said. "We look forward to growing old together. We have everything in common."



Young, soda-tipping lovers portrayed by Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland

## It sells—real or not

By **LINDA TAYLOR**

"Do you believe in magic? Do you believe in love?" The lyrics may come from Nashville but the thought comes from Hollywood.

People believe in love, even when it doesn't exist, and the box office promoters and fan magazines have played on the sentiment for years.

Remember back in the Mouse-teer days when sweet little Annette was teamed with Spin (portrayed by skinny Tim Considine) in the "Spin and Marty" episodes? Even 10-year-olds could identify with puppy love between those two.

Later, Hollywood took advantage of Annette's sex appeal to link her romantically with best sellers Paul Anka, Frankie Avalon and Fabian, those heart throbs from the "Beach Blanket" era.

**THE FAN** magazines admitted the love really didn't have to exist; the fan just had to think it did, and actors went along for the publicity ride.

Take the Connie Stevens-Troy Donahue "romance" that existed in the minds of the fan magazine readers, if never for real. What people saw on the screen, they wanted to think existed off screen too. The magazines obliged and "love" was created.

Perhaps the best known magazine for screen romances was Con-

fidential, forerunner to the change in the magazine approach with the advent of television in the 50s.

Show biz has also been known to cover up true romance for the sake of the "image." Remember when Bobby Sherman fans were heart-broken with the announcement that he was married?

**AND THE** squelching of love and marriage wasn't limited to American stars. Remember when the Beatles first made it big outside Liverpool? Who knew that John Lennon was not only married but the father of a child?

It was months before publicity agents finally let the truth be known to the screaming fans who would have given their left ear to even touch the man. How could a father be a rock star? Then what a stir when Lennon (later divorced from wife Cynthia) and Yoko Ono hit the heart-throb scene? Big time.

Love sells. It sells records, movie fan magazines and images. How many box office winners did Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton produce before the demise of their relationship? Same for Jeanne Woodward and Paul Newman, except for the fact that their marriage survived Hollywood.

And remember the Luci-Desi days? Man and wife working together — the viewer could just pic-

ture them at home doing the same zany things.

**HEART THROBS**, whether for real or just make believe, have made fortunes for the opportunists who can spot the sex appeal of an Al McGraw or realize the greater market for a Rita Coolidge-Kris Kristofferson combo? So what if it really worked.

Hollywood created love and reportedly, during the days of the big silver screen tyrants who ran their studios and their stars with an iron fist, destroyed loves that were a threat for a budding star.

The love game is still played. In recent television seasons, look what crowds Sonny and Cher drew with their husband-and-wife "true love" between a short Italian and talk, skinny Indian.

Then tap it ended, shows were cancelled and a heart throb love was severed. Fans could only turn to the magazines on the supermarket and drug store racks in their search for "What really happened to Sonny and Cher?" "Was it over long ago?" and "Who's Cher's new love?"

The thrill of it all will surely pass along to another team of starchy heart throbs. For the lonely, the bored, the star-struck, Hollywood gossip columnists and photographers keep the heart throb syndrome alive — and selling.

## It nurtures myths

By **CHRISTINE WALDEN**

Matters of the heart are difficult at best. Hard to get and even harder to maintain is that certain heart throb that makes the world rosy and life a breeze. And if love doesn't conquer all, we at least try to conquer love.

In that quest there have been many success stories. The Duke of Windsor and his lady lasted long after he bucked royal laws to take her hand. George Burns and Gracie Allen were hits not only in humor but in marriage. And what about the whimsical, inevitable screen romance between Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers . . . a match that kept audiences and itself going for years.

But if duration is a measure of love, there were also a great many failures. Those romances remembered with fondness, were often short-lived though passionate. Romeo and Juliet blew it, yet what greater love was there between the young and innocent. Or what of Fanny Brice and Nick Arnstein, a romance suddenly the victim of an ill-stacked deck. And of course, there is the tragic love between F. Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda that not only destroyed itself but the lovers.

By one love works and another fails is undetermined. On the screen, unrequited or tragic love brought tears and money and so in a two hour span, couples loved, hated and loved again.

**NOWADAYS** THE trappings of courting have been removed and lovers individuals play a pretty much hit-and-miss game. Being in the right place at the right time seems to be the formula for starting a long and happy relationship. Occasionally a friend comes up with a decent blind date.

But long ago, men and women found courting a bit easier and the future more clearly determined.

In fact, had their tactics been used by those such as Virginia Woolf and or Scarlet O'Hara, who knows what may have happened.

The existence of love lore described the magical formula to finding, conquering and marrying a mate. And years ago, following those rules was quite possibly as vigorous as following horoscopes and Ann Landers.

"The Folklore of Love and Courtship" edited by Duncan Emrich lists a wealth of myths by which fair young maidens and knights on white horses found love.

**THE BOOK** offers the answer to the first step in love conquering: who to conquer.

Simply, all a maiden must do is run around the house three times and on the third round, her husband will appear before her.

If that doesn't work, but there is someone in mind, two apples, named for two beaus and placed on the eyelids, can determine who to pursue. Once seeds are securely in place, blink. The one that falls off bears the name of the husband-to-be.

If there are more than two men on the horizon, take the following steps, but only if you are spending the night in a strange room. (Presumably a nap would work since the waking is more important than the sleeping.)

Name four corners of the room after each sweetheart. The first corner you look at upon waking will be named after the man you will marry.

**ONCE IT** is established who shall be your mate, you can then proceed to convince him of your intentions.

This may be difficult, but there are devices. Swallowing a raw white dove's heart can help. While swallowing, place your hand on the shoulder of

the one in whom love is to be inspired.

Or a few heart leaves, dried before a fire, ground into dust and sprinkled on the clothing of a potential sweetheart will make any individual mad about you, according to folklore.

If all else fails, a glass of beer, cider or lemonade presented to the object of your affection and into which a ground fingernail has been placed, is said to be sure to turn an unamorous individual into a tiger.

Men may secure a girl's love by pulling a hair from her head.

**TO DETERMINE** the success or failure of pulled hair or a raw dove's heart, chants seem to be the best method.

There is the traditional and still used "He loves me, he loves me not" routine performed on a datay.

For diversity try the yarrow-up-the-nose trick.

Pick a sprig of yarrow, put the stem up your nose and say "Yarrow, yarrow if he loves me and I love he, a drop of blood I wish to see." If blood appears, you are loved.

Marriage dates can also be approximately determined, according to folklore. Running around the block with a mouthful of water means you'll be married within the year. So does falling up a flight of steps, the closer to the top, the sooner the wedding. And accidentally stepping on a cat's tail is said not only to bring a screech but wedding bells.

There are, of course, no historical records to prove the validity of such myths. Indeed, it's hard to believe that a dove's heart could lead to love.

But as now, individuals were often willing to perform stunts, follow formulas and conjure concoctions to become the object of someone's affection.



Richard Burton and Liz Taylor loved and lost on the screen and off