

Splurge on a romantic bauble



Denise Rodgers

There was a time when a box of chocolates or maybe a dozen long-stemmed roses more than sufficed on Valentine's Day.

Today, these gifts, although sweet and romantic, are very predictable.

Times have changed. The stock market is flying high with the sweet smell of "dot com" futures, and consumers are feeling heady with success.

And with a seemingly unending good economy in charge, I think Valentine's Day has become a much more interesting tradition.

In fact, jewelers across the country have been reporting increased Valentine's Day sales every year for a while now.

No longer are men opting for gifts priced \$200 or less; they're making major purchases for their loved ones, say the jewelers.

At this rate, Valentine's Day could rival Mother's Day as the second best jewelry-buying holiday after Christmas.

Does this news leave you stunned and worried about what's appropriate to give on Valentine's Day?

Well, no need to panic. Diamond supplier DeBeers has been working overtime to create a list of gifts for a variety of pocketbooks and preferences. It includes their three-diamond anniversary ring with a center stone that is said to be at least a half carat in size. Hey, why not? Go for it!

However, such a set-up isn't just material; the ring's three stones symbolize the past, present and future of marriage.

But don't confuse this ring with DeBeers' diamond anniversary band, which is a thin wedding band set with diamonds either all the way around or halfway across the top.

When the anniversary band was first introduced, it was recommended for the 10th wedding anniversary. However, DeBeers has gotten wise to the fact that there are all sorts of reasons and times to buy diamonds and abandoned official milestones for the ring. So, put the anniversary band on your Valentine's Day list, too?

Then again, if it were up to DeBeers, every woman on the planet would be wearing an engagement ring of a carat or more, along with the anniversary band, on the left hand. Plus a three-diamond anniversary ring on the right hand.

But don't forget about DeBeers' 25th anniversary pendant with five bezel-set diamonds (it's almost worth the wait!). Then add a pair of diamond-stud earrings, a basic necessity, and DeBeers version of an ideal woman really starts to make perfect sense.

Get going

Valentine's Day is only a week away. So, if you have yet to run out and buy your special someone a bauble or two, get moving.

But, remember, you don't have to buy diamonds. There's no doubt they'll be appreciated, but they're not mandatory or, for that matter, expected by most sweethearts.

Heart-shaped pendants and lockets are a classic on Valentine's Day. And, a locket with your tiny heart-shaped picture inside shows a lot of thought.

Because Valentine's Day happens in February, another choice you'll find in abundance in your jeweler's showcase or on your jeweler's web site is the month's birthstone, amethyst.

A beautiful violet-colored stone, amethysts are still one of the best buys around, especially when they're plentiful.

Even if she doesn't have a February birthday, amethyst jewelry is gift most women will wear time and again.

But, if you think enough is enough and prefer to resort to flowers or chocolate, keep in mind flowers fade and chocolate, well, we all know where chocolate goes.

Just keep in mind jewelry can be cheaper than a health club membership — and a whole lot more fun!

Send your questions to The Jewelry Lady by e-mail, rodder@crich.com, fax, (248) 882-8223, or mail, c/o The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, Mich. 48009.

My Funny Valentine

LOVE, SURE, BUT WHY SO SERIOUS?

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
SPECIAL REPORT
<http://www.theobserver.com>

All the usual goodies — heart-shaped pendant necklaces, red boxes of delicious chocolates, gold-dipped roses and dinners-for-two — are available for giving this Valentine's Day.

But at least a few retailers are offering playful knock-knocks that poke fun at our obsession with love that may even help those of us who are flying solo on Valentine's Day.

"They're like love tranquilizers," said area comic Karen Bell-Brege, of Northville. "A

stress reliever for the addiction of love.

And, like with anything else in life, humor usually works wonders, said Bell-Brege, one of the founders of Totally Unrehearsed Theatre which performs at Mark Ridley's Comedy Caste in Royal Oak.

"When people get into relationships, they take it so seriously," she said. "But, if we take things too seriously, we get in knots and it just doesn't work."

So, products like "Jilted Lots-Of-Love" body lotion, \$9.95 at Aetheria in Farmdale, and Starbucks "Who Will My Lover Be?" game are a good thing, said Bell-Brege.

For a friend whose single or not having luck finding love, a fun gift like might lighten the mood on Valentine's Day. "For that moment they can laugh and say it's okay. Don't you think

that when you lighten up that's when the good stuff happens?"

Birmingham marital and family therapist Bunny Miller-Shaw couldn't agree more.

"The more sense of humor, the more of life you enjoy, the more attractive you are to other people," said Miller-Shaw.

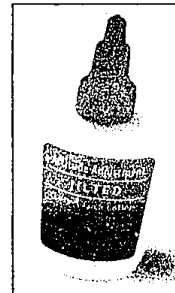
Although Miller-Shaw doesn't think we, as a society, are any more obsessed with love than we used to be, she does believe people are having more trouble finding partners.

"And it's not a matter of whether you choose to be down and sad, it's a matter of saying 'I'm going to reach a goal,' which isn't easy. Meeting the right partner in life takes a lot of energy," she said.

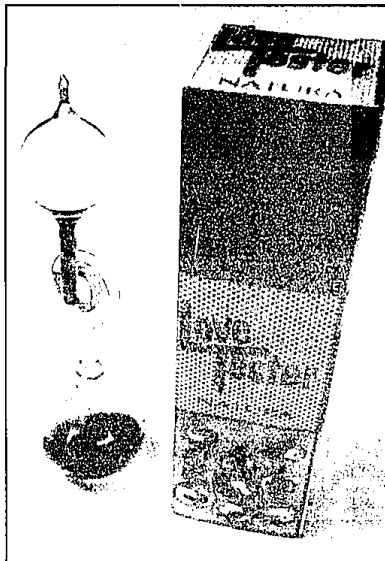
"We do make more out of all our holidays today, too, and there's a lot of hype on the part of industry, so having fun being able to have a little tongue-and-cheek humor keeps it light — the pain and work of finding someone."



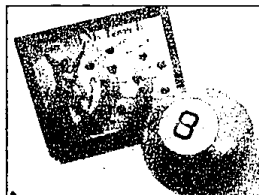
Keep it light: Why not poke some fun at love and romance with Blooms Romance Blend essential oils, \$16.50 at the Union General Sweetshop and Cafe in Clarkston.



Down and blue: Lift the spirits of a friend whose down in the dumps over love. A bottle of "Jilted Lots-Of-Love" body lotion, \$9.95 at Aetheria in Farmdale, will do the trick.



Take the test: Just hold Starbucks' scientific-looking glass "Love Tester" and you'll get a reading of your love potency, available at Starbucks cafes.



Fun and games: Ask the pink "8 Date Ball" all your important questions or play the "Who Will My Lover Be?" game. Both are available at Starbucks

Changes in store

Hudson's moves, expands men's and home sections

Hudson's is making a big move. The retailer is relocating and opening an expanded Men's and Home store at Lakeside mall in Sterling Heights, greatly increasing the store's presence there.

The expanded store, to be located in the site that was formerly occupied by Crowley's, will open at 10 a.m. Feb. 8.

The store will feature more space and an increased selection of Hudson's

men's clothing, not to mention furnishings, fragrances, shoes, textiles and other home merchandise.

Hudson's total operation space at Lakeside mall will increase from 206,000 to 321,000 square feet and company officials view the expansion as a commitment to the local community.

The current Hudson's Lakeside Men's and Home store will be moved on

Sunday, a process that will entail about 900 Hudson's employees transporting approximately 280,000 pieces of merchandise from one location to another in just seven hours.

"This one-day move will be an amazing team effort by the entire company," said Hudson's Lakeside store manager Lorrie Tanton. "We are recruiting team members from all of Hudson's stores in throughout Michigan, our distribution

center and our headquarters office to assist with the move ..."

Hudson's plans to remodel its existing store at Lakeside throughout the year. That process will bring improved women's and children's departments, as well as changes in the store's cosmetics and shoe departments and beauty salon.

The new Men's and Home store will be closed on Monday.

Retail, style and special store events are listed in this calendar. Please send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Fax: (248) 644-1314. Information must be received by 5 p.m. Monday for publication the following Sunday.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

HINO & MALLE TRUNK SHOW
Rox & Sherm, 6536 Telegraph Road in Bloomfield Township, hosts a trunk show of Hino & Malle's spring jackets, vests, skirts, pants and accessories through Feb. 12. For details, call (248) 855-8877.

DANA BUCHMAN FOR SPRING
Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy, hosts a Dana Buchman Spring focus day with in-store designer representatives, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Designer Bridge Sportswear, second floor and Special Sizes, third floor. For additional information, call (248) 614-8340.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11

VALENTINE'S JEWELRY SHOW
Netman Marcus, the Somerset Collection in Troy, hosts a special showing of jewelry by David Yurman. In celebration of Valentine's Day, Yurman will donate 5 percent of Feb. 11 sales from his Designer Jewelry Collection to the Henry Ford Heart and Vascular Institute. Show runs through Feb. 14, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Designer Jewelry, first floor. For more information, call (248) 643-8300.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

BORDER'S CHARITY BENEFIT

Make a purchase at any Borders Books & Music store in Michigan through Feb. 13 and 15 percent of your purchase goes to the Michigan Women's Foundation to benefit young girls. Mention the organization when making your purchase. For more information, call (734) 542-3946.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

PRETZEL ROLLING CONTEST
Auntie Anna's pretzel shop, Great Lakes Crossing mall in Auburn Hills, holds a pretzel rolling contest for kids. Participants will receive prizes and favors, 4:30-6:15 p.m. For more information, call the mall at (248) 454-6010.

FAMILY VALENTINE'S EVENT

Families can come together at Livonia Mall's "Rockin' Family Valentine's" event, featuring the nostalgic sounds of Benny & the Jets, family and child photo portraits, arts projects for kids, prizes and other activities, 4-8 p.m. For additional information, call (248) 476-1160.

PUPPET SHOW

Wonderland Mall in Livonia presents Father Millenium's Zero Show, produced by the Heikon Puppets,

through Feb. 13, food court. Shows start at noon, 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday and at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. on Sunday. For more information, call (734) 522-4100.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

DINOSAUR SHOW

Livonia Mall, at Seven Mile and Middlebelt roads, presents "Mystery of the Lost Dinosaur" for children and their families, throughout the mall. For additional information, call (248) 476-1160.

KAREN NEWMAN APPEARANCE

Local talent and celebrity Karen Newman visits Hudson's Lakeside location in Sterling Heights to sign autographs and talk with shoppers, 2:30 p.m., Men's Department.

WARM AND FUZZY STORES

Borders Books & Music, 30995 Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills, hosts a special story-telling session for kids, age 4 through 8, 2 p.m. For more information, call (248) 737-0004.

DOLL FASHION SHOW

The "We Love Barbie" doll fashion show returns to the Plymouth Cultural Center, 525 Farmer Road in Plymouth. The show features vintage, collectible and custom-designed Barbies and accessories, 11 p.m.-4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for kids age 4 through 12. For information call, (734) 455-2110.