It's The Thought That Counts
by Alivia Berrios

When it comes to purchasing or making gifts for your significant other, it can be difficult to decide what to give them. What makes a gift special? For many it's not about the price of the gift, but rather the thought put into it.

Lucas Tassone believes that heartfelt gifts could be better than store bought, "They could be, It depends on the person because some people would like a better gift than heartfelt gifts." Another question was posed, asking whether or not price and quantity matter. He shared, " No, because the fact someone is giving you a gift means a lot."

VHS vice principal, Mr Jay Lukasko, shared what some of his favorite gifts were. "I like dark chocolate and I've gotten a few thoughtful cards, which brought a few tears to my eyes." Last, Kylie Kruse agrees that creative self-made gifts can show how you feel about a person more than a bought gift. She shared "A homemade gift means more to me because it shows creativity and the thought behind it."

In conclusion, trying to find a good gift to give to your partner, friend, or family member doesn't have to be difficult. What matters most is the thought, care, and creativity you put into it. In the end, the best gifts always come from the heart, and those are priceless.

Date Night Ideas for Valentine's Day
by Codey Schwarck

Valentine's Day is the perfect opportunity for young couples to enjoy a fun, memorable date night. Whether you're in a long-term relationship or just starting to date, there are plenty of creative and affordable ideas to celebrate the day of love. For a cozy and intimate evening, you can stay in and cook dinner together, perhaps trying out a new recipe or making each other's favorite dish. "Cooking together is a great way to bond, and it's super fun to try new recipes!" says Ashton, a local high school senior. After dinner, you can have a movie marathon with romantic comedies, or binge-watch your favorite shows while snacking on popcorn.

For those looking for a little more adventure, try going ice skating at a nearby rink or taking a scenic walk under the stars. "I love going ice skating because it's a mix of fun and romance," says Ryan, a senior at VHS. If you're feeling extra creative, you could also visit an art studio and paint pottery together. Or, for a laid-back date, grab some takeout and have a picnic at a park, enjoying each other's company while you watch the sunset. Whatever you choose, the most important part is enjoying the time together and making lasting memories.

The History of Valentine's Day
by Stephen Stetz

Today, we know Valentine's Day as a day to think about our loved ones and those closest to us. However, it wasn't always like this. The day of February 14th has been about love for many centuries, but this holiday's backstory is a pretty interesting tale.

Valentine's Day can trace its origins back to the celebration of a Christian saint, St. Valentine of Rome, the patron saint of lovers. In the 3rd century, he was jailed by the Roman Emperor for ministering to Christians in the Roman Empire. From the 1st to 4th centuries, Christians were persecuted throughout the Roman Empire as Christianity conflicted with the Hellenistic religion that was practiced throughout the empire. Christian tradition states that St. Valentine performed weddings for Christian soldiers. In 269 AD, he was beheaded and buried on the Via Flaminia, a Roman road, on February 14th. That day has been designated St. Valentine's Day since around the 8th century. The phrases "your Valentine" and "my Valentine" trace their origins back to St. Valentine's execution. An 18th century addition to the story of St. Valentine says that a note reading "Your Valentine" was given to the daughter of the person who jailed him as a goodbye. According to early tradition, St. Valentine cured the blindness of the jailer's daughter. In its earlier years, February 14 was a day to remember St. Valentine, as it was declared in the late 5th century by Pope Gelasius, who likely never intended the day to become a celebration of love.

Other symbols of the holiday came into play much later. The association of lovebirds can be traced back to medieval Europe. English poet Geoffrey Chaucer wrote "The Parliament of Foules" in 1375, which is thought to reference the marriage between Richard II and Anne of Bohemia. Chaucer writes about a group of birds meeting to choose their mates on February 14. The gifts we call Valentine's also can be traced back to the 14th century when nobles would write love letters to their significant others. The first Valentine's card originated in an English prison of all places, written in 1415 during the 100 Years War by Charles, Duke of Orleans.

Over the centuries, the gifts got more elaborate with flowers starting to be sent to love interests and soon, the iconic chocolates. The 1860s is when the heart shaped chocolate boxes started to appear, made by the legendary chocolate maker John Cadbury, founder of the world renowned Cadbury. The 19th century also brought about a forgotten, and obscure part of the holiday, Vinegar Valentine's, the complete opposite of the traditional Valentine. These were sent as insults by rejected lovers, not so friendly neighbors, and business and political rivals.

As the world entered the 20th century, another icon of the holiday was introduced, Hallmark cards. In 1913, Hallmark created the first commercially printed Valentine cards and eventually, more began to make their own commercialized Valentine's items like the Sweethearts, the colorful candy hearts with romantic messages printed on them.

That then brings us to today. Valentine's Day is now bigger than ever and certainly has come a long way since its beginnings nearly 1,800 years ago and will continue to evolve and grow in popularity in the future like it has over nearly the past 2 millennia.

The Language of Flowers - And How To Speak It
by Delilah Poole

Victorian flower language is an ancient, and unfortunately, dying art. But what is it? Many people have never heard of it, hence the reason why it is dying.

Before attempting to understand the art–it is vital to comprehend the history of what birthed flower language's popularity and why it was used. While many different cultures around the world have similar art forms, it was popularized during the Victorian Era in Britain. Primarily women took to the art form as a hobby, learning its many intricacies in order to pass secret messages to their lovers, friends, family members, and even sometimes enemies. The language so so important to the victories that almost every home had a good book for interpreting the language, books for this were printed almost as frequently as the Christian bible at the time.

Now that the basics of the language's history have been described, it is now possible to de-

scribe what different flowers mean and what colors mean. "I have to think...let me think…I like water lilies" stated Michaela Kelley. Water lilies are traditionally representative of purity and majesty due to the whites of their petals–enlightenment is also a major symbol when talking about water lilies due to their association with water. To gift someone a water lily means that you admire them or to express sympathy during tough times; to receive one means you are dearly beloved by the person giving it to you.

While the majority of people know nothing about flower language, some people have taken

quite a liking to it. Senior student Gabriella Whitaker stated that her favorite flower is the "lily of the valley." This spring flower native to Eurasia is representative of

joy, happiness, purity, and luck. An appropriate time to gift this flower to someone is at weddings, baptisms, or other celebrations. If you receive a lily of the valley, that means they wish you joy and happiness.

The vast array of emotions a flower can convey without speaking is astonishing, this art form deserves to live forever and to be held as a sacred part of Victorian culture.

Happy Valentines Day!

Healthy vs Toxic Relationships: What You Should Look Out For and What To Strive For
by Jennifer Gray

Statistically about one in three people are in an unhealthy romantic relationship, and most of these people in said relationships do not realize the toxic nature of their relationships. So what are the signs to look out for?

"He told me if I left him he'd hurt himself. I was really scared to leave him" said an anonymous student at Vermilion High School. One of the biggest red flags in a relationship is fear. Being afraid is something that should not be a common feeling in a relationship. Being afraid to talk to them is a sign that the relationship isn't healthy.

"Whenever I did something they didn't like they'd yell at me. They yelled at me so much," stated Bird Gray, a senior. Constant

Healthy vs Toxic Relationships

Healthy	Toxic
-Communication	-Fear
-Respectful of your boundries	-Constant anger
-Honesty	-Mean words
-Compromises	-Violent
-Supportive	-Lying
-Trustworthy	-Pushes boundries
-Loves you for who you are	-Controling
	-Isolates you from other
	-Refuses to listen
	-Ignores or denying concerns

criticism and forcing to others to change and fit what they want is another massive red flag that is important to look for in a relationship. Nobody should have to change everything about themselves to please another.

According to the School counselors at Vermilion High School, some other things to look out for are "Possessiveness, manipulation, isolation from peers, family and friends, and belittling." The counselors recommended reaching out to them or another trusted adult if you find yourself in an unhealthy relationship or if unsure about

anything. "It is always good to get an outside perspective of what is going on from someone who is not directly involved."

Overall a relationship should be positive, but what makes a real relationship healthy? Well, communication is an extremely important factor in forming a healthy relationship, being able to talk to each other maturely about issues is very important for a long-lasting relationship. They should be able to set and respect each other's boundaries.

Connor Morrow and Lilah Werner have been together for a while now, and the two of them suggest to "be honest with each other, work out your problems don't just ignore them, and be supportive of your partner."

Valentine's Day Around The World
by Mariah Mills

Valentine's Day is celebrated in many different countries, each with its fun traditions. Here's a look at how different countries celebrate love on February 14th. In the U.S., Valentine's Day is a really big deal. People send cards, flowers, and chocolates to their friends, family, and special someone. Schools often have parties where kids can swap Valentine's cards, and couples like to go out to dinner or enjoy fun activities together.

In Japan, Valentine's Day is a bit different. On February 14th, women give chocolate to men. There are two kinds of chocolate: giri-choco (for friends or co-workers) and Honmeii-choco (for someone they really love). Then, a month later on March 14th, men

give gifts back to women on a day called White Day. In France, Valentine's Day is all about romance. Couples have nice dinners together and often give flowers or love letters. The French enjoy sweet, romantic gestures. There's even a special spot in Paris called "Pont des Arts" where lovers attach locks to the bridge to show their love. In Finland, they call Valentine's Day Ystävänpäivä, which means "Friend's Day." It's not just for couples, it's also a time to celebrate friendships. People give small cards or gifts to their friends to show they care.

In Italy, Valentine's Day is super romantic. Couples give each other flowers, chocolates, and jewelry. Some even share poems and love letters. In Verona, where Romeo and Juliet were said to have lived, many people visit the famous balcony and leave notes or flowers. In Mexico, they call Valentine's Day Día del Amor y la Amis-

tad, which means Day of Love and Friendship. People celebrate by giving flowers, candy, and cards not just to their romantic partners but also to friends and family. In Brazil, they celebrate Valentine's Day on a different day. They have a holiday called Dia dos Namorados, or Lovers' Day, on June 12th. On this day, couples exchange gifts, have dinner together, and celebrate their love.

Every country has its own special way of celebrating, but they all share the same theme of love and friendship. Whether you send a card, give flowers, or just spend time with friends, Valentine's Day is a special time for everyone to show they care.