

THE PORT HENRY FACT FINDER

Reporting the News and Needs of Port Henry and Surrounding Area

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ABOUT ST. VALENTINE, VALENTINES' DAY AND VALENTINES

Numerous early [Christian](#) martyrs were named [Valentine](#). The Valentines honored on February 14 are Valentine of Rome and Valentine of Terni. Valentine of Rome was a priest in Rome who was martyred about AD 496 and was buried on the [Via Flaminia](#). Valentine of Terni became bishop of Interamna (modern [Terni](#)) about AD 197 and is said to have been martyred during the persecution under Emperor [Aurelian](#). He is also buried on the Via Flaminia, but in a different location than Valentine of Rome. In 1969, with the revising of the Roman Catholic Calendar of Saints, the feast day of Saint Valentine on February 14th was removed from the calendar because, "Though the memorial of Saint Valentine is ancient, it is left to particular calendars, since, apart from his name, nothing is known of Saint Valentine except that he was buried on the Via Flaminia on February 14.

Saint Valentine's Day, also known as **Valentine's Day** or the **Feast of Saint Valentine**, is observed on [February 14](#) each year. It is celebrated in many countries around the world, although it remains a working day in most of them. The day was first associated with [romantic love](#) in the circle of [Geoffrey Chaucer](#) in the [High Middle Ages](#), when the tradition of [courtly love](#) was widely practiced. In 18th-century England, it evolved into an occasion in which [lovers](#) expressed their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering candies, and sending [greeting cards](#) (known as "valentines").

This might have developed from legends associated with one or the other Saint Valentines. Valentine's Day symbols used today - the [heart-shaped](#) outline, doves, and the figure of the winged [Cupid](#) – have evolved from the legends surrounding the saints.

A popular account of Saint Valentine of Rome states that he was imprisoned for performing [weddings](#) for soldiers who were forbidden to marry and for ministering to Christians, who were [persecuted under the Roman Empire](#). According to one [legend](#), during his imprisonment, he healed the daughter of his jailer, and before his execution he wrote her a letter signed "Your Valentine" as a farewell.

According to another legend, in order "to remind these men of their vows and God's love, Saint Valentine is said to have cut hearts from parchment", giving them to soldiers and [persecuted Christians](#), a possible origin of the widespread use of hearts on St. Valentine's Day.

Supposedly Saint Valentine wore a purple [amethyst](#) ring, customarily worn on the hands of Christian [bishops](#), with an image of [Cupid](#) engraved in it, a recognizable symbol associated with love that was legal under the Roman Empire. Roman soldiers would recognize the ring and ask him to perform marriage for them.

Many countries celebrate Valentine's Day as the beginning of Spring and Spring celebrates new life and therefore love. **Happy Valentine's Day to All!**

NOTES FROM THE pH7 COMMITTEE

For the past several years the pH7 committee has staunchly met on Wednesdays from 10am-12. At first, our meetings were held at the Barber-Cooke Insurance Bldg. by the kind permission of the owners. This past year we found a permanent home at the new offices of the Moriah Chamber of Commerce on Main Street. We have been happy and regular in our meetings – until – that thing call *weather* decided to nastily interfere with our best laid habits. Finally, this past Wednesday, January 29th, four of us met ready to welcome a visitor, Rose Chanler, a splendid concert pianist who is the founder and force behind the *Piano by Nature* series at Hand House in Elizabethtown.

She had asked if she might attend one of our meetings and, of course as always, we welcomed a new source for new ideas. The ideas came gushing out; ideas which mirrored many of our own or showed them from a slightly different angle, along with new proposals. She feels, as we in pH7 do, that musicians, artists and crafters of our area need to work with each other to promote everyone's concerts and shows so that residents from a larger area will be drawn to augment local audiences. We discussed how this and other goals might best be accomplished. Suggestions, such as dances highlighting music and dress from one of the many ethnic groups surviving from the mining days of Port Henry and; a food festival with music, again drawing from the diverse backgrounds of Port Henry's residents, were two very appealing ideas offered.

The on-going goal and effort to establish an art and craft co-op in Port Henry finally seemed imminently within sight as the venue, or possibly even two venues, came under discussion.

Chamber of Commerce President Tim Bryant, who had come to the office to work, drifted in and out of the meeting, adding his thoughts and another dimension to the conversation. It was an exciting meeting and Rose plans to return next week. Also, we original and older members hope new Port Henry resident, and pH7 attendee, Nancy Gilbertson will become one of our regulars.

JANUS NOTES

Looking backward:

We missed announcing the results of Moriah Central's Junior/High School and Elementary Spelling Bees. This year's Junior/High School winners were: Jay Straible and runner-up Jonathan Gibbs. The Sixth Grade winner was Karen King, with Madeline Cochran as runner-up. These winners will be attending this year's Regional Competition right here on their turf on March 7th.

Moriah's Spelling Bees are always important to the school, the participants and their families and friends, but as of the past two years, it has become very important to a much larger area. Since Nick Manfred became New York State's Regional Champion, winning a place in the National Spelling Bee competition in Washington, DC – not once but two years in a row – Moriah has a reputation to uphold and it seems it may well do just that. Congratulations to the winners and applause to all the competitors, some of whom may be next year's winners.

Looking forward:

On Thursday, February 20 at 3 pm, the Sherman Free Library will again host the Eat Smart New York nutrition education program, offering information on how to eat and shop to promote a healthier life style.

The Book Discussion Group will hold its monthly meeting in the Library on Thursday, February 20 at 6 pm. This month's book is *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. For more information concerning this group, call the library at 546-7461.

Ebook Reader Workshop will be on Friday, February 21st from 1 pm to 3 pm in the library. Bring your ereader, tablet, smartphone, or mp3 player and learn how to use the library's collection of over 1000 free ebooks.

Friends of the Sherman Free Library will meet in the Library on Thursday, February 27th at 6

pm. The Friends group advocates for the library, assists with programs, and raises funds for the library. The group will begin making plans for the coming year's activities. Join us by calling the library at 546-7461. A reminder: when the weather is bad, please call the library before heading out to make sure it is open.

A COMMUNIQUE OF CONCERN FROM FRANK MARTIN

Hello from Baltimore! I am growing more and more concerned about fracking... and why we have heard so little about its immense dangers. Most of this gas is meant to be exported to GER Asia and it could pose immense environmental damage to New York State and Maryland, where I'm at right now.

I went to a lecture on this after church yesterday. This is now a major issue in Maryland as it is for New York. It's far worse than I had ever feared. I hope that we can stop it. Ask people from Pennsylvania. they can tell you more.

It really is a moral and spiritual issue...which is why some churches are now getting involved. The best thing to do is to learn more and then, if we feel the concern, to write our legislators and governor in Albany. Vote to lift the moratorium when it comes up - in Maryland, it is this *summer*. If these bans can stay in place a few more years, the evidence will be overwhelming ***not*** to do it. Once it starts, it will be hard to stop....as has now happened in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

This is a slightly different issue from bringing a natural gas pipeline up to Moriah....which would sure be great, especially given our reliance on heating oil. Although all gas lines leak some methane, our local pipeline would not be tied necessarily to fracked gas. Anyway, it is something to think about. Frank

Note: Frank gave the following email address for those who would like to know more about this potential danger: <http://www.guernicamag.com/daily/ellen-cantarow-the-frontlines-of-fracking/>

The following is printed in anticipation and encouragement of the coming of Spring.

In Recommendation of the Oft-traveled Road – an essay by Sandra Lovell

Like a beloved, long-known friend, the oft-traveled road - best if it is just two lanes - the well-known road is comfortingly familiar but always enticingly different. Your mind and muscles respond automatically to the road's hills, curves, bumps and straight-a-ways, even your eyes seem to remember; you find you have no conscious memory of what you have just seen while concentrating, for a second or two, on a free-wheeling thought. Un-known roads are exciting but frustrating, you glimpse the new, the potentially fascinating, having to satisfy yourself with the probability that you will come this way again, remember what it was you saw and, more importantly, where. The often experienced brings freedom to enjoy the ever changing subtleties of the flowing scenes, natural and manmade.

A trip always offers a canvass of sky and landscape upon which sun, rain, fog or snow changes the stationary familiar into something new, uniquely extraordinary. Add clouds and wind and the kaleidoscope of visual and emotional stimuli can be almost overwhelming, not only of itself but from your own constantly changing perspective. A distant autumn-tapestried mountain range shimmers as the shadows of scudding clouds play hide-and-seek over and among its peaks and valleys. You are privy to a never-before and never-again to be seen performance. You also may be the *only* audience witness of that particular moment.

Villages, farms, houses become valued friends as you begin to note their changing personae with the seasons and even times of day. Nothing seems so filled with unexpected possibilities as a village on a sassy Spring morning with melted-butter sunlight pouring over everything, even into cool corners. You slow to the posted speed limit, more to savor this sense-feast than for courtesy or fear of a ticket which, though not often in rural areas, a deserved punishment is meted out just often enough and

unexpectedly enough to create respectful obedience. This same village becomes mysterious, cunning with the allure of exclusion as evening glides over its cuddling houses, particularly when chill air, as if it too wants warmth, hungrily sucks the smoke from many chimneys. You yearn to become a part of the soft lights and whispering promised peace, to be - not the outsider.

The basic canvass, though alive and changing, requires accents, vivid moments of enhancement: a flight of geese tossing itself, shawl-like, across the shoulders of the sky; a blood-red mountain maple impetuously shouting its presence among a stand of patient evergreens; a hawk streaking across your path, so intent on its kill it is unaware that a millisecond made the difference in who was killed and who remained alive. You become part of the accent as you pull to the road's side and watch as wings cover and tremble in the excitation of the kill and expectation of food. Finally it looks up, notes your presence and without haste flutters, just inches off the ground, into close-by weeds to begin its meal, becoming part of the background for the next accent.

Spring is often the beginning of an on-going relationship with unfolding mundane endeavors: the construction of a new building, the use is sometimes a mystery, creating an urge to stop and ask its purpose; the renovation of a home, you, yourself, feel a sense of joy and pride as new siding slowly creeps up walls, suggesting the owner himself is the installer; fresh paint affirms an original color; while a new color choice announces a possible change of ownership; steps and porches become level, new roofs and windows foretell a snugger winter.

Watching, as Spring-wet fields become mossy carpets of amorphous green, then small but identifiable crops, finally leaping into their summer fulfillment, is especially satisfying for the often, though not daily, traveler; the magic wand of time creates a sense of instant growth.

Time's magic is no less sure but far less kind on empty, forgotten houses, paint-less, sagging, left to their own self-burial. Some are small whispers on the landscape, their demise is quick and little-noticed, these once-homes. Particularly sad though, an old great town-beauty left empty. The original can best be imagined at dusk or through half closed eyes, promising many large, tall rooms with bay windows which once encouraged a friendly glance inside. Now the bay windows offer grey sockets streaked with what window glass remains and the unused porches sigh for the feel and sounds of feet, the assurance of being needed.

Summer settles over Spring like a brood hen settling over her eggs. It clucks and croons with sun and warmth and clever gentleness, slowly coaxing spring's youthful promises into full, rich life. On my special road, fields of alfalfa, corn and hay-grass ripen into the distance, offering food and shelter to myriads of insects, local and migrating birds and many, many other small creatures. You sense their soft noises as you see a bird rise, dip and disappear into this bustling microcosm. All the Spring-begun projects are completed or will be: the siding, the porch, the steps, and the small construction, its use still a mystery. The Year breathes softly at the end of summer - resting - saving energy for capricious, pied Autumn.

To drive an oft-traveled, tree-lined road in Autumn is to drive into breath-stopping surprise after surprise as, dressed in its glory of colour, the familiar becomes unfamiliar. Autumn is a wicked season, full-filling with its harvest, but coaxing us to Winter with another day of brisk sun and then another until, one day, it is winter and the oft-traveled road becomes a seldom-traveled, only-when-needed road, but with its own waiting beauty of snow-framed, winter-exposed wild places never visible before. Then comes Spring. The cycle begins again.

KIDS ARE GREAT! WHEN ASKED: WHEN IS IT OK TO KISS SOMEONE?

"When they're rich." Pam, age 7

"The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn't want to mess with that." Curt, age 7

"The rule goes like this: If you kiss someone, then you should marry them and have kids with them. It's the right thing to do." Howard, age 8

Look for the next issue of the Fact Finder on **Saturday, February 22, 2014** at Adirondack Hair Associates, Macs and Moriah Pharmacy; also, find copies to read at the Sherman Free Library. There are read-while-you-wait copies (but no one will be upset if you leave with one) at John Eisenberg's Service Center, Ken and Paula LaDeau's Champlain's Best Wash, Don Foote's "Miss Port Henry" Diner, and TFCU. NOTE: The Fact Finder may also be found on-line at porthenrymoriah.com. Go to "Living Here" and you will see "Fact Finder" to the far right, one line down.