



# THE WAKULLA HIGH TIMES

## DATES

- 2/2 - Groundhog Day
- 2/13 - Mardi Gras
- 2/14 - Valentines Day
- 2/15- Movie Night in Library 6-8pm
- 2/16 - School Holiday
- 2/19 - Presidents Day
- 2/22 - Talent Show Auditions
- 2/28 - Black History Annual Program



## Mardi Gras

By Aislyn Hamilton

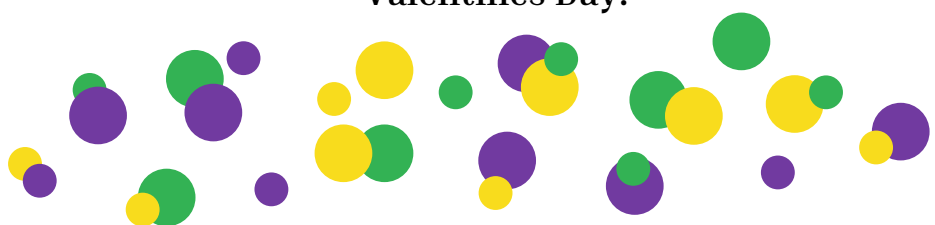
Although most people associate February with Valentines Day, another famous February holiday is Mardi Gras. Unlike the day of love, Mardi Gras does not have a set date: this year it takes place on February 13th. Mardi Gras is famously celebrated in New Orleans, Louisiana, but Rio de Janeiro, Brazil also goes all out. Although these two cities are most famous for their Mardi Gras celebrations, Mardi Gras originated in France. The word Mardi Gras is French for 'Fat Tuesday.'

Origins aside, Mardi Gras is announced by the vibrant colors of royal purple, green, and gold. These colors have specific meanings: purple represents justice, gold represents power, and green represents faith, as Mardi Gras was originally a Christian holiday. Today, not many people celebrate it from a religious view.

Mardi Gras traditions include beaded necklaces, with any designs or colors that you can find in New Orleans, the main colors being green, purple, and gold. These beads are thrown around by those on the holiday's floats and parades, which are prominent in areas where it is celebrated by most. Alongside parade floats and beads, another tradition includes Jester masks known as Italian 'Carnevale,' which were traditionally worn so people of separate social status could dance and celebrate in the streets together without having class expectations.

Mardi Gras includes feasting on many foods (hence the name 'Fat Tuesday'), which is traditionally done for the upcoming 40-day fast called Lent. A common traditional meal is king cake, which usually holds a fève or small trinket such as a figurine, often said to represent the Christ Child or Jesus, is hidden inside. After the cake is cut, whoever gets the fève wins a prize.

These are just the Mardi Gras basics: there are many other celebrations, and people across the world celebrate it in different ways. There is so much history to this wonderful holiday, and how it got popular in the areas it did. The important thing is to have fun, and stay safe celebrating the holidays this February, whether it be Mardi Gras or Valentines Day.



## Valentines Day

By Abigail Hart, Nhat Nguyen & Melissa Weaver

Valentine's Day is one of the happiest days of the year for all people in intimate relationships. Whether it was excitement, nervousness, or both, it is a time where an opportunity arises to learn your partner for the better. But how did Valentine's Day come to be named? Let us not forget the originator of the holiday.

There were three different Saint Valentines that people believe Valentine's Day originated from and they all have different but similar legends. All were killed by Emperor Claudius the Second of Rome for their defiance. One legend suggests one St. Valentine helped marry young men when the emperor outlawed it while another one aided Christian prisoners in escaping without the emperor's knowledge. Some say the third wrote the first "From your Valentine" after falling in love with his jailor's daughter. So now we know who started this tradition, but how did the date get set?

Some people believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14th to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial. However, others claim that Valentine's Day was chosen by the Christian Church. They say it was to honor St. Valentine and "Christianize" the Polish Lupercalia celebration.

Lupercalia was a fertility festival in Rome to honor the founders of Rome and its agricultural god Faunus. One ritual was when Luperci priests sacrificed a goat and dog to fertilize and purify. They then dipped the goats hide in the blood to put on the women and crop fields to increase fertility.

Another ritual of the festival was when young women put their names in an urn. Bachelors would then pick a name out of the urn and be paired with that woman, often resulting in marriage. Lupercalia did survive the first emergence of Christianity but was banned by Pope George at the end of the fifth century. That was when he declared Valentine's Day on February 14th. However, only later did this day become firmly linked to love.

To end things off, here is a little list of items you can buy for that special someone. Happy Valentine's Day!

## Valentine's Day Gift Guide!

For your Boyfriend :

- Matching bracelets
- Personalized shirts, pants, hoodies, etc.
- Handwritten love letters

XOXO



For your Girlfriend :

- A box of chocolates, candies, etc.
- Stuffed animals
- A bouquet of flowers

