

# Valentine's Day not for faint of heart

Being single on day devoted to romance can be a good thing



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Much to the chagrin of single people everywhere, it takes more than just disinfectant to get love out of the air in mid-February.

Candies, greeting cards and ads for romantic getaways seem to pop up everywhere you look.

It's easy to forget all the great things about being single while you're choking on that perfume-saturated Valentine's Day ambiance. But take heart -- *cough* -- because your fellow Clark County residents have some tales to make you feel better.

If it weren't for the darker side of love, Vancouver residents might have ended up hanging out by the fountains at Henry Williamson Park instead of Esther Short Park.

Williamson struck the original land claim for the city in the 1840s, and the entire area would have been his -- if it wasn't for love, said Jeff Davis, a local historian.

"A broken heart shaped the origins of Vancouver," Davis said. "When (Williamson) was still trying to press his land claim here, he left someone else in charge and went back to the East to get his fiancée. When he came back, the man he hired had left and Amos Short had taken over his claim."

Amos and Esther Short succeeded in their claim jump because love, apparently, conquers all -- even land claims.

"Vancouver would have had a totally different history if (Williamson) had stuck around and not gone back for the girl," Davis said. "I think Esther and Amos Short may have even moved into the little cabin that (Williamson) built on the claim."

Want a more modern cautionary tale about romance? Rachel Bardue, a Vancouver resident and dental assistant, has a good one about her ex-boyfriend.

After they broke up, Bardue's ex started dating one of her friends.

The relationship was going well, or so she thought, so when Valentine's Day rolled around, the friend sent him a half-dozen roses and a teddy bear as a gift.

"She sent those to his work, but then she didn't hear from him for about three days," Bardue said. "They were still going out after that, though."

Several months later, Bardue was visiting a different friend, who had a picture of herself and the ex-boyfriend spending a romantic Valentine's Day together.

He even brought the other girl a present: A half-dozen roses and a teddy bear.

"I texted my friend about the situation and asked her if the bear she had given him had poseable hands," Bardue said. "She said it did, and so did the bear that he gave my other friend."

Busted.

The funny thing is, the reason Bardue dumped him in the first place was because he cheated on her, she said.

“Yeah, he was a real winner,” Bardue said.

Even if you are taken or happily married, Valentine’s Day still isn’t worth getting worked up over, said Courtney Givens, owner of Simple Pleasures Events in Vancouver.

Givens and her husband have been married for 20 years, and both of them think the day is sort of preposterous, she said.

“So this year I gave him a choice for a present, either an oil change and tire rotation or a new hard drive for the computer,” Givens said. “He said ‘I’ll go for the oil change.’ It’s really more of a comedy show at our house.”

Actually, she’s not even planning to spend the day with her husband, she said.

“My best friend, she’s single. I got her a present and I’m taking her out for sushi,” Givens said. “Valentine’s Day, it’s not even a real holiday. It’s a retail holiday. Personally I think that those of us who are with somebody -- it’s a good time to be thoughtful to those in your life who aren’t.”

More good things about being single? You don’t have to share a bed with somebody that snores, nobody guilt trips you if you forget the flowers, you can go through the winter without shaving, you get to rule the TV remote control, and you can buy discounted candy on the 15th and nobody will be the wiser.

Want to add to the list? Feel free to tell your tale in the comment section of this story online at <http://www.columbian.com>.