



VILLAGER

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2013

VILLA

Valentine's is a many-splendored celebration of love and romance

Love songs, romantic poetry readings, fresh-baked cookies and candle-lit dinners are just a few of the ways people hereabouts will be celebrating Valentine's Day in the coming week. What follows is a partial list of the personal pleasures that will be available in the public realm:

"The Language of Love." Love letters, floral bouquets and small gifts were used to indicate a suitor's intention of marriage in the Victorian era. Learn what secret romantic messages could be conveyed by these gifts in hour-long programs beginning at 6:30 and 8 p.m. Friday, February 8, at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. Visitors will also listen to excerpts from Ramsey family love letters, play Victorian courtship games and enjoy freshly baked Valentine's Day treats. The cost is \$10, \$9 for seniors and college students, \$7 for children ages 6-17. Call 651-296-8760.

Children ages 8-12 are invited to mix, bake and decorate cookies using a 133-year-old recipe and a wood-burning stove from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, February 9, at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. While the cookies bake, the young bakers will take a tour of the house and discover how Alexander and Anna Ramsey's grandchildren celebrated Valentine's Day. The cost is \$13 and includes a batch of cookies. For reservations, call 651-296-8760.

Skylark Opera will present "Songs of Love II" at 1 p.m. Sunday, February 10, at Landmark Center. Hits from musical theater, operetta and opera will be sung by Karin Wolverton, soprano; Victoria Vargas, mezzo-soprano; Brad Benoit, tenor; and Seth Keeton, baritone. Pianist Eric McEnaney will accompany. There is no charge.

Nerds at Heart will hold its third annual Love Fest from 3-6 p.m. Sunday, February 10, at Tavern on Grand, 656 Grand Ave. A magnetic poetry icebreaker, trivia contest, board games, prizes and drink specials are some of the activities on tap for bachelors and bachelorettes. The cost is \$30 and reservations are required. Visit nerdsatheart.com or call 1-855-637-3568.

Romance and courtship in the Gilded Age of the late 19th and early 20th centuries will be discussed on Sunday, February 10, at the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. A 6 p.m. tour of the historic mansion will focus on the long marriage of James J. and Mary T. Hill, the weddings of their four daughters and the more turbulent courtships carried out among the Hill family servants. The tour will be followed at 7 p.m. by

an hour-long "loving kindness meditation" led by Beth Freschi. The two hours of romance and relaxation costs \$15. For reservations, call 651-297-2555.

Treat your sweetheart to a candle-lit dinner amid live music and the flowers of the Como Conservatory. Reservations are available at 5:30 and 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, Thursday and Friday, February 10, 14 and 15. Dinner includes salad, double entrée, dessert and two glasses of wine. The cost is \$165 per couple, a portion of which is tax-deductible. For reservations, call 651-487-8250. Child care will be available for \$25 at Como Kids' Club. Call 651-487-8272.

Celebrate Valentine's Day the old-fashioned way, listening to romantic verse by Dickinson, Poe, Longfellow, Browning and others read aloud by actors in 1890s garb. A Victorian Poetry Slam will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, February 13, at the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. Poems about love and romance will be featured along with others about temperance, sports, war and J.J. Hill himself. Audience members may join in the fun by reciting a short Victorian poem of their own. The hour-long program will be followed by light refreshments and tours of the Hill House. The cost is \$12, \$10 for seniors and college students, \$8 for children. For reservations, call 651-297-2555.

The Loff's annual Literary Love Fest will return at 6 p.m. Wednesday, February 13, to the Titanic Lounge in Kieran's Irish Pub, 601 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis. Local literati will hold court with stories of love, libations and lunacy, among them Courtnay McClean & the Dirty Curls, Heid Erdrich, Lorna Landvik and R. Vincent Moniz Jr. Admission is a suggested donation of \$5. For information, call 612-339-4499.

Songs of love will be performed by soprano Maria Jette and baritone Alan Dunbar with accompaniment by pianist Sonja Thompson during a Cocktails with Culture event from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, February 14, at Landmark Center. Also performing will be guitarist Alex Kosak and saxophonist Adrian Larkin from McNally Smith College of Music. A love spoons exhibition and woodturning demonstration will also be featured. Admission is free and so are the appetizers. A cash bar will be available.

Poets Ethna McKiernan, Michael Dennis Browne, Margaret Hasse and Tim Nolan will read their favorite love poems, their own verse and that of others in a free program at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, February 14, at SubText, 165 N. Western Ave.