

Coded Cards and Flirting



DEBBIE GIBSON

I'm sure you have heard of calling cards, but have you ever heard of flirtation cards? While a trend long dead, I found their story fascinating and it led to some other research and additional discoveries. Flirtation cards were coded explanations of how to flirt with the opposite sex. In some cases, the item was a book. Book leaning against your left cheek? Careful, someone's watching us. Book on your knee? Let's talk. Book between your teeth? It's over. From Atlas Obscura, I learned that calling cards were a well-documented phenomenon of Victorian Britain and the late 19th-century United States. Professionally printed with someone's name, and often their photograph, they had a complex function in social interaction and were variously used to announce a forthcoming visit, invite someone to your home, or denote that you had attempted to visit someone at their home while they were out.

Flirtations, however, don't seem to have had a practical function. According to Alan Mays, a collector of Victorian ephemera, "The coded gestures really seem too complicated for easy communication." Sheryl Jaeger has a similar take. A possible analog is the often-cited language of flowers—the idea that Victorians were all extremely well-versed in the subtle difference between a yellow and a white rose.

Other pre-printed cards were swapped between friends and then pasted into scrapbooks for safe-keeping—some of which contained sentiments largely unintelligible to a modern reader. On one, the "Anti-Poke Your Nose Into Other People's Business Society" seeks "a person at a salary of \$500 a year, with a periodical increase to \$1,000, to mind their own business and let other people's business alone." A common, if puzzling, message reads: "When are you going to pay the old lady for your last week's washing?"

Coded flirtations were probably ineffectual, flirtatious cards were not. It seems unlikely that anyone ever successfully dropped a book to tell someone that they needed to speak to them, pronto. But it didn't stop late Victorian anti-obscenity crusaders from

confusing the two, and worrying that they might. Mays gives the example of the politician Anthony Comstock whose "dire warnings," he says, "seem somewhat overbearing." In his 1883 text *Traps for the Young*, Comstock writes:

"I refer to the 'handkerchief' and 'glove' flirtation cards, by which means the schoolgirl is taught how to respond to signals from males ... Some are harmless, while others show that by a simple turn of the hand with a handkerchief or glove in it, an impure suggestion is meant to be conveyed. By this means an innocent girl may be drawn into the meshes of the net of the veriest scoundrel."

First of all, I love Comstock's use of "veriest." I might just adopt that word. I could have the veriest best day ever. I could eat the veriest decadent angel food cake in the whole wide world. I could be the veriest tired I've ever been. As far as "mind your own business" and "pay the washer woman," I could use a few of those, especially the pay the washer woman cards.

Further delving in old paper taught me that Victorians flirted with just about anything they could hold in their hands. There were codes for cigars, parasols, gloves, handkerchiefs, and fans. You could indicate interest, disinterest, alert your potential beau that you were being watched by parents, and indicate skedaddle, or come see my new living room lamp and we'll turn it down low.

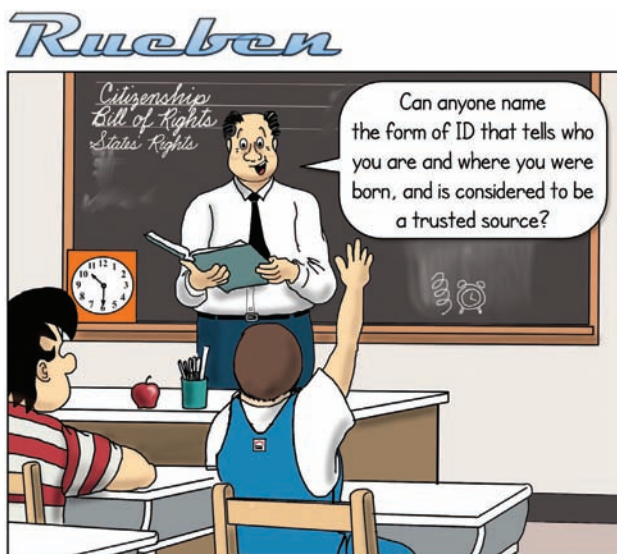
I suppose you'd have to practice these gestures in front of a mirror to perfect them, and it might take a while to memorize them all; so you'd probably have to be a fairly studious soul to master the art of flirtation. Imagine a homespun or country version of these cards.

"You better tighten that bridle, boy, if you plan on seeing me."

"Pardon me, Ma'am, but your eyes remind me of a hay mowing day."

"Come see me when the turnips and pumpkins are being harvested. I've got too much to do right now."

Heck, I bet you could make up some of your own. Go ahead, but don't get so many on a single page that you have to practice in front of a mirror.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Support Group For Female Survivors Of Sexual Assault

Women survivors of sexual assault are invited to attend regular support group meetings or individual support if you prefer. Survivors meet in a safe environment with other women who have had similar experiences. Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc. Family Crisis Services knows and understands what a survivor is going through. The fact that you are alive and reading this means that you are incredibly strong, courageous and intelligent. We are here to aid in the recovery process with individual support sessions. Please call and let us help. We are a confidential service. For information, call Ranetta Davis (276) 889-8206 or Haley Slade at (276) 988-5583.

Recovery Program

Recovery Program every Thursday evening at Lebanon Community Fellowship Church. Supper starts at 6:00 p.m., Worship begins at 7:00 p.m., various open sharing groups start at 8:15 p.m. and all activities conclude around 9:30 p.m. Child care is available.

Art Made From Railroad Spikes Featured At Museum

A collection of art made from old railroad spikes is featured at the Dante Coal and Railroad Museum.

Michael Bryant, Jr., from Castlewood, has made several wonderful pieces and has many items on display in the museum for anyone to view. On Saturday, April 14 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. he will be at the museum to talk about his art and meet with those that would like to come visit on that day.

The Museum is open on the first Saturday and third Saturday of each month from 11:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. and every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 11:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Revival

We request your presence to our Annual Revival on April 25, 26, and 27, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at Emmanuel Baptist Church, 485 Cleveland Road, Lebanon, VA 24266. Our speakers will be: Rev. Dwayne Mabry and choir, April 25, 2018; Rev. Danny Belcher and choir, April 26, 2018; and Overseer Ronnie Collins, April 27, 2018. Pastors are asked to bring their choirs if possible. We would be most honored with your presence!

Thanks to all, Pastor Rev. Jacquelyne Booher.

Gospel Singing

Church of Jesus Christ on Stoots Street will have a singing on Friday, April 13, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Singers will be Jerry Pruettt and Singers, and Darwin Woodruff and Singers. Everyone is invited to attend. Jackie Fields, Pastor.

Annual Camp Meeting

Westside Holiness Church Annual Camp Meeting April 29-30, 135 Roadridge Turnpike, Raven, VA. Guest speakers: Rev. Charles Barnett daily at 10:00 a.m.; and Rev. Lloyd Shoecraft nightly at 7:00 p.m. Everyone invited to attend. For more info: Pastor Roberts 276-971-2022.

Volunteers Needed

Home Nursing Company, Inc. Hospice, of Lebanon is currently looking for volunteers. This is a non-paid position. If you would like to help make a difference in the lives of local families we encourage you to contact us about this rewarding opportunity. Call us at 276-889-4318, or visit our website at www.homenursinginc.com.

April Rotary Programs

Hello April! The Russell County Rotary welcomes all to attend our weekly program meetings held on Thursdays from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. at Pat's Kountry Diner in Lebanon. Here are our April programs coordinated by Rotarian David Leonard:

April 12-Dwayne McIntyre, Goshen Homestead Farm.

April 19-Donna Meade, Chair of the Russell Health Coalition, Farm to Table Dinner Planning Committee.

April 26-TBA

Sabika Bingo For Child Abuse Prevention And Foster Awareness Month

Russell County Department of Social Services Child Abuse Prevention and Foster Awareness Month Sabika Bingo May 4, 2018 at the Russell County Conference Center, Lebanon, Virginia. Raffles, door prizes, hotdogs, BBQ dinner, and homemade desserts. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and bingo will begin at 7:00 p.m. All proceeds will be used to serve the needs of children in Russell County. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth C. Sabo at 276-883-5248.

Spring Revival

Spring Revival at Honaker Church of Christ, Honaker, VA at 7:00 p.m. nightly, April 19th-Mark Gaminde; April 20th-Dennis Wimmer; and April 21st-Hobert Kennedy. Fellowship meal on Sunday, April 22nd after the morning services.

Bro. Randy Taylor 970-9507 for more info. Everyone welcome.

Russell County Tourism Committee Public Meeting

The Russell County Tourism Committee Public Meeting will be on April 17, 2018 at 11:30 a.m. at Vincent's Vineyard.

Motorcyclist Fatalities In 2017 The Highest In A Decade

RICHMOND – Last year, Virginia recorded the highest number of motorcyclist fatalities in a decade, and, as the weather warms again, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) urges motorcyclists and motorists to do their part to prevent deaths this year.

One-hundred-and-seven motorcyclists were killed in 2017 on Virginia roadways, compared to 72 in 2016 – a nearly 50-percent increase. Ninety motorcyclist fatalities were reported in 2011, the previous decade high.

"We are working every day to reduce traffic crashes and save lives on Virginia roadways," said Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine. "DMV, VDOT, Public Safety and Community Partners are urging motorcyclists and motorists to give their full attention to driving and following the rules of the road."

"A large number of motorcycle crashes occur when the motorcyclist is traveling too fast and loses control of his bike. Following a safe speed is a simple solution for these types of crashes," said DMV Commissioner Richard D. Holcomb, the

Governor's Highway Safety Representative. "Other crashes can occur when a person driving a car, for example, doesn't see the motorcyclist because of inattention or a blind spot. We encourage motorists to be aware of motorcyclists sharing the road and to make sure you know where they are in traffic before changing lanes."

Motorcyclists can take advantage of the Virginia Rider Training Program, which offers statewide motorcycle classes for both beginning and experienced riders.

Motorcycle Safety Tips

Always wear safety equipment. Wear helmets and other protective clothing such as gloves, goggles and a riding jacket. Motorcyclists and their passengers must wear helmets in Virginia. A rider without a helmet is 40 percent more likely to suffer a fatal head injury than a rider wearing a helmet.

Remain alert day and night. Keep an eye on your surroundings at all times. Forty-four percent of motorcyclist fatalities in 2017 occurred between noon and 6 p.m.

Travel at a safe speed. Always obey posted speed limits and reduce speed in inclement weather. Speeding and failure to maintain control of the motorcycle contribute to a high percentage of motorcyclists' deaths.

Never operate a motorcycle after consuming alcohol: Forty percent of all single-vehicle motorcycle fatalities in 2017 involved a motorcyclist with a blood alcohol content above the legal limit.

Tips for Other Motorists

Look for motorcyclists. In

more than half of all crashes involving motorcycles and automobiles, the automobile driver didn't see the motorcycle until it was too late.

Check your blind spots. Always check for motorcycles before you pull out, change lanes, turn, back up or proceed through an intersection.

Anticipate the motorcyclist's movements. A slight change or debris on the road surface can be a major obstacle for motorcyclists so expect them to make sudden moves within their lane. Never tailgate a motorcycle or any other vehicle.

Summer 4-H CAMP

Russell, Wise, & Buchanan Counties

July 23-27, 2018

Registration Day

April 16, 2018

4:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

SWCC Center for Education & Training in the Government Center in Lebanon

WHO CAN ATTEND: Youth ages 9 to 13 years old (Sorry, no third graders, even if they have turned 9 years old)

COST: \$190.00

Camp fee covers transportation, room and board, activities and classes, and a camp t-shirt.

Payment plans are available and financial assistance is available upon request.

A \$70.00 non-refundable deposit is required at registration.

Payment Methods Accepted: Cash, Check, or Credit Card.

Camp spots are limited and will be filled on a first come first served basis.

No registration will be accepted before above registration date and time.

Contact the Extension Office at 276-889-8056 for more information.

For updates, Like our Facebook Page: Virginia Cooperative Extension - Russell County

ATV Trail Permits

MountainView ATV Club permits and Spear Head trail permits are on sale now! You get both permits when you purchase a MountainView ATV Club membership and they are good for 1 year from date of purchase.

The cost for both permits for an entire year is only \$50.00!

For more information or to purchase your permit contact: 276-393-0954, 276-395-2728, or 276-274-6342.