

21 ways to celebrate Valentine's Day

Brad Wadlow, @BradWadlowMyCJ 4:13 p.m. EST February 9, 2016



(Photo: ~File)

Love is in the air, and Valentine's Day is nearly here..

To help the case of love along, we've scoured the region and releases sent into MyCentralJersey.com to put together this list of 20 things you and your love can do. Some are specific to the day, and others can be do throughout the month.

While this is a highly subjective list, we think you will find it delightful and de-lovely. Enjoy.

1 and 2: Be a love; adopt a pet

HERE'S THE PLACE: Through February, Tabby's Place, 1100 Route 202, Ringoes section of the township..Tabby's Place: a Cat Sanctuary is a cage-free, no-kill sanctuary for cats rescued from hopeless situations, located at 1100 US Highway 202, Ringoes. Tabby's Place: a Cat Sanctuary is a cage-free, no-kill sanctuary for cats rescued from hopeless situations. Take home a double dose of feline affection for \$135. Each furry valentine is spayed or neutered, tested for FIV and FeLV, vaccinated, microchipped, and treated by a skilled veterinarian. The sanctuary is open seven days a week, and welcomes lovestruck adopters from noon to 5 p.m. each day. For more information, contact info@tabbysplace.org or 908-237-5300. You can fill out an adoption application and see the cats at www.tabbysplace.org/adopt-a-cat.html or visit www.tabbysplace.org.

WATCH: No more exchanging valentines at one school

"HAPPY VALEN-TAILS": noon to 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12 through Monday, Feb. 15, Animal Alliance's Robert W. Curts Memorial Pet Adoption Center, 1432 Route 179 North, Lambertville. Hosted by Animal Alliance, this is an adoption event committed to matching a record number of pets with loving homes on the most love-filled weekend of the year. In honor of Valentine's Day, adoption fees for all adult cats will be slashed to \$14; dog adoption fees will be reduced to \$214, down from the normal \$325 donation. All of the dogs and cats at Animal Alliance have received veterinary exams, are already spayed/neutered, have all age appropriate vaccines, flea and tick treatment, deworming and have been microchipped with a Home Again Microchip. Additionally, all cats and kittens at Animal Alliance have been tested for Feline Leukemia/FIV. During the four-day event, fatdogfoto of New Hope, Pennsylvania, is offering all guests a reduced rate photo session for pets and their people. Nanette Kardaszkeski, owner of fatdogfoto, will also give an additional discount to everyone who adopts a pet at Animal Alliance during the 'Happy Valen-tails Day' event. For more information and to view Nanette's work, visit www.fatdogfoto.com (<http://www.fatdogfoto.com>). Interested adopters can observe all of the felines as they roam and play freely in the cat rooms, and spend time with them individually in a meet and greet room. Animal Alliance T-Shirts and Tote Bags will also be reduced to \$10 from \$20. Call 609-818-1952. All pets can be seen at www.animalalliancenj.org (<http://www.animalalliancenj.org>).



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Meet the author of the definitive book of love

(<http://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/how-we-live/2016/02/07/author-helen-fisher-definitive-book-love/79833774/>)

3, 4, 5 and 6: Say it with music

A ROMANTIC EVENING OF CHOPIN: 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11, Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts (WIPA), 60 Locust Ave., Berkeley Heights. Salon seating-style concert, featuring pianist Luba Vasilyeva. Works to be performed in the all-Chopin concert include three Mazurkas, the Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, No.1 and Nocturne in E Major, Op.62, No.2, as well as Ballade in F Minor, Op.52. Wine and cheese will be served. Tickets, \$12; \$6 students and seniors, available at the door or by calling 908-790-0700.

"IN LOVE WITH BROADWAY: A CELEBRATION OF BROADWAY LOVE SONGS": 2 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12, Middlesex Public Library, Community Room, 1300 Mountain Ave. Presented by the Friends of the Middlesex Public Library. Performing will be baritone James Michael. Free. For further information, visit the Friends online at www.middlesexfol.org (<http://www.middlesexfol.org>), or www.facebook.com/middlesexfol (<http://www.facebook.com>)

[/middlesexfol](#)), or call the library at 732-356-6602.



Violinist and NJ Symphony Orchestra Associate Concertmaster Brennan Sweet will perform at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 14, in a Bach to Handel Recital at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield. (Photo: ~Courtesy Brennan Sweet)

BACH TO HANDEL RECITAL: 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 414 E. Broad St., Westfield. The Friends of Music at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield will present a recital performed in tandem by violinist Brennan Sweet, associate concertmaster of The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and Jonathan Spitz, NJSO's principal cellist. Baroque composers Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederic Handel are featured on this Valentine's Day program. Sweet will perform Bach's Partita III in E Major for solo violin (BWV 1006), composed in 1720 in six movements: Preludio, Loure, Menuets (I and II), Bourrée and Gigue. Cellist Spitz will perform Bach's Cello Suite II in D minor for solo cello (BWV 1008) (1717-23), composed, likewise, in a symmetrically conceived cycle of Preludio followed by five Baroque dance-type variations. Sweet and Spitz will cap the recital with a duet — The Passacaglia from Handel's Suite in G minor (HWV 432), arranged for violin and cello by Johan Halvorsen. Tickets at the door are \$20; free for students. Following the recital, attendees are invited to meet and greet Messrs. Sweet and Spitz at a reception in the Cloister. Contact Director Banks at 908-451-5082, or email cbnj123@verizon.net.



Celebrated Cellist at St. Paul's, Westfield. Jonathan Spitz, principal cellist with the NJ Symphony Orchestra, will perform in tandem with violinist Brennan Sweet at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 14, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield. (Photo: ~Courtesy Jonathan Spitz)

AN AFTERNOON WITH CORNELL GUNTER'S COASTERS, THE DRIFTERS AND THE PLATTERS:

2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14, The Theatre at Raritan Valley Community College, Route 28 and Lamington Road, North Branch section of Branchburg. Celebrate a musical Valentine's Day with the classic sounds of the 1950s and '60s. The musical afternoon will feature the greatest hits of Cornell Gunter's Coasters, The Drifters and The Platters. The Coasters will offer hits like "Young Blood," "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Charlie Brown," "Poison Ivy," "Along Came Jones" and "Yakety Yak." Selections from The Platters will include such tunes as "Only You (And You Alone)," "The Great Pretender," "(You've Got) The Magic Touch," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and "With This Ring." And don't miss such Drifters' hits as "Under the Boardwalk," "This Magic Moment," "Up On The Roof," "Save the Last Dance For Me" and "On Broadway." Tickets, \$25 and \$35. To purchase tickets or for more information, call the Box Office, 908-725-3420, or order online at www.rvccArts.org (<http://www.rvccArts.org>). Ticket holders and members of the community are invited to participate in a free 1950's-'60s era swing dance lesson, from 12:45 to 1:30 p.m., at the Theatre at RVCC. The

dance lesson will be conducted by instructors from Ludo's Ballroom of Whitehouse. To reserve a spot in the class, email your name and number of people participating to Lisa Melillo at Lisa.Melillo@raritanval.edu. For further information on RVCC, visit www.raritanval.edu (<http://www.raritanval.edu>).



Classics Tunes from the 1950s and 1960s will be heard when The Coasters, above, and the Drifters perform at The Theatre at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14. (Photo: ~Photo courtesy Raritan Valley Community College)

7, 8, 9 and 10: Yummy in love

BREAKFAST TO GO!: 7 to 9 a.m. Friday, Feb. 12, Kangaroo Kids Child Care and Learning Center, 1047 Route 28, Branchburg. Moms and Dads are invited to stop by on their way to work to pick up a breakfast to go. This is Kangaroo Kids thanks to its families, friends and the community. www.kangarookidschildcare.com (<http://www.kangarookidschildcare.com>); www.facebook.com/pages/Kangaroo-Kids-Child-Care-and-Learning-Center/301126633639 (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kangaroo-Kids-Child-Care-and-Learning-Center/301126633639>).

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Celebrate Valentine's Day with some chocolate. (Photo: File photo)

10th ANNUAL CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL: 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, The Congregational Church of Bound Brook, 209 Church St., Bound Brook. Homemade cookies, cakes, candy, and other chocolate treats will be on sale for you to take home or enjoy in the festively decorated social hall. There will be an ice cream sundae station, a beverage station, and fresh chocolate covered strawberries. Free admission; proceeds go to the missions of the church. Visit cobb.squarespace.com (<http://cobb.squarespace.com>), like the Congregational Church of Bound Brook's page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ccbb.church (<http://www.facebook.com/ccbb.church>), or call 732-356-1293.



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Staying Healthy: Express love for others and yourself

(<http://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/life/wellness/2016/02/08/staying-healthy-love-others-and-yourself/79809356/>)

VALENTINE WINE TRAIL: noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, and Sunday, Feb. 14, Villa Milagro Vineyard, 33 Warren Glen Road — County Rd 627, Phillipsburg. Celebrate "El Dia de Amor" with the taste of chocolate, the romantic twinkle of lights and delicious Villa Milagro wines on the GSWGA Chocolate Wine Trail. Sample "Beseme," the vineyard's "kiss me" wine for sweethearts. \$5 admission includes wine tastings, chocolate treats, and a gift monogrammed. www.VillaMilagroVineyards.com (<http://www.VillaMilagroVineyards.com>). 908-995-2072.

WINE AND CHOCOLATE WEEKEND: Noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13 and Sunday, Feb. 14, Alba Vineyard, 269 Riegelsville Warren Glen Road, Milford. Treat your valentine to samples of nationally award-winning wines paired with chocolates and culinary treats. The tasting experience is \$20 per person (21 and older), which includes samples of Alba's wines, chocolates, food pairings, and an etched Alba wine glass. 908-995-7800; www.albavineyard.com (<http://www.albavineyard.com>).



MYCENTRALJERSEY

Travel: Think outside the glass this Valentine's Day

(<http://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/life/2016/02/02/wine-and-chocolate-wine-trail-weekend/79473538/>)

ROMANCE AND FLOWERS FOR YOUR VALENTINE: 2 to 3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11, Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center, 190 Lord Stirling Road, Basking Ridge section of Bernards. This session of the Family Program Series will feature Shauna Moore, Somerset County Park Rosarian, who will demonstrate ideas for floral arrangements using roses and other blooms to create romantic compositions that are easily re-created at home. She will share some brief history on the symbolism of the flowers as they relate to the Victorian culture where flowers were the language of love. Free; registration required. Visit www.somersetcountyparks.org (<http://www.somersetcountyparks.org>) or call the EEC at 908-766-2489.

11 and 12: Ride or run

"I LOVE HORSES" VALENTINE INTRODUCTORY RIDE: Sunday, Feb. 14. Check-in time for this western-style ride, 1 p.m.; ride is from 1 to 3 p.m. Lord Stirling Stable, 256 South Maple Ave., Basking Ridge section of Bernards. Individuals with little or no riding experience are invited to enjoy a brief group lesson with one of Lord Stirling Stable's certified riding instructors, followed by a one-hour guided ride through the equestrian trails of Lord Stirling Park. Guides will answer questions and attempt to identify the various plants, birds and animals that may be encountered along the trails. Youth and adults who weigh less than 200 pounds, are at least 9 years of age, and are at least 5 feet tall are eligible to participate. Youth between 9 and 18 years old must be registered by a parent or legal guardian. Participants between 9 and 11 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian on the ride. \$35 for Somerset County residents; \$45 for non-residents. Registration at the Stable office continues through Thursday, Feb. 11, as space permits. Contact the Stable office at 908-766-5955; NJ Relay 711 for individuals with a hearing or speech impairment. Information on this and other events of the Somerset County Park Commission can be found at www.somersetcountyparks.org (<http://www.somersetcountyparks.org>).



Lord Stirling Stable will host the "I Love Horses" Valentine Introductory Ride on Sunday, Feb. 14. Check-in time for this western-style ride is 1 p.m.. and the ride is from 1 to 3 p.m.. Lord Stirling Stable is in the Basking Ridge section of Bernards. (Photo: ~Somerset County Park Commission)

CUPID CHASE: LIVE, LOVE, RUN: Saturday, Feb. 13, Buccleuch Park, 321 Easton Ave., New Brunswick. Registration 8 a.m.; run 10 a.m. 5K in support of people with disabilities. Hosted by Community Options, Inc. \$30 on or before Friday, Feb.12; \$40 on Saturday, Feb. 13. See more at: http://imatter.comop.org/site/TR?fr_id=1255&pg=entry#sthash.TAU8rhMI.dpuf (http://imatter.comop.org/site/TR?fr_id=1255&pg=entry#sthash.TAU8rhMI.dpuf). Visit www.Facebook.com/CupidsChase (<http://www.Facebook.com/CupidsChase>) and follow them on Twitter at @CupidsChase5k.

13 and 14: Love is in the stars

"ROMANCING THE STARS": 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Raritan Valley Community College, Planetarium, 118 Lamington Road, North Branch section of Branchburg. Star show for couples ages 16 and older will offer a light-hearted look at the Universe with a show that focuses on stars, constellations and stories that all celebrate love. \$15 per couple. Reservations are strongly suggested. 908-231-8805; visit www.raritanval.edu/planetarium (<http://www.raritanval.edu/planetarium>).



The planetarium at Raritan Valley Community College is ready for Valentine's Day. (Photo: COURTESY OF RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLANETARIUM)

12th ANNUAL VALENTINE'S DAY PSYCHIC FAIR: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14, Days Inn, Route 22 East, Bridgewater. Couples readings: \$45 for 20 minutes. This day is also Peace Vibration Day, SuZen RavenHeart will hold a 20-minute meditation and drumming session at noon to bring in this Special Energy from all those participating all around the world. There will also be astrology, tarot and numerology readings. Special guest readers: Sydney Francis, channeler and author of "Steps To Ascension," will be conducting readings and channeling sessions all day. Michka "White Raven" Grant is a tarot/intuitive/chakra reader, shaman and meditation instructor. This event is conducted by "Be The Change" Life Coaching of Central Jersey. Admission is food and nonfood items for the Food Bank Network of Somerset County and New Jersey Animeals, a nonprofit agency that delivers pet food for the pets of seniors. Exhibitors include: Keystone Gemstone Designs Co. by SuZen & Spa Products, crystals and more with Michael; chair massage with Nika; Next Level Healing (diet, digestion, absorption, elimination) with Susan Richter R.N.; Alternative Health Relief, Bio Energetics with Francine; Barbara Steingas, Reiki and Chakra healings; and Molly and her personally blended Essential Oils from India. The readings and healing sessions will cost \$35 for 20 minutes; couples receive 20 minutes for two for \$45 (\$1 for each additional minute). Email: psychicfairbw@gmail.com for more information. Visit www.suzenprevents.com (<http://www.suzenprevents.com>) and click on promotions.

16, 17, and 18: Dance the night away

PBSN SEMI-FORMAL VALENTINE'S DANCE WITH RUMBA INSTRUCTION: Thursday, Feb. 11, The Manor Restaurant, The Dome Nightclub, 111 Prospect Ave., West Orange. Rumba instruction 6:30 p.m., dance 8 p.m. DJ will be taking requests and spinning the hottest dance tracks of today and yesterday all night long. Mix of oldies, disco, Latin and top 40 music. Singles, couples, friends, guests, and walk-ins welcome; expected median age 55. Dress to impress, semi-formal attire. Cash bar. \$13-\$20 admission includes optional one hour Rumba dance lesson and dance. Registration 6:30 p.m. Class is for beginner and intermediate level dancers. No partner needed. Just drop in, pay at the door. Held by Professional and Business Social Network (PBSN). Membership not required.



Fly high this Valentine's Day with The Dirty Dancing lift. (Photo: USA Today)

VALENTINE'S DAY DINNER DANCE WITH PIAZZA DI ROMA & TOTAL SOUND ENTERTAINMENT: 7 to 11 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 13, Piazza Di Roma, 1178 Highway 34, Aberdeen. Join Piazza Di Roma with Total Sound Entertainment and create a Valentine's Day memory that your loved one won't soon forget. Everyone is invited to "Feel the Love" this year with a four hour premium open bar, passed hors d'oeuvres, dinner, dessert and coffee for \$180 inclusive, per couple. Reservations required. www.piazzadiroma.com (<http://www.piazzadiroma.com>). 732-583-3565.

ST. VALENTINE'S DINNER DANCE: 6 to 11 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Villa Milagro Vineyard, 33 Warren Glen Road — County Road 627, Phillipsburg. Limited seating for this very personal, romantic event. Start your evening with hors d'oeuvres served in the Vintner's Residence. Meet your chef as he prepares your dinner. Enjoy four courses paired with Villa Milagro's exceptional wines. Then waltz among twinkling lights as you listen to jazz soloist, Ginni Corsello. \$75. Reservations required. Priority to vineyard customers. www.VillaMilgroVineyards.com/ValentineDance2016.html (<http://www.VillaMilgroVineyards.com/ValentineDance2016.html>). 908-995-2072.

19 and 20: Love and marriage

RENEW YOUR VOWS, RENEW YOUR MARRIAGE: Willow Grove Presbyterian Church, 1961 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains. Couples from all faith traditions are invited to attend one or both marriage-building opportunities available at the church this weekend. From 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, in Alexander Hall, married couples, those considering marriage, and individuals can participate in an interactive learning event, "Building Healthy Marriages: Adding to Your Marital Toolbox." This event includes interactive presentations, discussion, and an opportunity for spouses to apply what they learn to their relationship. Materials used will come from nationally respected marriage enrichment experts, including Dr. Harville Hendrix, Helen LeKelly Hunt and Gary Chapman. On Sunday, Feb. 14, couples can join others in the church sanctuary at the conclusion of the Sunday worship service (11:15 a.m.) to renew their wedding vows. The Rev. Cynthia Cochran-Carney will officiate. A reception will follow and each couple will receive a special gift to commemorate the occasion. The worship service begins at 10 a.m. and all are welcome to attend. To register for the workshop or renewal of vows or both, contact the church office at 908-232-5678 or email office@willowgrovechurch.org by Feb. 11. For those attending the Saturday, Feb. 13, workshop, there will be a fee of \$10 per couple for materials; the Sunday, Feb. 14, event is free. For more information about church programs and ministries, visit www.willowgrovechurch.org (<http://www.willowgrovechurch.org>) and their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Willow.Grove.Presbyterian.Church (<http://www.facebook.com/Willow.Grove.Presbyterian.Church>).



Couples from all faith traditions are invited to attend one or both marriage-building opportunities available on Valentine's Day Weekend at Willow Grove Presbyterian Church in Scotch Plains. (Photo: ~Courtesy Willow Grove Presbyterian Church)



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National Adoption Day: Love that knows no bounds

(<http://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/2015/11/18/national-adoption-day-love-knows-no-bounds/75997984/>)

CELEBRATION OF LOVE AND ROMANCE: 9 a.m. to 6:10 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14, 46th Street and Broadway, New York City. The Times Square Alliance will host a full day celebration of love and romance. Share fairy tale moments starting with surprise proposals, followed by wedding ceremonies and culminating in a large vow renewal ceremony. Live surprise proposals between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Duffy Square (Times Square, between 46 and 47 streets, and between Broadway and 7th Avenue). Couples will have their special moment shared on one of the iconic screens overlooking Times Square as they surprise their valentine and pop the big question. Live wedding ceremonies between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Duffy Square near the Heart of Hearts sculpture. Vow Renewal Ceremony 6 to 6:10 p.m. in Duffy Square at the foot of the Red Steps, with more than 200 partners. Also, Heart of Hearts – Times Square Valentine Heart, now through Sunday, March 6, in Duffy Square. This year, Times Square Arts partnered with Center for Architecture to select Heart of Hearts by Collective-LOK (CLOK) as the winning design. CLOK's Heart of Hearts is a faceted ring of golden, mirrored hearts that creates a kaleidoscopic pavilion multiplying the spectacle of Times Square. Diamond-shaped spaces inside each heart will create "kissing booths" within the ring where couples will find their activities mirrored, allowing privacy and publicity in the Heart of Hearts. For more information, visit www.timessquarenyc.org/times-square-arts/projects/at-the-crossroads/heart-of-hearts/index.aspx (<http://www.timessquarenyc.org/times-square-arts/projects/at-the-crossroads/heart-of-hearts/index.aspx>). Visit www.TimesSquareNYC.org/Love (<http://www.TimesSquareNYC.org/Love>).



QuickChek's chocolate-covered strawberry frozen chocolate treat . (Photo: ~Courtesy Mensch & Co.)

21: Hot, hot, hot

FUEL UP: If you need a last-minute gift for your Valentine, consider heading over to your local QuickChek, which is featuring a handcrafted chocolate-covered strawberry frozen chocolate. Based in the Whitehouse Station section of Readington, the fresh convenience market chain is offering this limited time 16-ounce treat in their in-store Q Cafés, where they take the most decadent hot chocolate recipe ever and blend it with ice into finely crushed chocolatey perfection. It's made with dark chocolate and real strawberry puree. The price: \$1.99. Visit www.quickchek.com (<http://www.quickchek.com>).

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