Valentine’s Day can be big business

Expressing one’s love to another is a celebrated custom on Valentine’s Day; whereby sweethearts and family members present gifts to one another, such as cards, candy, flowers and other symbols of affection. Opinions differ as to who was the original Valentine, but the most popular theory is that he was a clergyman who was executed for secretly marrying couples in ancient Rome.

In A.D. 496, Pope Gelasius I declared Feb. 14 as Valentine Day. Esther Howland, a native of Massachusetts, is given credit for selling the first mass-produced valentine cards in the 1840s. The spirit continues today with even young children exchanging valentine’s cards with their classmates.

California in 2009 led the nation in the number of chocolate and cocoa manufacturing establishments, with 135, followed by Pennsylvania, with 111, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Total value of shipments in 2009 for firms producing chocolate and cocoa products was $12.6 billion. Non-chocolate confectionery product manufacturing was a $7.4 billion industry

In 2010, Americans ate 24.7 pound of candy per capita.

The combined wholesale value of domestically produced cut roses in 2010 for all operations with $100,000 or more in sales was $17 million.

In February 2011, U.S. jewelry stores sold $2.27 billion in merchandise.

The number of marriages performed in Nevada during 2009 was 108,150. So many couples tie the knot in the Silver State that

it ranked fifth nationally in marriages, even though its total population that year among states was 35th. California ranked first in marriages.

The number of dating service establishments nationwide as of 2007 was 393. These establishments, which include Internet dating services, employed 3,125 people and pulled in $928 million in revenue.