

Is Valentine's Day a legitimate holiday?



Jennifer Webb
News Editor

It seems to have become a tradition that every February 14th is a national day of romance. But where did this day originate, and why is it so widely recognized?

So it appears everyone tries to cash in on this day of 'Love'. Everyone from small town mom and pop businesses to nationally recognized corporations. What exactly is the appeal of a day that originally came from a Saint named Valentine? Who is this mysterious saint, and why do we celebrate this holiday? The history of Valentine's Day, and its patron saint, is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains relics of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition.

Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were

martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young, single men - his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

According another legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'Valentine' greeting. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl, who may have been his jailer's daughter. She visited him during his confinement, before his death. It is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'from your Valentine,' an expression that still is used today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legend is murky, the stories emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and romantic figure. By the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

The question now seems to be not why do we celebrate this holiday, but has it become too commercialized? In Great Brit-

ain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the seventeenth and eighteenth century; it was common for friends and lovers in all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes. By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct manifestation of one's feelings were discouraged. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to the ease of communicating one's feelings.

Today, direct expression is no longer discouraged by society; in fact, it is quite the opposite. It is becoming more acceptable. People have gone so far as to profess their love on national television. Just look at all the "talk shows" or contests the media encourages. People are competing to get that 30-second spot or longer to express their devotions or opinions, and essay contests to declare their undying love. Has this holiday lost its meaning, or has it naturally evolved with the times? As a big supporter of Valentines Day and profession of love publicly, I believe that there is nothing wrong with the wide spread commercialization of Valentines

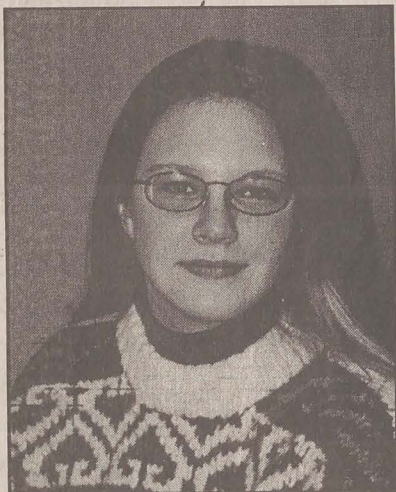
Day. Because of this, we have more options available for communicating our feelings.

Valentines Day has not only become a day of love expression, but a day just to say "your special". We have everything from homemade valentine cards to little stuffed characters that sing and dance. Hallmark, one nationally recognized corporation, has every kind of card imaginable. Everything from "I love you from the depths of my soul," to "It's Valentines Day, take your clothes off!" And I know you've all seen the numerous teddy bears, candy hearts, and flower arrangements that can express any emotion you may think of.

We can all remember making bags to collect the valentines you got at your parties in 3rd and 4th grade, and getting the class list so you wouldn't forget anyone. I remember making cupcakes with my mom the night before Valentine's Day, and quietly slipping the candy hearts with "I Love You", printed on them to my crush.

Just what can we get from all of this? Love is simply something to be celebrated. So this Valentines Day, take advantage of the opportunity to let that special someone know how you feel about him or her.

How could we forget a King?



TINA WILLIAMS
Features Editor

I was embarrassed to say I was an ACC student on January 15, 2001. It was Martin Luther King Day and the college I am usually proud of attending did not acknowledge the FEDERAL holiday.

There is no legitimate reason for skipping over the commemoration of a national

hero. The American people decided Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. made an important enough impact on their country to be honored every January.

Who is ACC to devalue that? King was an internationally known Nobel prizewinning advocate of nonviolence for social change. His eloquent speeches rallied thousands of people together to improve civil rights in America. His most famous speech, the March on Washington Address, reached millions as they viewed its delivery on live TV.

"I have a dream..." they were words that shook the nation.

His commitment to better society led Congress to adopt the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The bill ended segregation in public places and outlawed discrimination in employment by

race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

King didn't stop after the bill was passed. Before his assassination, he began a "Poor People's Campaign" to deal with economic problems and he spoke out against American involvement in the Vietnam War. After his untimely death, it was the memory of his endless dedication that prompted a new national holiday-Martin Luther King Day.

You can't mail a letter. You can't stop at the bank. But you must attend classes at ACC, as we did on January 15th. I understand Alpena's population may not be as diverse as Detroit, but what kind of message is ACC sending to students and the community by holding school on MLK Day? The act tells me "we" don't care about equality, culture, or history. "We" would rather

Did You Know ? February is National Black History Month

celebrate the first day of deer season (which we had off) than the legacy of a man who dedicated himself to civil rights and nonviolence in America. King's work has affected every American's life, even the student's and staff of ACC.

I have a dream... one day ACC will recognize the significance of Martin Luther King Day and will celebrate diversity and the fight for peace in America!

THE POLEMIC

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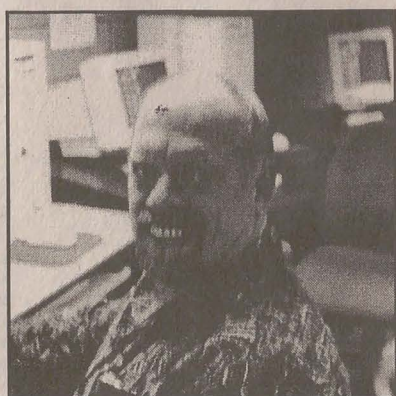
Harry Potter... Just For Kids?

What is your opinion of the Harry Potter Series?

Interviews and photos by Marc Gauze Staff Writer



Jenna D'Amico
"I think they're great books and I love reading them. They're really fun and I love them."

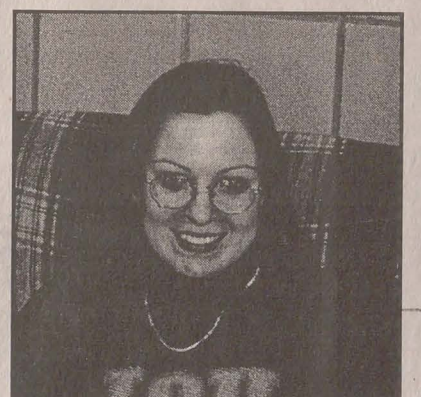


Victoria Santiago



Darise Bannett

"I think they're great books and I love reading them. They're really fun and I love them."



Lisa Keyser
"I think they are great. The kids really get into them."