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& CRYSTAL JEON

Well boys and girls, it's that dreaded time of the year again. Report cards? Try again. Prom? Not quite. It's the time when the big "V-word" clouds our vision and creates much turmoil. Valentine's Day used to be so much more enjoyable back in second grade when everyone was required to make a valentine for the entire class. Now valentines are made for that "special someone." Whichever way one feels, Valentine's Day is a holiday filled with love, stress, and most importantly, gleeful fun.

It's hard to believe that underneath all the lovey-dovey, icky mush, the history of Valentine's Day actually began with a saint, Saint Valentine. One legend tells of how Valentine was executed for continuing to marry couples even after Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage for his young soldiers. Another tells how Valentine

fell in love with his jailor's daughter, and before his execution, left her a letter signed: "From your Valentine," thus becoming the first to use the eventful phrase.

In today's times the history behind Valentine's Day is not important; it's more about getting the right gift, being extra sweet to your someone, and deciding what love really is. At Science and Math, this sugarcoated holiday tends to bring out either the best or the worst in students. Sighs of content or groans of disapproval arise when Valentine's Day is mentioned. Take one junior,

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Brij Verma, for example. When asked what word came to mind when he heard about Valentine's Day, he said, "sweet." He is looking forward to going out with a date on Valentine's Day, and is

keeping his surprise for her under close wraps. He says that it is actually less stressful having a girlfriend on Valentine's Day than not having one. When another student was asked what he thought about Valentine's Day, he quickly replied in a robotic tone, "WebAssign." To

go even further, several males responded with a careless, "I don't really think about it much." Hopefully they won't question why they are dateless on V-Day.

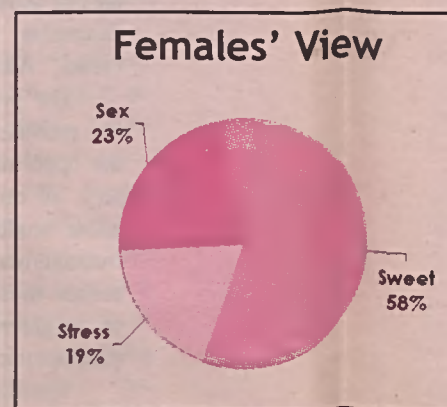
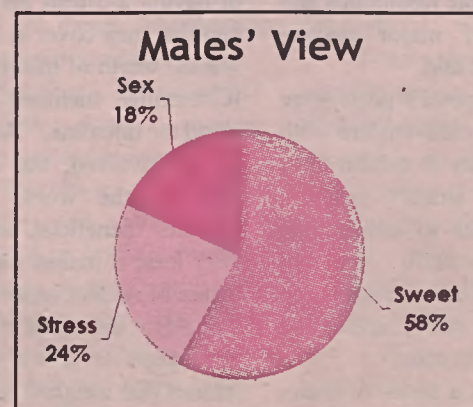
Girls have a different

Valentine

Sweet and r

or just a pathetic exc

**"Out of the three words:
sweet, stress, and sex,
which one comes to your mind when
Valentine's Day is mentioned?"**



The Other Valentine's Day

STEPHANIE POOLE

At least 1 in 3 women and girls has been sexually abused or beaten in her lifetime. A woman is raped every 90 seconds in the United States and every 26 seconds in South Africa. Every 21 hours there is a rape on each American college campus.

A woman is battered every 15 seconds in the U.S., usually by her intimate partner. Over 33% of murdered females are killed by their partners, versus 3.6% of males.

The U.S. Justice Department reports that 1 in 2 rape victims is under 18 years old, and 1 in 6 is under 12.

The V-Day web site lists these statistics and many more in an effort to remind visitors of the cause the organization is continually fighting—violence against women and girls.

Formed five years ago as a single Valentine's Day campaign, V-Day has grown into a fervent annual movement with worldwide support. In 2001, Worth Magazine named V-Day one of "America's Best 100 Charities".

V-Day actively promotes and aids existing anti-violence organizations and events around the globe. Independently, V-Day is marked by an annual line-up of projects and programs taking place around Valentine's Day that raise awareness and funds for the international organization.

V-Day programs are separated into distinct promotions—the College Campaign, the Worldwide Campaign, the Rape Free Zone Campaign, the International Stop Rape Contest, and various others. Recently, V-Day was able to take action in Afghanistan,

"Reading *The Vagina Monologues* helped me realize that women should be confident and proud of themselves and their bodies, not because they please men but because they are unique and powerful in their own ways."

- Gabrielle Scronce ('02)

after years of witnessing injustices against women there, and co-hosted the Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy in December of 2001.

The most recognized V-Day initiatives are performances of Eve Ensler's Obie

Award-winning play "The Vagina Monologues". These are organized by local volunteers during V-Day's nationwide benefit season (currently January 24 - April 13, 2002).

"The Vagina Monologues" is a play that allows for no shame in celebrating women's intimate body parts and calls out for the end of female suppression. It points a finger at society for cautioning women about their sexual desires, charging this denial of female sexuality as the source of many women's embarrassment, loss of sexual confidence, and low self-esteem.

The play draws on humorous, frank, emotional, and sometimes shocking personal monologues based on interviews with women of different backgrounds and life stories. It makes no attempt to attack the male gender, seeking only to affirm female liberation from social, emotional, and physical abuse.

Duke University, taking part in V-Day's College Campaign, will be presenting "The Vagina Monologues" for



Joan Marcus

Eve Ensler performing *The Vagina Monologues*, an empowering play that points a finger at society for cautioning women about their sexual desires.

its third year in a row on February 14th and 15th. Duke's production is directed by students and performed by a large cast of students along with University staff volunteers. Proceeds from this performance will be donated to the Durham Crisis Response Center, Duke's Office of Sexual Assault Support Services, and groups benefiting women in Afghanistan.

UNC is promoting an entire week of events beginning on February 11th with a benefit concert and concluding, after the February 15th and 16th "The Vagina

Monologues" performances, with a silent auction.

Many other local colleges and universities, including Davidson, Elon, Wake Forest, and Meredith, are also presenting "The Vagina Monologues" in February. NC State University is offering a later production of the play on March 5th and 6th. Tickets can be purchased at university box offices.

For more information about *The Vagina Monologues*, see www.vaginamonologues.com, and for information about V-Day, see www.v-day.org.