

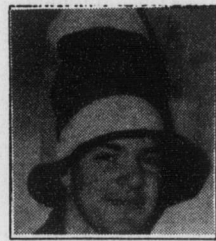
the
inquirer
& reporter

by Becca Lee

What is your opinion of Valentine's Day?



My opinion depends on whether I'm involved with someone. I think it's stupid and lame if I don't have someone, and it's great if I do.
-Rosa Evergreen, first year



I think Valentine's day is cheesy because if you do have a partner you should show them that you love them everyday of the year, not just one day.
-- Chris Oswald, first year



It always seems that right before Valentine's Day people break up.
-Heather Loring, senior



It gives me a reason to do something for the ones I love. The only problem is that I shouldn't need a reason. Random gifts mean more.
- Mike Barney, junior

Love is not for sale

LORI KERR
guest columnist

Valentine's Day 1984. I remember a room full of scurrying 5-year-olds making envelopes to hold valentines from fellow classmates... I remember the teacher cutting out red and pink construction hearts with the big scissors... I remember the happy expression of each child as they collected their valentines and spent their free time reading them...no one was made to feel excluded and everyone truly loved everyone else, because no one knew any better...

Valentine's Day 1997. I sat down to write this editorial many times. I asked many people for their opinions on the subject. I considered all the bad things I had to say about "V-Day". I tried to decide where I stood. How is it possible for anyone to hate Valentine's Day, a holiday which, after all, collects more revenue than Christmas? How could I bitch about it, when I had no constructive way to fix its problems? What did I really have to add to all the cynical talk about the holiday, anyway? I settled on the fact that I hate the holiday—a holiday devoted entirely to love in all its many forms.

Sounds like a lovely idea, but is that really what the holiday is about? Or is it something more trite, more trivial, and more economic? I think it's essential for people to give and receive love, but is it necessary to devote a day to love? Is Valentine's Day a holiday to celebrate all forms of love or is it a holiday to show off your companion, or to show how much money you can blow to prove you love someone?

Now, I know what you're thinking as you read this: "you're just bitter" or "damn cynical people"—but to be entirely honest this will be the first Valentine's Day that I have spent alone in four years. As a matter of fact, this is the first year that I don't feel particularly bitter toward the holiday. I think expressing the fact that you love someone is a very positive thing; the main problem I have with the holiday is that it has become very exclusionary. Each and every year this holiday would roll around and I would think, why do I need someone to buy me things to prove that they have strong feelings for me? Valentine's Day is pushed on us by every commercial, t.v. sitcom, and movie ad we see. Basically all it comes down to at the end of the day is a \$5 card that gets shoved in a drawer, wilting flowers, and deflating balloons, and that is for those people lucky enough to be in a relationship at this heinous time of year.

Meanwhile if you're not seeing someone you're made to feel abnormal and excluded. If you're not with someone, you're no one. I hate the false show of any emotion, so, somehow prescribing a day to be in love is a gross and unnecessary act of oppression by our society.

Is there an answer? Is there a way to fix this dilemma (since we all know everyone loves to be loved)? I think we should take the day back, send a card to your mom or grandma (one made of construction paper and tiny red and pink glued-on hearts) and this time, you get to use the big scissors.

Inauguration day chosen in ignorance

JACOB NOBLE
staff writer

On January 20, 1997, the civil rights movement took a big fall. Instead of rejoicing and celebrating the life of a man who almost singlehandedly brought about change in the sixties, we instead decided to celebrate the re-election of a president, who just like those who came before him upheld the racial prejudices of the great society in which we call America.

The ignorant remarks which our president made during the inauguration, just heightened the reasons why we needed to postpone the inauguration and reflect a true being. Comments such as: "...the bold conviction that we are all created equal." Clinton then goes on to say that our great America was, "...preserved in the 19th century, when our nation spread across the continent, saved the union, and abolished the awful scourge of slavery."

What is Clinton thinking! Has he lost track of all the tragedies that have occurred along the way? Has Clinton forgotten that slavery was not abolished until almost three-fourths into the nineteenth century? Did Clinton forget that even though slavery ended, the nightmare was still in place? After blacks were freed from slavery they were subjected to the harsh realities of what we now know as racism.

Ignorant statements like that and others which were made in Clinton's speech are the reason why we need to celebrate King's birthday. Racism, one of the few constants in America, is why we stop and look back at King's life and recognize all of his accomplishments.

Clinton then asks the question, "Will we all come together, or come apart?" Well, Bill, you answered that question by holding your overpaid and not-well-thought-out party. How can a country which is so divided come together when on one side, one group of people celebrated the re-entering of an already demonstrated slow-poke, and another group of people celebrated the life of a man who not only gave hope to blacks, but who opened the eyes of all to the wrongs of racism?

By our country celebrating the inauguration of such an unenlightened president on what some consider a very important day, King's day, we not only took a step back in the civil rights movement, we took a step forward in the direction of separation, a problem which Clinton even says is "America's curse."

I am sure Clinton is familiar with King's "I have a dream" speech; in fact he mentions it in his inauguration speech, at least he remembered what that day was really about. In King's speech he dreams that "one day this nation will rise up and live out its true meaning of its creed." Clinton, alludes

to this quote, but then why did he not hold true to it?

For those of us who know our constitution, one can make the argument that in it, it states that the 3rd Monday in January shall be designated as the swearing in ceremony. So what! The Constitution was written by a bunch of racist slave-holders who did not care one bit about the rights of others, except for those who were like themselves. Clinton, being the most powerful man in the country could have done something instead he played the role of the true "Southern democrat." Clinton said, "As times change, so must government." But once again Clinton's actions contradicted his words.

In all our country remained divided on the day in which we were supposedly to come together. While some chose to celebrate change in America, others fell prey to the ever-present racism sponsored by our government and its most powerful figure. On January 20, 1997, was the dream remembered? I think not. As King points out in his "I Have a Dream Speech," which was made almost 35 years earlier, "...the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land." As maybe King would have put it, this past January the celebration of King's accomplishments was deemed a bad check and returned due to "insufficient funds."