

Rethinking Valentines' Day

by pat miller

Last year when I was Susanne Dean's research assistant I dug up what historical information there was concerning Valentine's Day. Ms. Dean utilized this material in a brilliant essay concerning the character and vicissitudes of the ancient holiday, and this year it is my charge to continue the tradition and offer some opinions, reflections and further material evidence as to the true nature of this regularly scheduled phenomenon.

Journal co-editor Charlotte Porter doesn't like Valentine's Day whatsoever, as according to herself "I don't ever get a Valentine". A sculptor from the BCA says the event "sucks". Ed Hendricks, a candidate for student body president, says he has a "wife and two kids", and therefore he regards the day as "a very nice day to take my wife out to dinner". However, it is the opinion of Richard Butterfield, who now holds the office that Ed aspires to, that Valentines Day is a very bad thing. For him it is the anniversary of a 72-stitches accident, and "it's dumb to send cards with little hearts anyway".

Before continuing with this unscientific sampling of public opinion, it could be enlightening to recapitulate the rather sketchy history of St. Valentine's Day. First of all, not only was there a real St. Valentine, there were three, and they all died or were born or did something significant

on February 14. All of them were martyrs. But strangely enough, it appears that none of them had anything to do with what we now commonly regard as the loving holiday.

Then there is the Roman feast of Lupercalia, during which young men and maidens had their names tossed into a box, from which couples were drawn. The male and female pairs danced around and sang a lot together, with the additional attraction that the fellow became the girl's "gallant" for a year. Later this event became Christianized, which cut out a lot of the fooling around, and finally the Christians substituted a saint's name for the day, and changed the name-drawing to a gift-exchange, and rather arbitrarily chose February 14 as the date for the event.

Despite all this derivation another very like cause for our present celebration of February 14 is the Middle Ages' belief that this was the day the birds mated, or got married, or even got Christianized?

For Bill Lowrance, "the hot anxiety of thrusting passion" associated with this day "leads me to anticipation of "Rethinking Thinking" which refers, of course, to a seminar featuring Elizabeth Sewell, to be held on campus the night of February 14. Somewhat in the same vein (so to speak), Susan Clark responds to

the concept of Valentine's Day by noting that "it will be a good exhibit", referring of course to the art/love showing to be held in Rowe Building on Thursday.

Buddy McManus searched and searched within himself but could finally arrive at no opinion or emotion concerning the saint's day. Susan Lockhart, a recent transfer to UNCC, was of much the same disposition. She confessed a tendency to ignore the pseudo-holiday, simply because it always fails to affect her. Journal photographer John Baynard simply advises everyone to visit the doctor for a check-up on Valentine's.

A recent article in the Charlotte Observer details the Valentine's Day sentiments of Gloria Steinon, who happily enough, doesn't waste too much time on the subject. The nicest part of it, Gloria reveals, is that Valentine's Day incurs no great burden of preparation on the part of the female. As a matter of fact, it's true that this is one holiday that incurs hardly any burden on anyone, and perhaps that's why it don't get no respect. Like most American holidays, Valentine's seems now bereft of all or any of the great rhythms that inspired festivals like Lupercalia, and since it's not mandatory either, nobody cares anymore.

But hope is on the way. The Journal, always concerned with the public need, has suddenly

decided to establish a "VD Tradition" at UNCC, in hopes of restoring some of the primal human connection to the need for a festival of love. Or if not that, perhaps it can recreate a sense of mandatory celebration. At any rate, the Journal has rented the rock stump immediately beside the Bell Tower for the entire duration of Valentine's Day, February 14, 1974. The purpose of this rental is to allow readers of the paper and/or friendly acquaintances a place for the voicing of one-way or even mutual affections. Due to the benevolence of the Journal, no one may feel afraid to leap up beside the Belk thing on Valentine's Day and relate the truth abiding in his/her respective heart. This is no joke.

Bill Frye and Tom Duley offer an interesting dialogue on the nature of St. Valentine's. Tom quite reasonably suggests that February 14 is a much too early date for a celebration of love. It should come a month or two later, he argues, when the skies are warmer and love is truly in the air. On the other hand, Mr. Frye regards the holiday held at any time as a "Crock of shit". Borrowing words from H.D. Thoreau, Bill additionally remarks: "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!"

To lend this exposition some measure of historical significance it is perhaps best to relate the

feelings about Valentine's Day garnered from Susanne Dean, who initiated this commentary last year. To Susanne February 14 offers several opportunities. It is "a good day to send candygrams to President Nixon", and "give your boyfriend the clap." Furthermore, the date recalls the time to make a "yearly donation to the Church of God the Indifferent", and this has some giggly connection with "kissing Henry Miller on the cheek." Susanne assures me that this last idea will make a few people chuckle somewhere. In toto, Ms. Dean reminds all that V-Day is the only time to wash "your grandmother's dirty socks".

Mike Aldridge, the other co-editor of this paper, sits at the business desk across from his friendly acquaintance, the stately and Mormonesque Mary McNeill. A few moments ago they were communicating nonverbally right in the center of the Journal office, and now as I ask Mike who is slumped in his chair just what he thinks of St. Valentine's Day, he starts juggling a little with laughter and this continues for thirty or forty seconds until his face matches his pullover strawberry sweater. I thank Mike for his message and assure him that he need verbalize nothing. Perhaps all great ancient traditions come to this.

Candidates running for the positions of Journal Editor, Rogues and Rascals Editor, Sanskrit Editor and Business Manager, WVFN Station Manager, President of the Student Body, Chairman of the SUB, Vice Chairman of the SUB, Student Body Vice President, Superior Court Justice, and Student

Representatives to the Media Board will meet, along with candidates for Emperor of UNCC, to answer questions that members of the student body have. This meeting will be held in the Parquet Room of the Cone University Center, on Wednesday, February 20 at 11:30. All students are urged to come.

IFC Long Overdue

by bill carpenter

The beginning of this Spring semester has brought still another effort to organize and formalize an Interfraternity Council on this campus. Unlike past attempts at this sort of organization, the latest effort seems to have been successful in laying the foundation of a united fraternity voice at UNCC. "It's about time"

seems the appropriate response.

For some time now, the IFC has been no more than casual discussion and a strong mutual disinterest on the part of the individual fraternities. Each group has been content to struggle along on its own, barely recognizing even the existence of the other fraternities on campus. Seldom did interest, in potential members or otherwise, coincide. Consequently, any effort at a common bond between Greeks was viewed as, at the most, needless and at the least, a threat to the freedom of separate fraternities. Early attempts at IFC organization by Assistant Dean Betty Chafin were greeted with disinterest, reluctance, and criticism. With the same sort of commitment displayed by the Paris peace delegations, fraternity representatives found it difficult to even agree on a meeting time, much less any organizational policy. However, Ms. Chafin's persistence and changes in fraternity leadership eventually brought about the atmosphere necessary for the initial steps of


organization to be taken. At this writing the IFC seems to have gained the support of most of the fraternities on campus (Omega Psi Phi and Kappa Alpha Psi have yet to attend meetings despite repeated invitations) and has made significant progress toward a setting of priorities in respect to what shall concern the council. Much discussion has been devoted to the potential power of a unified Greek vote in campus elections. With as many give-a-damn students as UNCC seems to have in regard to campus affairs, any sort of block vote would be very effective in determining the outcome of campus elections. The value of such tactics would not be in what the Greeks would gain but in the influence such a rah-rah threat would have upon the give-a-damn majority. Faced with an all Greek legislature, student body officer slate and SUB, perhaps at last the majority of students would be forced to take an interest in what goes on at this university. Once again, "it's about time."

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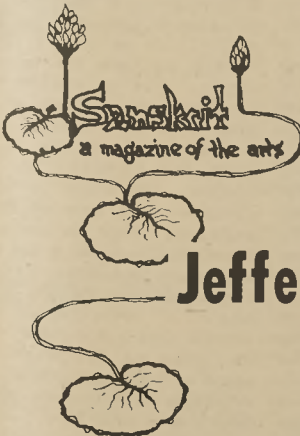
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