

TILL WE EARN A HOLIDAY

It's Friday, I'm in love?

Bring out your fine chocolates, roses and flowers even some suggestive underwear...it's Valentine's Day. The midpoint of February also known as two weeks to March is encroaching upon us once again. This annual day of infamy needlessly stresses male and female, young and old indiscriminately. It's the ultimate catch-22 for anyone's love-life; single people are pressure to "find someone" which requires hardcore "wooing;" vis a vis, those lucky enough to be called couples are thrown into an out of control whirlwind tornado of neuroses to find that perfect expression of Eros. What my theory presupposes: this Friday is just a Friday—just love the one you're with.

Before you moralistic Bible-thumping



Michael Webster

business majors beat down this editor's door, check yourself. Why concern ourselves with Hallmark's patron saint? Historically, the origins of Saint Valentine's day are conflicted-at best. The story of St. Valentine based upon actually three possible figures. His story stems from the holy mother Church's early martyrologies. So how did Hallmark get its hooks into a stud Valentine? Obviously, from their first greeting card poet of the Mid Middle Ages-

Chaucer. In his quasi-sappy account of a cock, Parliament of Foules, he illegitimately places guys in the hot-seat. Within the text claims that on the feast of St. Valentine "every foul [guys] cometh ther to choose his mate [your respective shorti]." Chaucer was obviously not a team player.

In other words...Valentine's Day is a conspiracy first initiated in medieval times by Hallmark and Chaucer. Unlike other conspiracies, this one does not lead to such places like the offices of various administrators of student life or Area 51. No, no my brothers and sisters, this evil alliance has its crosshairs set on our heartstrings. When we are without, we feel lonesome because of societal pressure to uphold an arcane and bastardized arbitrary day chosen by the Roman Catholic Church to venerated a minor martyr surmised to have lived in the third century. Wrong! There is no reason to feel any lonelier on Friday than any other day. If you want to feel more lonesome this Friday, wake early and watch the dawn rise over the Hill Section and smell the

remnants of stale beer and the broken dreams of those journeying the Walk of Shame.

It is my contention that St. Valentine's day should be venerated in its proper place, not-so-much at the cash register but in our hearts and chapel of our own domination. (here, here my Protestant friends) If you want a real Valentine, try somebody you really care about, instead of some awkward lackluster-sweaty-palmed one-night-stand. Maybe you should send a Valentine to your mom, dad, dog, brother, sister or friend—they really do love you, usually. If this doesn't suit you, and you think yourself a failure if you don't score a date and you still want to listen to the Cure in your room or drink away some naïve high school story of "the one who got away" this Friday, think about Kurt Vonnegut's early Valentine's gift from the United States Armed Forces in 1945... the Dresden fire bombing. Passion burned a little hotter then, so it goes.

Guest Editorials

Color blindness

By DAN HOPPEL JR.

For The Aquinas

Working in a midsize local supermarket, I am often in the pulpit of the "heartbeat of America." Basically, whenever anything of interest happens in Scranton, in Pennsylvania, in the United States or in the world, I get a very broad spectrum of observations and oral commentaries, from the most well-educated of people, to those who don't understand the inner workings of a toaster oven.

After the Sept. 11 attacks, I heard many remarks, some sad, some hopeful, some as blatantly ridiculous as Michael Jackson's recent statement that he'd take a swan-dive off his balcony if there were no children left in the world. But unlike Jacko, most of us can't pick the color of our skin on a daily basis. Therefore, as you might imagine, living in a city where most blacks cannot walk down the street without a little old lady taking a firmer grip on her purse, a lot of the comments I heard about the terrorist attacks were flagrantly racist. One that sticks out in my mind, however, is as ridiculous as I've heard in my life, and I believe is the crux of the racially based unequal treatment that takes place in

America. A man with whom I worked, in his mid-20s, said to me, "I can't believe this. We should just wipe those dirty Palestinians off the Earth."

I stood there in mind-numbing shock. Granted, when I later inquired about the PLO to this guy, he thought I was talking about a rock band. Regardless, this is why we have problems in America. I pray that men like this will never lead our country because if they do, there's a good chance we'll be nuking Canada next time our land is attacked (Headline: "Canada Destroyed; Nothing Left Except Wayne Gretzky and Molson Ice"). Seem far-fetched? It doesn't appear so when we see how uneducated so many Americans are. Across our "great" nation, and especially in areas like Scranton, the color of your skin or the accent in your voice often set you apart, too far apart for comfort. We still discriminate in our country, albeit not as unconcernedly as the segregated public facilities of the mid-1900s, but nonetheless, we have not come as far as we should have for an industrialized and technologically advanced modern nation.

Think about it for a minute. If you go to Italy, you encounter a certain, common culture, no matter where in Italy you go. In

Ireland, you find the same. But in America, you can sit down to a meal of pasta, roasted potatoes and a beer without any inkling of misgiving. (If you don't think that pasta and potatoes can go together in the same sitting, I suggest you mention that to the cooks in our school cafeteria.) What identifies America, then? What is our defining characteristic? Simply put, it is no defining characteristic, or in other words, the fact that we are a product of all that have inhabited our country. America is Italy, Ireland, England, Russia, Germany, China, Japan and every other nation of the world. Where else can you find Buona Pizza and the Great Wall Buffet in the same shopping plaza, but in America? We are a nation of outsiders. Not one of us can stake a claim to being here before anyone else. Even the Native Americans came here from outside our continent. So, why do we let ourselves hold prejudices?

Everyone is different. We all have our cultural behaviors, but let's face it, none of us can say we apply ourselves to any single conforming culture, probably not even ten cultures. Everything we have, everything we do, is a product of the outside world. I am of Italian and Irish ancestry, but I think that Tony Bennett sucks, and I hate ham and cabbage. That's why I'm here. That's why we're all here, to enjoy the benefits of diversity. We are all Americans, and that is what makes America great—the freedom of choice—choice of what we

like. It's like a buffet line, really. We pick everything that we enjoy from every culture that has impacted American society and discard anything that we don't like.

Next time you hear someone say "nigger" or "towelhead," why don't you remember that you go to a school where you sit right next to kids who have probably heard the same slurs a thousand times. And then, stand up for them. Even if it's a stranger. That is what America needs right now, more than ever: people to forget differences and embrace the fact that we're all Americans, because that's what we are. We might be Italian, or Irish, or Polish, or Indian, or Jewish, or Catholic or whatever. But, we all share one common trait: we are all Americans.

And a note to President Bush and his Administration: if we are attacked again, Canada didn't do it. They couldn't if they wanted to. Besides, we're college students. We can't risk losing Molson, as well as all those other Canadian breweries. What in the hell would we do then?

God bless America.

Dan Hoppel Jr is a sophomore from Dunmore.

Infidelity should be a criminal offense

(U-WIRE) – Have you ever dreamed of the perfect mate? Since we aren't all born and raised the same way, we all probably want something a little different. I might want someone who is gentle and calm, while you may want someone who is loud and outgoing. I want someone who is short and lean while you want someone who is toned and agile. We are all entitled to our preferences, and it's the differences in people that make us happy.

But even with my little knowledge of love and romance, there is one thing that I'm sure that will spoil even the kinkiest of couples this Valentine's Day. No matter if you're black or white, male or female, young or old, I think anyone can honestly say that one of the most fearsome components in a relationship is the concept of "the affair."

Look at this hypothetical situation: You've bought your girlfriend a large teddy bear for Friday's special holiday. She specifically told you not to get her anything, but you know more than anyone else that she wants the biggest toys on the shelf. You've

made it to your room, and lo and behold, you find her and your best buddy lying on the floor, making it further around the baseball diamond than you ever had before. Because of human nature, your rage and adrenaline build up so high that you end up killing both of the offenders.

The murderer in that story is most likely going to jail, as he should, but have you ever stopped to think of why unfaithfulness isn't a crime?

The U.S. government puts a lot of time into its articulation of marital law. Certain ordained individuals are required to attend the ceremonies, the government forbids whom they deem to be "participants of an alternate lifestyle" to tie the knot, and most importantly, the high-profile ceremony not only has a symbolic meaning, but a legal one as well. Not only according to God, but according to the state of Ohio, you are one.

So if the government puts so much emphasis on marriage, then why don't they care when someone knowingly goes out of there way to break that commitment and

defile any type of promise they ever had with their spouse? The law allows you to get a divorce and the judge might yell at him or her for a little while, but what consolation is that?

Since the U.S. government is "busy" with more "important" issues like Iraq and North Korea, it's likely that there won't be any enforcement of a potential law to forbid this kind of behavior. Thus, we have to do things on our own to make sure this Feb. 14 won't stick in our diaries as nostalgia from Hell. For example, we have to stop romanticizing this behavior. I've heard men and women alike say that "kissing" someone isn't being unfaithful. They constantly plea that there are certain things, which are still sexual in nature, that are constituted as cheating. The truth is, however, that if you can't tell him or her what you've done, then it's probably something you didn't need to do.

Sounds like common sense. But when reality checks us, we realize that cheating is an issue that can be battled with this common sense.

The other resolution is to be brutally honest. "Look, honey, I don't know how to say this without hurting you, but the truth is that I am no longer attracted to you." Wouldn't you scream if you heard this? Is he/she saying that I became uglier? How horrible! But the truth to this is that this is a pain that goes away. I know from experience that by hearing this, you'll be upset in the short-run, but the pain doesn't start to compare to learning that you're so unattractive now that I've been sleeping with this other girl for three weeks. You can make attempts to prettify yourself, maybe by dieting or using acne medication. But if he or she still feels the same way, then understand that people have other tastes and wants something different.

The truth is that your chances of being crushed on Valentine's Day are pretty low. But don't be one of the jerks that ruins someone's life by satisfying your sexual desires with someone else. End the relationship or talk things out. You'll surprise yourself with how much you accomplish.

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FEBRUARY

Continued from page 8

groundhog friend and Cupid, you might recall that February is Black History Month. If asked who the most prominent, historical African-American figure is, the general consensus would most likely be in favor of Martin Luther King, Jr. But, we celebrate his birthday in January. I'm not saying Dr. King's life is not allowed to be celebrated more than one month a year; he

just isn't really seen as February's main guy. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are remembered during the year's second month. But, we do not even get off of school for President's Day anymore. Apparently their birthdays are only worth observing in grades K-12.

I guess one word for February could be inconsistency. Sometimes it snows; other days it feels like spring (not this year, but in previous years...). And, for the ultimate silliness: February is usually 28 days long,

but every four years the 29th marks the end of the month. What?! Variety is the spice of life, but not when we're talking about the calendar. Why don't they make Mondays follow Wednesdays every other decade while we're at it? Basically, February is madness.

At least we are not alone in getting through such a month. We have our loved ones, especially on Friday, our friends and our cafeteria ladies, especially Romaine and Rita.

LONELY

Continued from page 8

motive. To love means to shift focus from an egocentric place to one in which another's well being supercedes your own. To do so requires a relinquishing of control, both over one's own self and others. Control and love do not travel together. To love is to lose control, seeking redemption in another.

Rebecca L. Martin is a sophomore from Hunlock Creek.