

OUR VIEW

What's Love...

It's here. V-day. "V" for Valentine's Day, that is. Before delving into the day and what it (potentially) holds for relationships, let's step back and look at its roots. This, from History.com:

"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 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."

"Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl—who may have been his jailor's daughter—who 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 is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France."

"While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial—which probably occurred around 270 A.D.—others claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to 'christianize' celebrations of the pagan Lupercalia festival. In ancient Rome, February was the official beginning of spring and was considered a time for purification. Houses were ritually cleansed by sweeping them out and then sprinkling salt and a type of wheat called spelt throughout their interiors. Lupercalia, which began at the ides of February, Feb. 15, was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus."

Why the history lesson? Because its important to understand the back story behind one of the most important relationship days in the year. One survey notes that as many as 6 million people have broken up with someone on V-Day. A FoxNews.com story reports discord between what men and women want on Valentine's.

"More than 90 percent of the men polled said they would be giving a hug as part of their gift. Only 13 percent of the female respondents, however, said they wanted a hug. Twenty-two percent of men who intend to give gifts said they would give lingerie, but only two percent of the women surveyed want lingerie. Flowers, the most coveted gift on the female list of desirable Valentine's Day gifts, ranked second on the male gift-giving list. However, jewelry, which was the women's second pick for most desired gift, only rated fifth on the men's list. Does all of this discord between men and women's visions of the perfect Valentine's Day cause any relationship damage? It certainly does."

Given this, we might need to come to grips with the realization that commercialization has drained the love out of V-day. It, like marriage, has been commoditized. We've taken the love out of institutions built on love. No one said love is easy. It's tough. Look at the history of the origin of Valentine's Day. Look at the central religious figures of the early world and the sacrifices they made to set examples for the world. Look at people who've given their lives to save their mates. Look at the men and women who toil everyday to make lives better for their loved ones. Marriages crumble. Relationships falter. Families fracture. But love is the force that can overcome all. We don't have to all agree, but let's love one another.



Obama-led change really real

By Harry C. Alford

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The term "change" seems to be popping up in every political conversation or philosophical discussion.

It is being overused, but that doesn't take away the power or importance of the particular type of change we are all talking about. It is the change of communication and information sharing. The Democratic Sen. Barack Obama's presidential campaign hit this nail right on the head, and the other campaigns have been missing the mark. This just isn't a nouveau term that sounds hip, but a phenomenon that is taking place in this high technology age in which we live.

No longer do we wait on the news. News jumps at us and appears right in our faces. Major news sources and Internet companies feed us the news minute by minute. It flashes on our personal computers and Blackberrys.

Something may happen in Kansas, Atlanta, Chicago, etc., and we have the details within minutes. We see it raw; there is no time to massage it or spin for political purposes. The truth is being told straight up, and that is a very good thing.

Likewise, we can communicate to the masses at the speed of thought. We have databases, blogs and websites that everyone,



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within earshot of our messages, views and comments. The recent Jena Six matter showed us how organized we can become and assemble thousands from anywhere in the United States.

What formerly would take about a year to organize can be done now within weeks, if not days. It makes an organized group or campaign effective anywhere in the nation.

The Obama campaign is showing this. Whether it is Idaho or Southside Chicago, the team is there. As Obama has recently claimed, "Whether it is North, South or places in between, we are there." And right he is.

People who have been in political campaigns for decades find themselves lagging far behind in organization and fundraising versus this new style. Even Republican Congressman Ron Paul with his fledgling group can out raise all other Republican candidates.

I haven't bought a daily newspaper on a routine basis in the last few years. The

news comes to me. Only Black-owned publications are the media I pursue, as it gets deeper into the issues from our perspective. The rest flashes before my computer screen, free of charges, and multiple times each day. Google even sends us news flashes about "Minority Business" a few times a day. They will even flash us some of our own writings as it gets out there in the "blogosphere."

The current presidential campaigns are proof positive that people are insisting on "change." The routine same 'ol, same 'ol technique is not going to be tolerated anymore. The same group of people interested in a national campaign is now being overshadowed by an ever growing group of newcomers who demand excellence and improvement.

The Obama campaign has inspired millions to get into

this game of politics. It is changing the standards immensely and ever so quickly. His competitors have had to quickly change their themes, focus and strategies.

He has them off their game, and he is progressively benefiting from it. His campaign is upsetting the status quo, and, all of a sudden, we have a new populace jumping into the fray. Whether it is Georgia, Louisiana, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois or Washington, the campaign is gaining steam with all demographics. It is historical, and the political experts are baffled.

Understanding the term "change" gives one a great advantage. The Obama campaign understands this, and he, in a very cool manner, is leading the charge for "change." He brings to the voting booths new people interested in getting into the

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