

Forum

Presidential prejudices could sway voters

■ CHELSEA CALLAS

Contributing Writer

"That's an excellent question," was the response of presidential candidate John McCain when asked by a McCain supporter, "how are we going to beat the bitch?" Although it's not the job of rival candidates to defend each other, McCain could have handled the comment with class instead of overlooking the sexist remark and continuing the discussion like nothing wrong was said.

This isn't justification, the world of politics is vicious and McCain was probably doing what he thought was best to keep the most votes.

According to OutsidetheBeltway.org, a political website which posted a poll on candidate prejudice, unfortunately for Mitt Romney, 24% of people wouldn't vote for a Mormon candidate. Even more surprising to me was that 42% of people wouldn't vote for a candidate 71 years of age putting John McCain behind in the race.

The statistics continue. Women, atheists, Catholics, African-Americans, homosexuals, Mormons and many other personal characteristics or beliefs are looked down upon by voters.

Where will the discrimination end and what kind of candidate are voters, truly looking for?

For whatever reason, age, gender, ethnicity and religion come into play when choosing a president. Who cares what a president looks like when they are

making decisions that contrast with your personal beliefs? We should choose our candidates based on the tough issues facing the world today and how they would handle them as opposed to superficial personal traits.

Although not all voters vote with prejudice, by looking at past presidents it's easy to see prejudice exists when voting.

All have been white men at fairly old age (the youngest 42, the oldest 69), who come from a wealthy background, and not every president has been an angel. The point I am getting at is being white, male, wealthy

and old doesn't qualify someone to be president.

I see the argument and understand that there could be reason for not wanting to vote for a person because of a specific trait or belief. I understand that voters could be worried about a Mormon president because of separation church and state. I understand that people could be afraid a woman president wouldn't be strong enough for the job. But I don't agree.

These thoughts are based on generalizations and there is no way to tell if a woman wouldn't be a strong enough leader, a Mormon would mix church and state

and a 71 year old president would be "too old." Even if these issues did exist in presidential candidates, they remain only a small aspect of the overall person.

The only way to know for sure if you agree with a presidential candidate's views, is to see how they voted on the issues you care most about, not making a judgment that only pertains to one issue.

The great thing is, voting records for presidential candidates are open for anyone to see on the internet at vote-smart.org.

Being an informed voter means knowing how your favorite candidate voted on

issues you care about, and seeing if it matches up with your beliefs on that issue. This makes it easier to see how future presidents would handle issues you care about.

It would be a very sad thing for presidents who could have been exceptional leaders to be pushed out of the race because of their religion, race, age, gender, or anything else that doesn't have anything to do with politics.

Voters—I urge you to be informed when voting and to not let image or prejudice determine your vote. Every vote counts, and a vote based on prejudice will sway the race.

Valentine's Day provides means for expression of love

■ MARY WOOD

Staff Reporter

Depending on who you talk to, Valentine's Day can be the most dreaded or the most anticipated holiday of the year. Many people become upset as Feb. 14 approaches, feeling the pressure of finding romance in time for the holiday, and others who have it can become stressed out while forming the perfect plans for their sweetheart. But Valentine's Day doesn't have to be a painful experience, if you are in the right frame of mind.

Though it's often considered a scam specifically designed to sell cards, candies and flowers, Valentine's Day actually has a legitimate and

interesting history. Its name comes from Catholic saints, but the actual traditions are said to be related to Graeco-Roman festivals of fertility and love, and the month of Gamelion in ancient Athens which was dedicated to the gods Zeus and Hera's marriage. In the 1400's in

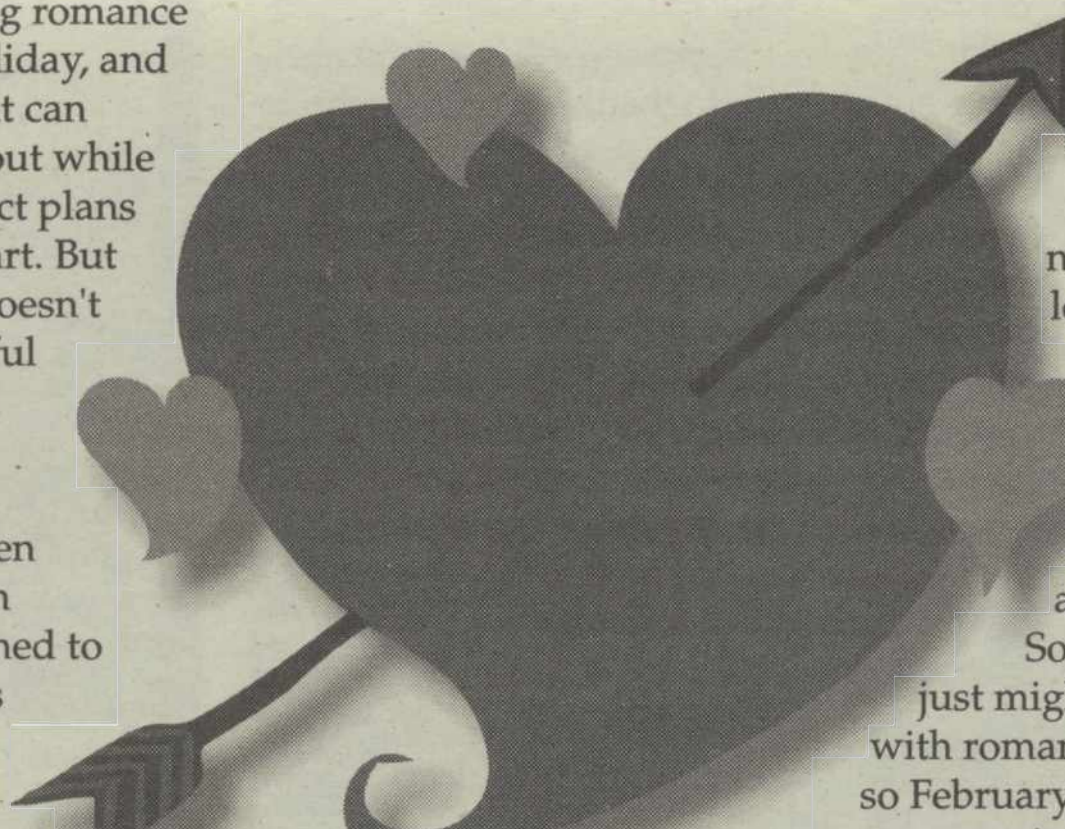
France, the High Court of Love was established on Feb. 14, and dealt with many matters related to love. With all of this and more behind the formation of the holiday, it's hard to prove that it's simply about chocolate and love notes.

Even with those classic gifts, Valentine's Day still has value. Though giving gifts isn't necessary to show love for someone, it's fun to do so every once in a while, and Valentine's Day provides a time to do that. Some relationships just might not be filled with romance all the time, so February presents an opportunity for couples to

bring out their mushy-gushy side.

Valentine's Day doesn't have to be solely about romantic love, though. It's a great time to show friends and family that they're cared about. I've heard plenty of stories about single girls bonding over the holiday with a girl power night. You don't have to be in love to have a great time on V-day.

So before succumbing to depression and anger this year, take a minute to put things into perspective. Even if you're not in a relationship, you can hang out with your friends for Valentine's Day, make valentines for others and let everyone know they're cared about. Caring is the spirit of love anyway, which is what Valentine's Day is all about. Well, love and candy, but that's a pretty good combination.



Valentine's Day lurks around corner

■ KIRA MATSUOKA

Staff Reporter

Valentine's Day is a day that many people have come to love or loathe.

It is said by some that the holiday began with the tragedy of St. Valentine, a Catholic bishop. Valentine died while in love with a maiden. Moments before his death he wrote a note to his lover signed "your valentine." Based on that historic moment, people have been sending valentines to their loved ones on Feb. 14, the very day St. Valentine died.

While this holiday is most often viewed as a romantic time for loved ones, to some it can be the complete opposite. In 2005, an Oregon man, Gerald Krein, Jr.,

encouraged others in a yahoo chat room to take part in a mass suicide on Feb. 14. He was charged with one count of solicitation to commit murder and four counts of solicitation to commit manslaughter.

Some use Valentine's Day as a time to show admiration for the one(s) they love. For others, it is a day that leaves them feeling left out. And then there are the cases when people are disappointed with how their significant other remembers them on the day which seems to have so much riding on it.

At first glance, Valentine's Day is a harmless and exciting day to express emotion to the one you love. But look closely and you'll see something deeper

than just a love it or hate it holiday. It is a day, that for some, has devolved into materialistic nightmare. Most of us know how it feels to be left out, it's raw and it lingers. Emotional distress can result from not being remembered that day, or from spending the holiday alone.

Valentine's Day shouldn't only be a day to reward someone with whom you are romantically involved. This day can be for anyone: family, friends, or someone who you know deserves a little extra something to show you care. Without love, life can be tough, and Valentine's Day should be used to show others you care, because you never know who might need love the most.

Amplifier

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