



INTERACT

<http://www.wa.gov/icsew>

January/February 2000

BlackVoices Compiles List of Top 100

Over the course of 1999, BlackVoices.com asked users from across the nation and abroad to nominate who they believe are the "100 most influential African-Americans of the 20th century." Some important names did not break the top 100 and some controversial names did.

Here are the top 10. For the complete ranking of the final "100 Pillars," go to www.blackvoices.com

Martin Luther King, Jr. -- Clergyman. Civil and human rights activist, whose passionate speeches on freedom, justice and equality inspired the nation. His "I Have A Dream" speech is one of the key defining moments in American history.

Thurgood Marshall -- First African-American U.S. Supreme Court Justice and perhaps one of the most brilliant to sit on the High Court. First, as a NAACP lawyer and then as a justice, he helped achieve great gains in civil rights.

Booker T. Washington -- Educator. Founded the Tuskegee Institute. Consulted with presidents on issues of importance to African-Americans.

W.E.B. DuBois -- Sociologist, activist, co-founder of the NAACP. Accomplished the first sociological study ever performed in the United States.

Rosa Parks -- Civil rights activist. Her simple act of defiance helped trigger the Civil Rights Movement.

Malcolm X -- Activist. He helped move Black people towards self-reliance, self-determination, and inspired tremendous pride.

Jackie Robinson -- First African-American to play in the major leagues. Changed professional sports forever.

Jesse Jackson -- Human rights activist, clergyman, and politician.

Muhammad Ali -- Internationally acclaimed professional boxer. Perhaps one of the three most recognized people in the entire world.

Carter G. Woodson -- Historian, educator, activist. Shaped the way African-Americans viewed themselves- no longer as just simple slaves, but as a varied people with accomplishments both large and small.

Washington Enters New Millennium With No Major Y2K Problems



Karen Dunn, CTED's Representative to ICSEW, eagerly awaits the stroke of midnight while working at the Y2K Coordination Center at Camp Murray. Pictured below with Karen are Adam Bless of the Oregon Department of Energy and Jo Wadsworth, Y2K Project Coordinator for the Utilities and Transportation Commission.

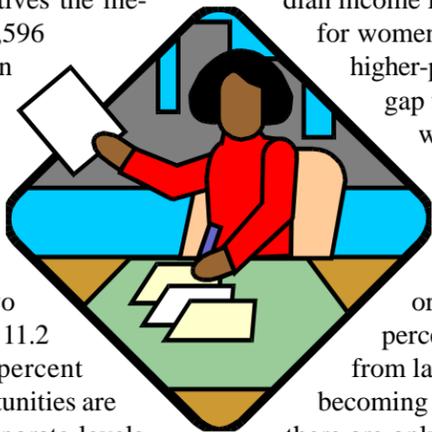


National Statistics on Women in Management

By Leigh Bacharach

Female corporate executives earn 68 cents to every dollar earned by their male counterparts. A study conducted by Catalyst, a nonprofit group that works to advance women in business, found that among the nation's highest paid executives the median income for men was \$765,000 and \$518,596 for women.

Women in higher-paying positions have a wider pay gap than their counterparts in the general workforce, where women earn 76 cents for every dollar men make, according to Labor Department statistics. More than half of Fortune 500 companies have two or more female officers, comprising 11.2 percent of all corporate employment opportunities are women in high corporate levels, among all Fortune 500 companies.



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Women managers are more likely employed in the same fields in which there are also proportionally more women employed below managerial levels. Service industries, public administration and finance have a larger percentage of women managers than manufacturing, transportation, and public utilities, according to Labor Department statistics. Women have made great progress in achieving management positions, but their median earnings continue to be well below those of male managers.

Organizational attitudes and beliefs about job assignments for women, existing social structures, personnel practices, and industry type are all thought to be barriers to women's careers in management. Age also plays a part in managerial structure. Women in younger age groups (ages 25-34) have a higher percentage of managerial positions than women in older age groups (ages 45 and over). This discrepancy is thought to be due to generational differences, and changes in participation of women in the labor force.

There are ways for women to break the barriers or glass ceilings in management. Women in management positions report that they were helped by mentors. Mentoring has helped women overcome the exclusion from the "old boy" network. Education and training in the corporate levels have also aided in women's advancement. Companies are providing more formal training in gender, racial and cultural sensitivity issues.

According to Labor Department reports, managerial positions are expected to increase by 2.2 million by the year 2005. Workers with work experience, specialized training or graduate study will have an advantage in competition for these jobs. Industries where women hold the highest percentage of managerial positions are among those with the highest rate of employment growth. The employment picture for female managers, though still bleak, is improving due to mentoring, organizational policy changes, and similar programs.

ICSEW Chair Shares Her Fears and Joys

By Dawn Baker
ICSEW Chair

I have a confession to make. Up until 1997, I had never even heard of ICSEW. Although my agency had a representative on the committee, I didn't have a clue what they did. That year I was invited to attend the ICSEW conference. I was so impressed with the work that ICSEW was doing I came back to my agency and asked to fill the outgoing member's position.

I worked on the Education Committee for two years and was ready to allow someone else from my agency to take over when I was asked to apply for the Chair position. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be appointed. I felt there were others far more qualified. When I was selected it was with complete shock! Every fear I ever had came over me... "I can't speak in public!" "I don't have any experi-

ence, how in the world will I ever lead this group?" "Where am I going to find the time?" These fears are still there, but I've learned to quiet them down to a manageable level. I realize now I've been given a gift. Something I would never have asked for, but that gets more valuable with each passing day. I've done things I would never have had the courage to try.

Risk is a frightening thing. No one likes to fail. I've had to remind myself that many of the worlds' most famous people failed, sometimes very publicly. But they continued to take risks, and we have learned and benefited from both their failures and successes. Each of us has an endless list of possibilities just waiting to be explored. We just have to quiet our fears and jump in with both feet. We will at times fail. But we will also

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1999-2000

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'I was glad I hadn't settled'

Climbing Mount Rainier Provides Challenge

By Erma Burgermeister

(Editor's Note: Erma is the ICSEW Alternate from the Attorney General's Office and works in Seattle.)

At the ICSEW convention last May, the bidding for the items in the Silent Auction was fast and furious. As soon as the new bid was put down someone was waiting to change it. When the bidding closed, my pencil had prevailed and I got the one I wanted. The certificate read "Mount Rainier Centennial Hike for four with gourmet backpacker's lunch." In the basket under the certificate were two Washington State Parks T-shirts and a book that had information on every State Park in Washington. I look out my window every day and see Mount Rainier in the distance. This would be a chance to really see it.

The hike was for four people so I invited my husband Lou, a coworker, Carol Williams, and her friend Al Baker. Our guides were Cleve Pinnix, State Parks Director, and his wife Marty. Cleve was a National Park Ranger on Mount Rainier during the '60s and has many stories about his service on "his mountain." Cleve and Marty know every plant, tree, bush and critter that exists on Mount Rainier.

The first hurdle was selecting a date that would work not only with everyone's schedule, but one that was agreeable with the mountain. The snowfall was particularly heavy last year and not melting quickly, which meant all trails might not be accessible. We tentatively picked August 27, 1999 and crossed our fingers!

The mountain cooperated and August 27 was it. We met Cleve and Marty at a parking lot in Lakewood where we climbed into Cleve's Eurovan to start our adventure. We did manage to find the last latte stand before we entered the mountain so we could have one last shot of caffeine.

Our first destination was Lake Mowich where we discovered the parking lot was packed. We definitely would have a lot of company on the trails. We put on our gear and started out for our next destination, Lake Eunice. We soon found that we had lots of unwanted company. There were bugs in our eyes, in our ears, up our noses -- I'm sure we each swallowed a couple of pounds of protein. The bugs had obviously brought in reinforcements. Al was the one who had the foresight to bring a small bottle of bug repellent, which he shared with the group. Unfortunately, instead of being repelled, the bugs thought of it as barbecue sauce.



Enjoying their lunch at Lake Eunice are (clockwise starting at upper left) Marty Pinnix, Erma Burgermeister, Al Baker, Carol Williams, and Lou Burgermeister. (Photo by State Parks Director Cleve Pinnix)

The trail to Lake Eunice consisted of several switchbacks that were either huge tree roots or rocky ledges. And me with my vertigo and fear of high places! Why couldn't I have been content to bid on that cute basket full of perfume and bath oil? But I was determined to finish the trip.

At Lake Eunice we prepared to enjoy our gourmet backpacker's lunch prepared by Marty. Cleve, environmentalist that he is, selected a place where we would be least likely to hurt the vegetation when we sat to enjoy our three-bean salad, cous-cous, salmon salad, raspberry iced tea and homemade chocolate brownies. While we were eating, a very young and enthusiastic ranger stopped by to tell us that we really shouldn't be sitting on the vegetation. Cleve graciously told him that we would clean up and move on. We teased Cleve about getting us in trouble with the Park Rangers.

While Marty and I rested at Lake Eunice, Cleve, Lou, Al and Carol continued on a more difficult climb to Tolme Peak, where there was a fire lookout cabin. The climb was almost straight up the side of the peak. They all agreed the view was worth the effort of the climb.

Marty and I started back down towards Lake Mowich and the others caught up with us along the way. We met many people enjoying the beauty of the mountain. It had been a great trip with beautiful scenery, great people, and wonderful food. I was glad I hadn't settled for the basket of perfume and bath oil.

ICSEW Chair Shares Her Fears and Joys

Continued from page 1

succeed. It has been said that the only absolute failure is to fail to try.

This committee has been a way for me to take risks, grow both personally and professionally and make a difference in the lives of others. It has been my "higher" education. Education isn't just what is learned in a classroom. It's life's experiences and challenges. These help shape who we are.

Being an active part of ICSEW means *being there*. Being there not just in body but in spirit and mind. Taking an active interest in others. Listening. Sharing what you know. Asking for help. Taking risks. Celebrating accomplishments.

Many of the women I've met could not have imagined five years ago they would be where they are today. The things they've accomplished, places they've gone, people who have touched their lives and whose lives they have touched. All this because they weren't afraid to take risks and follow their dreams.

Being Chair of this committee is a milestone in my life. Something I

would never have dreamed I could do. Without the help, support and encouragement of each other our chances of success are small. By being there for each other, mentoring, encouraging one another, we *are* making a difference.

Take a few moments today and recognize your accomplishments. Recognize someone else's accomplishment. Share your experiences with someone, let someone share theirs with you. We have the capacity to build on the experiences

and accomplishments of others. Why wouldn't we? You've heard the phrase "Life isn't a spectator sport." It's absolutely true. If we don't get involved, make ourselves available, use the talents we have, and take a few risks we will be missing out on a life full of accomplishment and joy.



Calendar of Events

Autism Awareness Month	January
National Personal Self-Defense Awareness Month ..	January
ICSEW General Membership Meeting	January 11
Martin Luther King, Jr. (State Observance)	January 17
American Heart Month	February
Black History Month	February
Ground Hog Day	February 2
ICSEW Executive Board Meeting	February 9
Valentine's Day	February 14
Presidents' Day	February 21
Leap Year Day	February 29
ICSEW General Membership Meeting	March 14

A Look Ahead at the Legislative Session

By Mary Farley

Being tasked with writing an article about what the Legislature will tackle in the upcoming session beginning January 10, 2000 is a little like trying to read someone's mind.

Governor Gary Locke had the challenge of revealing his proposed budget first. Those that follow may lend support or wage all-out opposition to the Governor's budget and initiatives. So far, the press has treated the Governor well and recognizes his perseverance toward well-established goals. His themes include a stronger education system, aid to local governments hurt by the passage of I-695, tax relief, health insurance reform including a patients' rights bill, child care enhancements for welfare recipients moving into the work force, and a thoughtful redesigning of the transportation budget. We can be sure that these issues will be strongly debated to final passage.

The Governor's supplemental budget aims to: keep spending within Initiative 601 limits; does not propose any new taxes; enhances education goals for improving student achievement and providing access to higher education; provides relief to local jurisdictions for vital services impacted by the passage of Initiative 695; maintains a responsible reserve account; and uses other surplus state revenue to improve education and cut taxes.

Alternatives to Governor

Locke's requests are beginning to circulate. Some claim he is not leaving enough in reserve for an economic downturn. Others say he is avoiding the issue of transportation funding by choosing to wait for a comprehensive report from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation Financing. A few opponents have even criticized lowering class size, claiming that's not the real issue.

Three legislators are considering a bill that would allow workers locked out in a strike to receive unemployment benefits. The situation at Kaiser in Spokane, leaving 2,000 steelworkers out in the cold for more than a year due to an unresolved labor contract, provides the impetus for this proposal. At the same time, the Governor and others want to curtail the scheduled increase in the unemployment tax.

Teachers, it is rumored, will ask for more compensation although the Governor has stated that a supplemental budget is not the appropriate time for this action. The elected Superintendent of Public Instruction, Terry Bergeson, will propose a \$36 million compensation package for teachers in the mid-experience range.

Many legislators view tolls as a partial answer to funding transportation projects such as another span across the Tacoma Narrows. But first, it must be settled whether or not a legislated toll would violate the intent of Initiative 695.

One political party leader has proposed a five-percent cut from every area of the budget except K-12 education and corrections, with additional hiring and spending allowed in these two areas. It wasn't pointed out, however, that K-12 and corrections costs make up about half the general fund budget, so all the cuts would have to be taken from social programs, higher education, and government operations.

Debate will rage concerning privatization and contracting out of government services. Allowing supermarket chains to sell hard liquor is sure to raise a ruckus among some critics and be hailed as "about time" by others. Some want to grab the tobacco settlement money to plug the holes left by the passage of Initiative 695, while opponents insist it can only be used for health care and smoking cessation programs. Instead of a proposed tax cut, some want the money to go to roads or education. The rising costs of health care and cries of poorer service are sure to raise tensions if Legislators are bold enough to address the needs this time around. Only a few lawmakers are daring to mention increasing taxes as a solution to funding challenges.

Governor Locke has worked tirelessly at government accountability through executive orders, legislation, and example, achieving noticeable results. However, the elected state auditor proposes a bolder step.

Brian Sonntag, wants to create an "Alliance for Accountability" to ensure that all good ideas for making government more accountable receive serious examination without regard to their political impact on the decision makers.

Throughout the debate, looms the possibility of more citizen initiatives. One proposal gathering momentum would force the state to spend 90 percent of its transportation funds on road construction and maintenance, severely restricting public transportation projects.

Since the citizen-approved Initiative 695 already took a huge chunk of the transportation budget, wouldn't 90 percent of "not-much-left" equal "very-little-with-which-to-work?" These are the tough questions to be hashed and thrashed by the Legislature for the next two months. Word on the street is that they got the message and they are listening to us. Let your voice be heard by writing your state Senators and Representatives or calling the toll-free Legislative Hotline at (800) 562-6000.

**Washington State
Domestic Violence
Hotline
1-800-562-6025**

Letters to the Editor on Domestic Violence

Donna, I wanted to share a quick comment on your article. Thanks for the great article but, I personally feel that the issue of domestic violence perpetrated on men is a women's issue. Here is my thinking:

I'm a Camp Fire leader with six junior high school girls. We were working on a project in community government and had a female Pierce County Sheriff's officer at our meeting for an interview session (exploring government careers). She mentioned domestic violence issues and that while the victims are generally women, men too are sometimes victims.

Well as you can imagine, the girls started laughing. I shared a story with them about a male co-worker of mine who was a battered spouse. His wife once broke his arm. The problem is that most men are ashamed, same as women, but they fear ridicule so they keep the problem hidden. This fear of ridicule is not a problem women usually face. I explained to my girls that violence against another person is NEVER acceptable and that if these notions are changed with their generation, then we will have taken a large step.

If people believe that violence is acceptable against men, then how far of a step is it to accepting a little bit of violence towards women? If all

violence against another is an aberration, then the problem of violence against women can be greatly reduced. It is not a women's or men's issue, it is a people issue. Thanks for another great article.

**Linda Brown
Department of Revenue**



Donna, I found the Nov.-Dec. 1999 issue of InterAct to be very interesting and informative.

The article on male battering reminded me of a question that has confronted me for as long as I have been dating. This is the apparent belief that many women seem to have that men actually enjoy receiving verbal, emotional and sometimes even physical abuse. Just as with the man who contacted you about his situation, I have objected to such attacks and frequently received a reply such as "Oh, come on now, you know you really enjoy it." When, or if, I was actually able to convince them otherwise, they seemed totally amazed and might reply with "But my last boyfriend (husband, etc.) liked being abused." Of course, I have no way of knowing that for sure, although I suspect the men really didn't like it but were too polite to say or do anything about it. (Men are trained to just sort of put up with it.) Perhaps

that is the source of the saying "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation."

Anyway, I don't have the slightest idea of where this notion about male abuse may originate with females, but there is certainly some interesting psychology involved. My own way of dealing with it now is to just cut off (or at least minimize) my involvement with that person. I rarely have the interest or the energy to confront the situation or get into an argumentative relationship. Basically, if I don't enjoy the person's company and feel that the relationship is a positive and constructive one, I don't pursue it.

One other thought is that it definitely takes two to Tango, and even though the male undoubtedly does most of the physical battering, that does not mean that females are not capable of inflicting severe stress and damage on the male ego. As a fairly recent divorcee (three years) who is well established in the local singles scene, I am amazed at how many men I talk to who have similar stories about their former marriages or relationships. The general complaints I hear are usually about deceit, infidelity, verbal abuse (regarding income, child rearing, friendships, lack of affection, etc.), and refusal to communicate. A common ploy seems to be "Six months ago I mentioned this problem to you (once) and you

haven't done anything about it yet."

Solution: Try bringing the subject up again. Men feel that if they don't hear about it frequently, it doesn't exist.

Anyway, one thing I have been told (by women) is that women don't want solutions to their problems, just someone who will listen to them. This is of course contrary to men's prime goal in life which is to solve problems, and is something we are trained to do and feel responsible for. Also, we are trained (or evolved) to be providers and protectors, not counselors. I was frequently told as a child that I would someday have to provide for a family, but I was never warned that I should have a degree in psychiatry too.

In summary, I think that in most cases of female (or male) battering there can be blame placed on both parties, although neither one may be able to determine exactly what their role is in originating the problem. Many reactions we have are a result of our conditioning and happen almost subconsciously. Discovering the real sources of domestic violence requires intense analysis and recognition of the role of both partners.

It would be interesting to hear about any other men who might respond to your article.

**Jon Bennett
Department of Ecology**

Living with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

By Kathy Shore
ICSEW Vice Chair

I am a parent of a child with special needs. I have a daughter with learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

I chose to write about this subject because balancing career and family is an issue for many of us. Another work place issue that has gotten a lot of attention over the years has been diversity. Among the issues of diversity, there has been a lot of discussion about the need for awareness of people with disabilities.

When we think of disabilities, we think of those who are hearing impaired, vision impaired, or physically challenged. But there are also those who have hidden disabilities – who look and act perfectly normal on the outside – who are completely and totally misunderstood. Such is the case of the person with learning disabilities and/or ADD.

I cannot call myself an “expert” on this subject. I have no doctorate, no college degree, and no initials behind my name, and cannot cite statistics. I can only express what it is like to be a parent of a child with these disorders.

Like most mothers, I was delighted with my newborn daughter who seemed perfect to me in every way. She was a willful, noisy baby; blue eyed, blonde, and beautiful. The fact that each milestone with her – crawling, standing walking and talking – occurred at a later rate than many babies her age did not seem to be cause for concern. The pediatrician assured me that each child has his/her own timetable for reaching these milestones – to relax, and let nature

take its course.

As she grew, she became increasingly oppositional, demanding and difficult. At first, we blamed it on the “terrible twos.” When it turned into the “terrible fives and sixes” that excuse was beginning to wear thin. She threw temper tantrums that went on for all hours. She persevered – asking the same questions over and over – not seeming to be interested in the answers. She seemed to have a hard time following simple instructions. She was labeled “lazy” or “difficult” or “helpless.” She was frustrated much of the time, and as parents, we were equally frustrated. Well meaning relatives said she was spoiled and that I needed to “discipline” her.

She did not fit in with her peers. She acted too babyish for most of her peers. She was labeled “stupid” and her younger sister was teased about her “dumb sister.” My husband and I fought all the time about the right way to bring up this child. He felt that I was too “lenient” and I thought that he was “too strict.”

The tip off that something was not quite right was when her younger sister – who was two full years younger – was surpassing her older sister in skills. What seemed impossible for the older sibling – like impulse control, learning, staying on task – came easily for the younger sibling. Where the older child was constantly disciplined for inappropriate behavior, the younger sibling pleased without effort and was constantly praised. As a mother of the two, I constantly felt torn and



guilty. It wasn't fair for one child to feel like a loser, and for the other to feel like a winner. I worried about my older daughter's self esteem. I could see and feel her despair.

We tried family counseling. We tried parenting classes. We tested various theories on child rearing which had little or no effect. My daughter did not respond to “I” statements. We could explain why she was being disciplined. She would appear to understand. But then she would do the same things over and over again.

It took testing from the school system and a visit to two pediatric neurologists to finally learn that my daughter was, indeed, developmentally delayed and might have ADD. I was devastated and in denial. I had been determined to prove everyone else wrong. I underwent a grieving process, thinking “Why me?”

And yet, after seeing quite a few “professionals” with lots of initials behind their names, delivering what sounded like a very complicated “diagnosis,” I finally had to accept that my child was not “normal.” I also had to accept that my stubbornness was not going to help her in life. And most importantly, that I would need to not only recognize her disability, but provide the needed support to enable her to develop as normally as possible.

Telling me that my child was “not smart” came as a tremendous blow to someone like me, who places a high value on “intelligence.” I came to recognize how often I use the word! I describe my friends as “intelligent” people. I came to recognize the derogatory terms people often use to describe those who are not intelligent; i.e., “moron,” “dweeb,” “twit,” etc. Those terms began to make me wince, much the same way as racist remarks do.

Dealing with the system was the toughest part. Finding a good physician who truly understands ADD required changing insurance

plans. It required challenging my fear about giving my daughter medication. Educating and collaborating with bus drivers about the ADD kid who acts out on the bus was another hurdle. Going to bat with teachers who graded her poorly for a short attention span or for “not sitting still in class” challenged my approval seeking tendencies in dealing with authority figures. It also included educating peers who were inclined to tease and torment and be cruel, as well as taking a stand with relatives who were inclined to be judgmental and critical.

I went from wimp to warrior – on behalf of my child. I realized I was the only one who was going to stand up for her, so I became her advocate. I began to see the barriers the system imposes on those who are not mainstream and cannot meet the “norms.” It taught me more about diversity than words can say, and strengthened my character in the process.

My daughter has been a gift to me. While ADD is, and will always be a part of our lives, there are many benefits. I have come to appreciate her strengths. When using words like “disorder” or “disability” it is easy to only focus on her weaknesses. But my child, like many ADD individuals, is creative, artistic and intuitive. Another is that she is tremendously soft hearted and compassionate, and understands the suffering of others – perhaps because she has been there.

A lot of kids get lost in the system. Prisons are filled with learning disabled adults. These kids are high risk for all kinds of difficulties in life if their disabilities are undiagnosed and untreated. But it is important to remember that many of our historical figures had learning disabilities, too, such as Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Woodrow Wilson, General George Patton, to name a few. It drives the point home that greatness does not always come from what we classify as “normal.” No one can truly measure another person's potential. Intelligence comes in all shapes and forms.

L&I to Host Fair to Recognize Women

In celebration of ICSEW's 30th Anniversary, Labor and Industries' ICSEW core group is hosting a fair. This fair will be held Tuesday, February 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the auditorium at the L&I building in Tumwater.

The theme is “Lifting Mind, Body and Spirit” and celebrates state employed women and their many-faceted lives. The fair will feature informational tables on health and wellness, financial planning, volunteer opportunities, arts, recreation, and career planning. Representatives will be available to answer questions.

There will also be historical exhibits, the compelling ICSEW domestic violence exhibit, and a room for neck and shoulder massages. State employed women artists are encouraged to submit their artwork so it can be displayed throughout the day.

That evening there will be a silent auction for Washington Women's Wellness. For further information, please contact Valerie Gerst, L&I, (360) 902-4617.

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How Will You Celebrate Valentine's Day?

By Marla Oughton

What is Valentine's Day really about? My kids would tell you it's a time to give cards to classmates and share candy! Many adults would tell you it's a time to appreciate those you love. I read in an article that Valentine's Day is a special day that has been set-aside in order to honor “love.”

If you look for the true meaning of Valentine's Day you'll find there was a person who did in fact live by the name of Valentine (some debate as to who he really was), who was killed for being a Christian and later recognized as a Saint. February 14 was designated as a special day to remember St. Valentine.

How did “love” become part of remembering St. Valentine? Well it has to do with a pagan love festival originating on February 15, but later changed to February 14 in an effort to stop it. Ever since then “love” has left its mark on St. Valentine's Day. Its now been 1504 years since St. Valentine's Day was enacted in 496 A.D.

Now that you know all that, will that change how you celebrate Valentine's Day? Will you celebrate St. Valentine the person or celebrate “love”? I vote for love.



interact. These sources, both linguistic (intraand interlingual) and extralinguistic, represent the learners' own knowledge interacting with cues from the words themselves and the surrounding text. From the Cambridge English Corpus. However, biological molecules and surfaces often interact via four or more of these forces either simultaneously or following on one another. From the Cambridge English Corpus. These examples are from the Cambridge English Corpus and from sources on the web. interact (third-person singular simple present interacts, present participle interacting, simple past and past participle interacted). (intransitive) To act upon each other. (of people) To engage in communication and other shared activities (with someone). The way staff interact with each other during breaks can play an important role in the workplace. (of two or more things) To affect each other. This medication can interact with alcohol, so it's best to avoid drinking while you're taking it.