

In the name of St. Valentine

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February 14 is a day cherished by all couples and hated by all singles. This day is filled with candies, flowers, gifts, and cupid. These gifts and signs of affection are shared between lovers across the country and all in the name of St. Valentine.

We often wonder how Valentine's Day came to be and why it was named after this very mysterious saint. The entire holiday is surrounded by mystery, and we know that February has long been remembered as the "Month of Romance."

St. Valentine's Day has both Roman and Christian traditions. So, who exactly is St. Valentine and how is he associated with love? The Catholic Church recognizes three different saints with the name Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyrs.

A legend says Valentine was a priest who served in Rome during the third century. At the time, Emperor Claudius II was ruling over Rome and decided that single men made better soldiers than married men. So he chose to outlaw the marriage of young men. Valentine, realizing how unjust this was, defied Claudius II and performed marriages for the young lovers in secret. When Claudius learned of Valentine's actions, he condemned him to death.

Another legend suggests that Valentine may have been killed

for helping Christian prisoners escape from the Roman prisons. The Christians were often beaten and tortured in the prisons. It is believed that Valentine actually sent the first valentine to himself. It is said that while he was still in prison, he fell in love with a young girl who visited him during his imprisonment. Before his death, he wrote her a final letter and he addressed it "From Your Valentine," which oddly enough is one of the expressions still used today.

The truths behind the legends are a little foggy, but his actions prove to be heroic, sincere and full of love and romance. During the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in both France and England.

It is believed that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death, which probably occurred in 270 A.D. It is said that Christians celebrate the day for different reasons. In ancient Rome, February was the official beginning of spring. This time was also considered time for purification. They would hold the festival of Lupercalia, the fertility festival dedicated to Panus (the Roman God of Agriculture) and Romulus and Remus (the founders of Rome). During the festival the Roman priests would sacrifice a goat for fertility and a dog for purification. The males would slice the goat's hides into strips, dip them into sacrificial blood and parade through the streets. The hides would be put on the

women and in the crop fields, which was believed to make the women more fertile in the upcoming year. Later in the day all the women's names were placed in an urn and the men would take turns pulling the names out, choosing which female they would be paired with for the year. These "matches" would often end in marriage. Pope Gelasius, around 498 A.D., declared February 14 as St. Valentine's Day. The Roman system of putting the female's names in the urn was eventually considered un-Christian and outlawed.

The history lesson is now over, but what are some traditions celebrated on that special day? Hundreds of years ago in England, the children would dress up as adults on Valentine's Day. They would go from door to door singing songs about Valentine. In Wales, they carve "Wooden Love Spoons" that were given as gifts. In some countries, a woman would receive a gift from a man. If she intended to keep the gift, it meant she intended to marry him. In the United States, we give candy, chocolates, and flowers to sweethearts. These candies are often accompanied with cards expressing love for one another.

We know some traditions celebrated and some history, so now all we have to do is look forward to the holiday. Don't forget, February 14 marks the day to tell your sweetheart your feelings or to go out and find that special Valentine.

Troops protect Iraqi voters

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Kuwait for sale in their bases, "so they would have been in region."

The statement appeared on a Web site often used for posting statements from militants, some of which have proven authentic in the past, and was in the name of a group that has claimed previous kidnappings, the Mujahedeen Brigades.

The Arabic text, however, contained several misspellings and repetitions.

Staff Sgt. Nick Minecci of the U.S. military's press office in Baghdad said "no units have reported anyone missing."

Nearly 200 foreigners have been abducted in Iraq in a wave of kidnappings this year. At least 10 hostages, including three American civilians, remain in the hands of their kidnapers, and at least 35 foreign hostages have been killed, including three Americans.

The only American soldier known to have been taken hostage is Pfc. Keith M. Maupin, 20, of Batavia, Ohio, who was shown in a video in April being held by militants. Another video aired in June showed what purported to be Maupin's slaying, but the picture was too unclear to confirm it was him and the military still lists him as missing.

In the latest violence, clashes broke out early Tuesday in the eastern Mosul neighborhood of Nablus between insurgents and Iraqi National Guards, officials

said. One person was killed and another injured. A roadside bomb killed four Iraqi National Guardsmen in the northwest of the city, Lt. Khail Rashid said.

Two policemen were killed when a bomb they were trying to defuse exploded on a street in the Kurdish-run city of Irbil.

U.S. troops clashed with insurgents Tuesday near the main market in Qaim near the Syrian border, sending crowds fleeing, witnesses said. There was no report of casualties.

With the election complete and the ballots safely in Baghdad, Iraqi authorities eased the severe security measures that had been put in place to protect the voters and polling centers. The hours of nighttime curfew were eased, now covering 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Royal Jordanian Airlines and Iraqi Airways resumed flights to and from Baghdad. Cars, trucks and buses began crossing the border between Iraq and Syria at Tanaf. A five-mile line of trucks loaded with goods was waiting on the Syrian side to cross.

However, the Yarubiya crossing point which leads to the northern Iraqi city of Mosul remained closed.

Security measures for Sunday's vote, including a ban on most private vehicles, were credited with preventing rebels from pulling off catastrophic attacks, although more than 40 people were killed in about 100 attacks on or near polling stations.

A statement posted on the Web on Monday and attributed to an

al-Qaida affiliate dismissed the vote as "theatrics" and promised to continue waging "holy war" against the Americans and their Iraqi allies.

A Shiite clerical-backed alliance was expected to win the most number of seats in the 275-member National Assembly created in the election. But the alliance is not expected to win the two-thirds majority required to name a prime minister without support from other parties.

Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's ticket was expected to finish second among the 111 candidate lists.

Officials have not released turnout figures, although it appeared that many Sunni Arabs stayed away from the polls, either out of fear of insurgent reprisals or opposition to an election under U.S. occupation.

That has raised concern about further alienation among the country's Sunni Arabs, who form about 20 percent of Iraq's 26 million people but whose role in the country's educational, technical and intellectual elite is much greater.

In the south, U.S. troops opened fire Monday on detainees rioting at the Camp Bucca prison facility, killing four prisoners, the U.S. command said. The unrest broke out Monday during a search for contraband and quickly spread. Detainees hurled rocks and fashioned crude weapons from materials in their quarters, the statement said.

Patriot-News editor brings experience to classroom

By John Fox
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From the newsroom to the classroom, Bob Vucic, 59, brings experience from his prolific career in print journalism to the students of Penn State Harrisburg.

Vucic, who is teaching Communications 231W; Journalistic Writing this semester, worked from 1982 to 2003 at The Patriot News. He spent the last two years at The Patriot News as managing editor, design; a very coveted and distinguished position in the world of print journalism.

"I think in terms of the hierarchy, it is a place where most reporters aspire to become," said Vucic of the title, which is outranked only by the editor. "Some people may be reporters their whole lives, starting out at small papers and hopefully ending up at a large paper like the Washington Post or New York Times. Others, like me, love the editing process."

Vucic explained that the typical progression for an ambitious journalist looking to become an editor is as follows: reporter, assistant city editor, city editor, news editor, managing editor, and ultimately editor.

He said that he received a call from PSH proposing he fill an adjunct/lecturer position and, being quite interested, he accepted the offer.

"The job is initially for this semester only," said Vucic. "If they would like me back I certainly would love to be back."

Vucic, who currently lives in Camp Hill, is originally from Pittsburgh. He graduated from Point Park University in Pittsburgh with a B.A. in journalism and went on to take graduate courses in political science at The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.

After college, Vucic started out

as a reporter for The Latrobe Bulletin in 1965, prior to joining the Army to serve in Vietnam. From the late 60s to early 70s, he wrote for The Daily Press Times in Virginia before making a move to retail advertising. In 1972, Vucic worked for the Morning Herald in Hagerstown, Maryland as a reporter and wire editor until 1982.

His career at The Patriot News lasted from 1982 to 2003. Vucic said that he started out as a copy editor before moving on to become the assistant city editor, wire editor, news editor, until finally reaching managing editor, design in 2002.

Vucic is married with four children. His wife, Cate Barron, is the current managing editor, design for The Patriot News.

Vucic came to PSH not without previous teaching experience. He taught a couple of graduate classes in journalism at Temple's Harrisburg campus in 1990 as an adjunct/lecturer. Now here, Vucic said that the students of PSH are a joy to be around and to teach.

"The students here are more mature than what I otherwise thought," said Vucic. "I think it's

ment and explained in detail his overall teaching style.

"Very conversational. My style is fluid and iconoclastic," he said. "I don't observe the sacred cow. I understand the importance of grades as being the measurement of what you know. But, I de-emphasize grading as much as I do to see an individual's improvement over time. I don't like to talk about grades too much."

Vucic knows first hand what it takes to be successful in the world of print journalism. He said that he will bring all of his professional experience into the classroom for his students to learn from, and also explained what he wants his students to learn and take with them from his class.

"I've been in newspapers for thirty years, so I'm quite familiar with all aspects of them. I want them [students] to be better writers and to know the basics of writing," said Vucic. "I want them to have a handle on basic communication organizational skills; to write simply, honestly, factually, and to open up their writing to make them aware of how media works and operates. I want them

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-Prof. Bob Vucic

because a lot of the students here have jobs and that forces responsibility and a certain amount of maturity. I think that definitely comes across. I absolutely enjoy this."

As a teacher, Vucic is very concerned with individual improve-

to know more when they leave here than they did when they started."

During his entire career in print journalism, Vucic recalled some of his favorite aspects of the job,

"I loved competition," said Vucic. "As a reporter, I loved

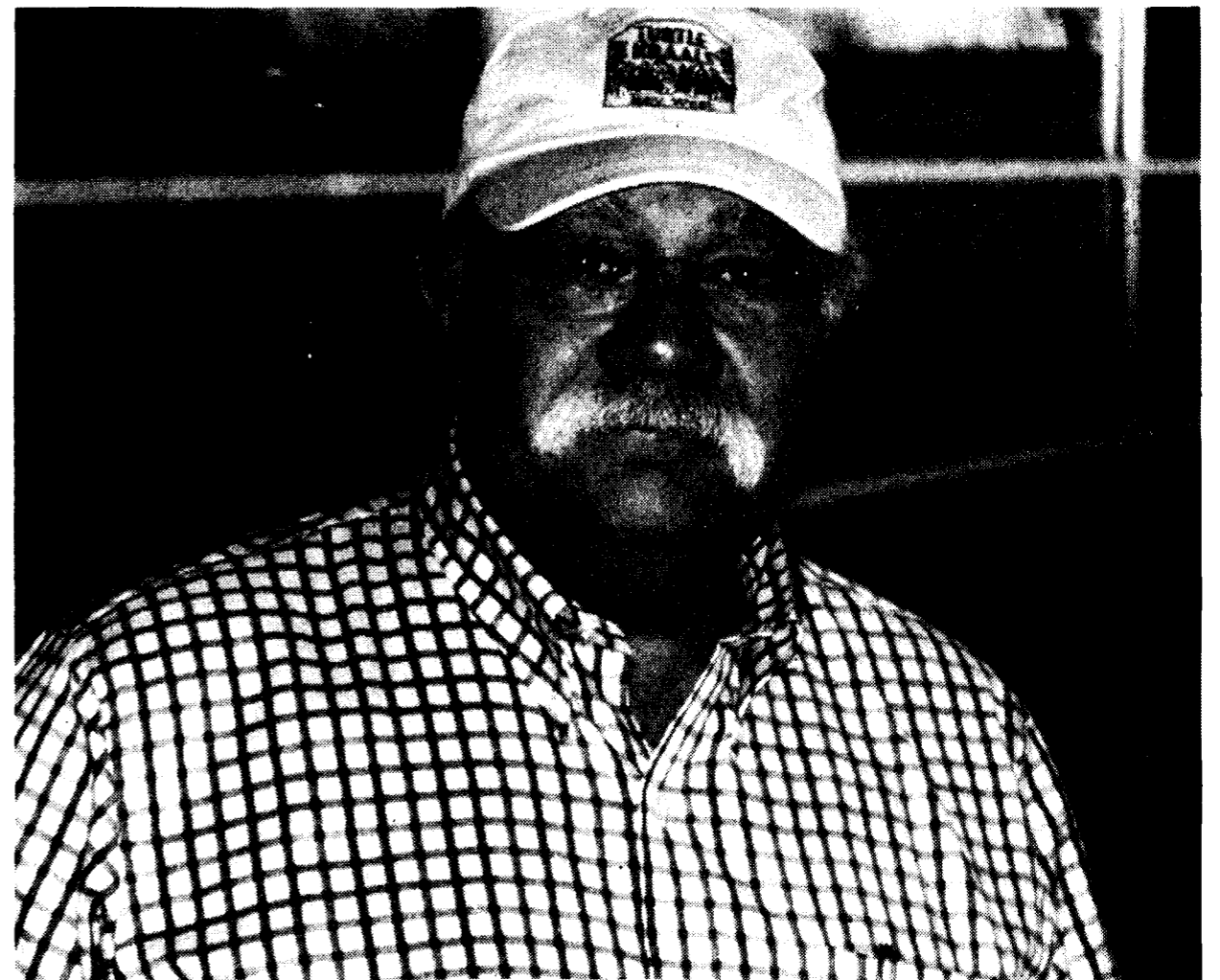


Photo by John Fox/Capital Times

Bob Vucic's experience as managing editor at The Patriot News enters the classroom as he teaches Communications and Journalistic Writing at PSH.

scooping other newspapers; the notion of getting the story before anyone else. I also loved the byline. I loved to have my name out there."

Vucic explained that even though he never took a criminal justice class, he loved to cover murder trials and learned a lot on the topic simply by having to do it.

"Then, as time went on, I became an editor," said Vucic. "I love the notion that no one knows what I do. I love that I could select a story, assign a story, and design a page that the reader doesn't know who did this. So, I became just the opposite from what I was as a reporter. I loved the anonymity and working with the staff."

During his capacity as manag-

ing editor, design, Vucic had the privilege of designing many unforgettable moments in recent history which The Patriot News aggressively covered. Vucic designed many historic images seen in the Central Pennsylvania area and beyond, such as the war in Iraq, the Clinton impeachment, and 9/11. Vucic reflected on how it felt to design the important images which were seen by so many people across all of the mid-state.

"You felt accomplished, like you were responding to a need and providing a necessary service. You were giving your reader something they otherwise may not have gotten," he said. "We took incredibly confusing, scary, and monumental stories and in a matter of hours tried to make

some sense out of it- visually and with words. It took many of us to put that all together. We were a team."

Vucic elaborated on the determination that drove him and his team to produce the news.

"Sometimes you just simply go into overdrive," said Vucic, "and don't worry about how many hours you put in. You know what has to be done because you're professionals and you simply do the very best. In the end, it is a great feeling of satisfaction."

Vucic's exceptional experience leaves no question about his ability at the helm of a classroom. The communication students of PSH will benefit greatly from his instruction and we can only hope that he will stay on to teach on a permanent basis.