

The Guts and Love of Martin and Coretta Scott King

By Gene Naden
Chicago, Illinois, USA
16 January, 2012

This is dedicated to Martin King himself, Coretta Scott King, Bayard Rustin and all who made signs, stuffed envelopes, and sat down when told to stand up and move.

The desire to be loved and cared for is the core of a human being's life

"Love me please", a babe cries

We never lose that; the feeling; the desire - not to be hurt

To be nurtured

Yet Coretta did not abandon Martin despite the embarrassment his actions brought to her

And they knew they would be attacked, even by their followers

They knew the day would come when the love of their followers would be eclipsed.

Totally, by a man's hate.

They privately carried that chilling anticipation.

They held their focus on their mission of social change.

Fear did not command them

That was guts.

And love.



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is gradualism, the idea that we can somehow make things right in incremental changes. That will not work for us any more than it worked for the African Americans, a.k.a. Negroes, in the 1950's and early 1960's. They were getting nowhere until the United States legislature was confronted with a crisis.

And that is my prophecy to you; we shall have our special day in history. The question is, "when?" It could take place in 2012 or in 2024. Which date would better reflect our love for ourselves and our children?

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The Rainbow Connection

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New Congressional Lines Split McLean County, Twin Cities

The newly-drawn congressional districts mean new district boundaries and potentially new representatives for Bloomington/Normal and McLean County.

Incumbent Rep. Tim Johnson's(R) district was redrawn and he now finds himself running for re-election in the 13th congressional district, where he will face off against Republican challengers Frank Metzger and Michael Firsching. On the Democratic side, David Gill, who is running for the fourth time, faces off against political newcomer Matt Goetten.

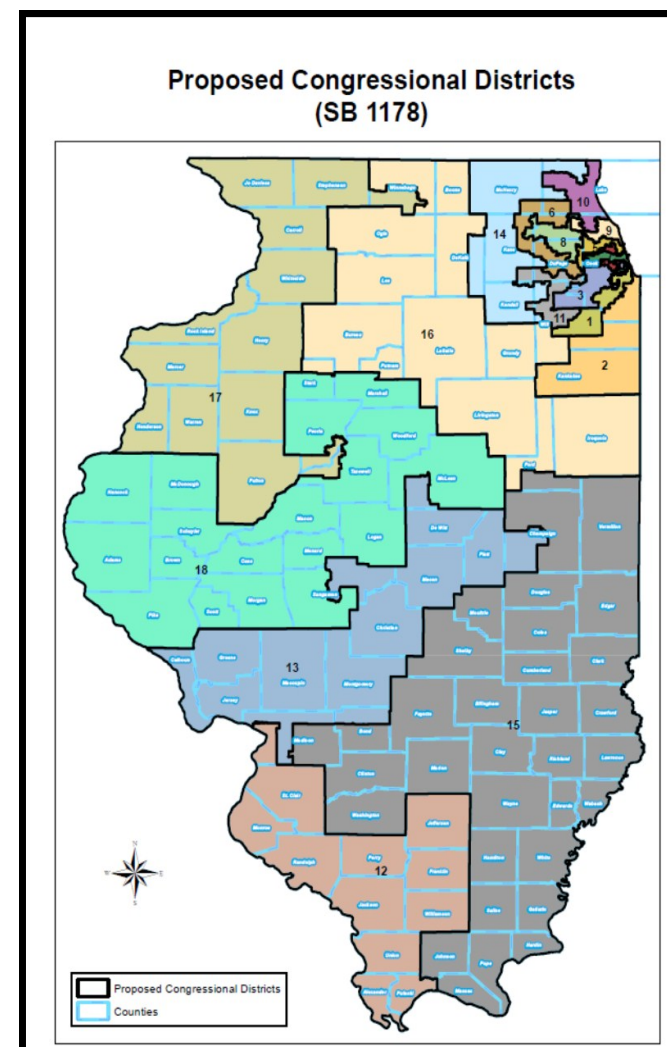
The 13th district encompasses much of McLean County, including the east sides of the Twin Cities.

The rest of Bloomington/Normal and the county fall into the 18th district, where Republican congressman Aaron Schock is running to serve a third term. He faces a primary challenger in Republican Darrel Miller. On the Democratic side, Matt Woodmancy and Steve Waterworth compete for the chance to run in the November general election.

To determine which district you live in, please see the new congressional map in this newsletter. An interactive, online version of the congressional map can be found by going to <http://www.ilhousedems.com/redistricting/>.

The Illinois primary is Tuesday, March 20. The Advocacy Council plans to send a candi-

date questionnaire to each congressional candidate; responses will be published in our March newsletter .



Where Do We Go from Here? 2012

By Gene Naden
MLK Day, January 16, 2012

Martin Luther King wrote: "Now, in order to answer the question 'Where do we go from here?' we must first honestly recognize where we are now."

On King's day we had much to celebrate. Today I ask you to think of the challenges that remain:

- Queer teenagers are much more likely to attempt suicide than their straight peers.
- If a US citizen happens to fall in love with a foreigner of the same gender then that foreigner cannot become a permanent resident even if the couple somehow manages to marry.
- In all but six states, a couple of the same gender cannot marry and is either relegated to the second-class status of "civil union" or has no status whatsoever.
- Mainstream movies generally depict all kinds of sexual and gender nonconformists as tragic figures at best, often as victims, as morally corrupt or even as murderers.
- In real life, sex workers, homosexual or heterosexual, are exploited and treated as criminals
- Transgender teenagers are not allowed reassignment surgery or hormones but are forced to wait until they are older, when the transition is much more difficult.
- In any public place in Chicago, for example, or nearly any hospital, one must define their gender identity – male or female – in order to obtain access to the toilet.
- In many or most states of the Union, a transgender person must submit to genital surgery, and document the fact, in order to receive an appropriate driver's license or state ID.
- Homosexual activity around the world is a crime punished by death, mutilation or long prison terms.

How did this come about? You have individuals, frequently male and occasionally gay, at all levels, who choose to or feel compelled to oppress those who are female or who do not conform physically or psychologically to the stereotypes of our culture. This may be about money or it may be expressed in other power relationships. Convinced that we have few options, many of us put up with it. Others simply give up.



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As Martin Luther King said in his 1969 speech "Where Do We Go From Here," the task of bringing into personhood people that have been taught throughout history that they are nobody is not easy." He went on to say,

"The tendency to ignore the Negro's contribution to American life and to strip him of his personhood, is as old as the earliest history books and as contemporary as the morning's newspaper. To upset this cultural homicide, the Negro must rise up with an affirmation of his own Olympian manhood. Any movement for the Negro's freedom that overlooks this necessity is only waiting to be buried. As long as the mind is enslaved, the body can never be free. Psychological freedom, a firm sense of self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon..."

He could have been talking about us.

Again quoting King, one of the great problems we confront is our own lack of power. Power was the ability of King to make the white male-dominated US legislature say "yes" when it wanted to say "no." That was power.

I sometimes feel that I don't deserve to have political power. Where does that idea come from? Somewhere in the history books or in the churches, I got the idea that love and power were opposites, that "love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love." But we cannot afford to be confused about this: neglect of our rights and the rights of our children is not love. It is just neglect.

What would love be? Love could be expressed in the following ways:

- Deletion of the "sodomy" laws that are on the books across the nation
- Gay-straight alliances in all the schools
- Designated administrators legally required to respond to any violent incident in the public schools
- Decriminalization of sex workers, male and female
- Marriage recognized by the Department of Homeland Security (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service). (It is ironic that sexual orientation has now become an issue of national security.)
- Universal recognition of corporate domestic partner benefits.
- Gender-neutral toilets in hospitals and public places

Would this type of progress be a threat to families? Yes. It is a threat to families based on women's shame at being single, upon men's need to prove their worth to the community, based on fear of being different from the majority, based on guilt about sexual expression by single people.

Is this a threat against organized religion? Yes it is that, too. This is a threat to organized religion that is based on guilt or the quest of a priesthood for power.

I know that many of you, perhaps most of you, are already working towards what I advocate. What I have a problem with

"Where Do We Go" continued on page 4

IWU Annual Drag Ball and Dance Planned

It's that time of year again ladies and ladyboys! Your favorite genderbenders are back for the annual Illinois Wesleyan University Drag Ball on Friday, Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. at the IWU Memorial Center Main Lounge. Come out and show off your best genderbending attire and win some prizes!

A fantastic show is planned featuring Regina and the Cookies, newcomer Miss Tasha Cornel, and returning hostess, the always fabulous Hillary Haze.

This year's show will feature new attractions such as a Dollar Dance and audience fashion show, so get ready to strut your stuff!

After the show there will be a photo opportunity with

the performing Queens, and then Regina will DJ a bumping dance party and spin all your favorite tunes. Be sure to leave your song requests on the event wall! A \$3 dollar donation will be taken at the door OR you can tip the queens during their performances! One hundred percent of all proceeds go to charity to support LGBT movements in the community!

The show begins at 7 p.m. this year with the dance party following immediately after!

First Fridays Spring Schedule

Local LGBTQ organizations, including the Advocacy Council (ACHR), will host monthly First Fridays socials at the Bistro, 316 N. Main Street in downtown Bloomington.

Each organization takes turns providing munchies and appetizers for each First Friday session. And of course, Jan and the Bistro provide the space and the drink specials to start everyone's weekend on a positive note!

The schedule for the first half of 2012:

- February 3 - ACHR
- March 2 - Open Worship Church of Hope
- April 6 - ISU Triangle Association
- May 4 - PRIDE, State Farm ERG
- June 1 - Open Worship Church of Hope

Please join us for some great food, drink and fun at our First Friday socials!

Calendar

- Feb. 3—First Fridays-February--is Tour De Chocolat Downtown. Businesses will be open and passing out chocolate treats.
- Feb. 5 and 19—the Female to Male Transgender Group monthly meetings will be held at 1p.m. in downtown Bloomington. Contact treypolessky@gmail.com for location and more details about the group.
- Feb. 10—Hotspot Show hosted by Sharon Share a Like at the Bistro
- Feb. 11—Plain Jane will be playing at the Bistro
- Feb. 17—King Show at the Bistro
- Feb. 18—The deadline for this year's high school seniors English essay contest from The Queer Foundation is Feb. 18. Teachers, counselors, or students who want more information, please check out our website at <http://queerfoundation.org>

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