

THE BISTRO

Friends, Family,
Community, Fun & Love.

316 North Main
Bloomington, Illinois 61701
309/829-2278

M-TH: 8p.m.-1a.m.,
FRI: 4:30p.m.-2a.m.
SAT: 8p.m.-2a.m.

Queer Manifesto continued from page 2 ...

If you read Bishop Robinson's speech given at the opening of the presidential inauguration (you would have to have read it because apparently it wasn't broadcast), you may have noticed that he specifically mentioned the danger Obama is in and expressed hope that he would be "safe" (in other words that he would not be assassinated). These prophets, these heroes, tend to have a diminished life expectancy. And, as Franklin pointed out, dependency on them can "betray" us (his word.)

So go ahead and buy that "Milk" CD. Attend the UU church or the MCC. Pray at night (I do, sometimes). Pay attention to what I say about Dr. King. Listen to Obama's speeches. But do any of you need to be reminded that the day will come when none of these is sufficient and you or I or both of us will have to make a decision solely based on the facts of the moment?

Web sites of interest continued from page 3 ...

Central Illinois Safe Schools Alliance
www.myspace.com/cissail

McLean County AIDS Task Force
www.mcatf.org

Central Illinois Gender Society
www.illinoisgender.com

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington
www.uubloomington.org

New Covenant Community
www.nccnormal.org

The Bistro
www.myspace.com/bloomingtonbistro

The Shark Bar
www.thesharkbarbloomington.com

Serving Our Community

Insurance and Financial Services

Scott Simons
Financial Services Associate
The Prudential Insurance Company of America
2305 Village Green Place, Suite A
Champaign, IL 61822
217-398-2500
<http://www.prudential.com/us/scott.simons>
scott.simons@prudential.com



Insurance issued by The Prudential Insurance Company of America,
Newark, NJ and its affiliates.
IFS-A113832 Ed. 10/2007

A fully customized
cleaning in a
one-size-fits-all world.

Come home to a customized service that is
guaranteed to fit you perfectly.

\$60 off

\$20 off first 3 cleanings
Weekly or biweekly service
309-661-1726



merrymaids.com

merry maids
Relax. It's Done.™

New customers only. Not valid with other offers. Valid only at this location. Cash value of 1/1000 of 1 cent. Offer good through 10/31/2009.

	<h2>New Covenant Community</h2> <p>An Open and Affirming/More Light congregation which welcomes all persons into full participation in the life of our community, regardless of race, gender, age or sexual orientation.</p> <p>Worship Sundays, 10:30 a.m. Sunday School and childcare provided during worship</p> <p>Chapel of the Campus Religious Center 210 W. Mulberry St., Normal, IL 61761 (309)454-7362 www.nccnormal.org</p>
--	--

The Rainbow Connection

May 2009

ACHR Board of Directors: Dave Bentlin; Peggy Burton; Gary Gletty; Margo Mendoza; Donna O'Crowly

The Rainbow Connection is published by the Advocacy Council for Human Rights (ACHR). Correspondence can be sent to P.O. Box 5048, Bloomington, IL 61702-5048, or e-mail info@achr-il.com

Family Reunion Picnic

The Advocacy Council, with support from other area lgbtq organizations, will again sponsor the Family Reunion Picnic at noon on Sunday, July 19 at Underwood Park in Normal.

The annual event features great food, games, a raffle and (hopefully) lots of sunny weather!

If you would like to help plan this year's event please join us at our next ACHR meeting at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12 at Connections Community Center, 313 N. Main St. in downtown Bloomington. If you cannot attend but are interested please contact us at info@achr-il.com.

Help Debbie Halvorson

Anyone who has lived in Bloomington/Normal for any period of time realizes that we rarely have a local elected official - on either the state or congressional level - who is a supporter of lgbt rights.

Things began to look up in November when the voters in the 11th Illinois congressional district elected Debbie Halvorson to replace decidedly anti-gay Jerry Weller.

(The 11th district includes a significant portion of Bloomington/Normal. To see if you are in the 11th district go to www.govtrack.us).

So far Rep. Halvorson has continued her support of glbt issues that began when she was a state senator in Springfield. She met with local lgbt leaders last fall and assured us that our civil rights are important to her as well.

Halvorson and all 435 members of the House of Representatives face re-election in 2010 and already challengers in the Republican Party are stepping up and fundraising in anticipation of running against her.

Folks, we need to rally behind Rep. Halvorson and do anything we possibly can to ensure her continued service in Washington. Her support will be vital on legislation such as the hate crimes act, the Employment Non Discrimination Act, and the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

With that in mind, we would like to begin planning for a local lgbt fundraiser to help finance Debbie's 2010 campaign. However, we need help! If you are interested in helping to coordinate such a fundraiser please consider joining us in this project.

We will have an ACHR meeting at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12 at the Connections Community Center in downtown Bloomington. One of our topics will be this fundraiser, so if you are interested please join us.

ACHR to meet with Rep. Brady

Members of the Advocacy Council are planning a meeting with Rep. Dan Brady to discuss HB 2234, the bill that would provide civil unions for same-sex couples in Illinois.

Brady has not indicated his support for the bill; however, we feel that the meeting will be an opportunity to provide Brady with information and statistics about the lgbt community in his district. We also hope such a meeting will help us re-establish an ongoing dialogue with Rep. Brady on other issues that are of concern to the lgbt community.

For more information about HB2234 visit www.ilga.gov, www.equalityillinois.org or www.aclu-il.org.

BN LGBT diners at Swingers Grille May 12

The BN DiningOUT Group will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12 at Swingers Grille, 1304 Cross Creek Drive in Normal.

If you plan to attend please e-mail skeena@yahoo.com so enough table space can be reserved. For more information about the BN DiningOUT group go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BNDiningOUT>.

To view the menu at Swingers Grille go to www.swingersgrille.com.

Laramie Project coming to Bloomington

In October 1998 gay college student Matthew Shepard was brutally murdered in Wyoming at the hands of men with hate in their hearts. His senseless death galvanized into a movement to raise awareness about hate crimes against lgbt people.

The McLean County Diversity Project has joined that movement by sponsoring a local production of "The Laramie Project" to be performed at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 15 at the Bloomington Center for Performing Arts in downtown Bloomington.

Deaths of lgbt people like Matthew Shepard are the driving force behind efforts to enact the federal hate

... continued on page 2

continued from page 1 ...

crimes act which would classify such acts of violence as hate crimes and institute more severe criminal penalties against the perpetrators.

The cast consists of 7th–12th grade students from area schools. The production is under the direction of Tricia Stiller and Troy Clark.

Tickets for the performance are \$7 for adults; \$5 for elementary and secondary school students; and \$5 for seniors 65+. Tickets can be obtained by calling the center box office at 309-434-2777 or by visiting the center's web site at <http://www.cityblm.org/bcd/>.

For more information about the McLean County Diversity Project go to www.mcleancountydiversity.org.

LGBTQ Spring Prom

LGBT folks 18+ years of age from central Illinois will be heading to Champaign for the Mpowerment Promenade from 8 to 11 p.m. on Saturday, May 2.

The event, which includes free admission, will be in the Cityview Banquet Room on the fourth floor of the Illinois Terminal, 45 E. University Ave. in Champaign.

Music will be provided by DJ Randall Ellison with catering by Jim Goulds.

Many of us never experienced a prom where we could be our true selves; the prom is an excellent opportunity to right that wrong!

Movie Fan has a new home!

The Movie Fan, with the best selection of lgbt-themed films anywhere downstate, has a new home in Normal.

The store recently moved to 503 S. Main Street, just south of Avanti's and the Newman Center. It was a fixture for many years in Uptown Normal just across from the Normal Theater.

The Movie Fan's new space is bigger with more convenient parking. And as always, David offers a full selection of lgbt-themed DVDs in addition to all the latest mainstream releases.

For more information on the Movie Fan go to www.themoviefan.com.

Middle Aged Gay Guy 23

Victory is ours! (Isn't it?)

by Tom O. McCulley

I make a point of keeping up with “the other side” when it comes to the movement for gay civil rights. What this means is that now and again I visit the Focus on the Family website; I go out of my way to read anti-gay letters to the editor in various newspapers; I even, dear readers, listen to Rush Limbaugh if I think some recent news article will send him on an anti-gay rights rampage. None of this makes me a hero, of course—(well, maybe listening to Rush)—it just keeps me informed about the language “the other side” is using in its continuing attempts to deny me my basic civil rights.

Recently, the tenor of the language used by the other side has started to change. In many anti-gay rights quarters, what used to be outright hysteria has morphed into an abject resignation—a sort of acceptance, if you will, that things are changing. Bill O'Reilly recently wrote an op-ed piece admitting that some form of gay partnership rights will become a reality across the U.S. within the next generation. Dr. James Dobson has been chanting a mantra that the “culture wars are lost” when it comes to gay rights on his Focus on the Family radio broadcasts and in parts of FOF's website.

As I reported in this column recently, a vast majority of my students at Heartland Community College not only accept, but actually promote the idea that single gay persons and gay partners should receive equal protection under the law—even those students who still believe I am going to hell because of who I have shared my bed with for twenty-six years.

Recent polls have shown that more and more Americans are moving into the “yes” column when it comes to granting me and my kind

the same legal protections shared by the heterosexual majority. In fact, if polls asking about legal protections for gays and their families are limited to those under thirty, the margin of acceptance becomes refreshingly large.

It is easy, then, to think we've won the overall battle for our rights—right?

Oh, if only that were true! Dig deeper into Focus on the Family's website and you'll find that more than ever before, our gains in civil rights protections are being used as a call for more money to put a stop to our “advances.” Listen a little more closely to Rush and you'll hear—behind his ongoing denial that he hates homosexuals—the use of our newly gained legal recognition in places like Vermont and Iowa as a clarion call to those whose anger at the “gaying of America” simmers just below the boiling point. Read between the lines a little bit in the recent O'Reilly piece and you'll get a hint that he wants to blame our civil rights gains for much of what he and his ilk believe is “wrong with America.”

I am the first to criticize those who play what I call the “Hitler” card in their writings. The “Hitler” card for me is comparing any cultural change that is happening at the moment to anything similar that happened in the history of the Nazi movement in Germany. You'll find a lot of the “Hitler” card being played in letters and articles and opinion pieces being written at this moment about President Obama and his current policies. The real problem with the “Hitler” card is that once you've played it, what else is there to say?

Still, at the risk of using a tool I so often criticize—I'll play my own “Hitler” card for a moment and ask for your indulgence.

Just before the Nazi's came to power, gay people in Weimar Germany had gained more acceptance than gay people in any other part of Europe—certainly more acceptance than gay people in the U.S. at the time. Gay persons in

Germany had their own clubs; they could appear as couples in the streets in major German cities. Gay supportive researchers produced work promoting the idea that being gay was not a disgusting choice or some form of disease but rather, that being gay was natural. Progressive German politicians were examining legislation that would have granted gay persons legal protections.

That's when some Germans, afraid that their country was becoming “too progressive” and “morally impure” turned to the Nazi party to “clean up” their society.

With our recent gay rights victories comes a charge to all of us who labor on the front lines of change; we cannot let down our guard. We cannot rest. We cannot believe for one moment that the next set of rights we gain will come without a cost—possibly a heavy cost.

Today, I am celebrating the idea that as early as this summer I can get in my car and travel to beautiful northern Iowa and get married. Today I am more and more sure that soon, very soon, the state of Illinois will at the very least pass a Civil Unions Bill.

Today, even though this battle has been long and I am very, very tired, I am girding for the next set of battles to come.

Web sites of interest

Advocacy Council for Human Rights
www.achr-il.com

Out and About Illinois
www.outandaboutillinois.com

Equality Illinois
www.equalityillinois.org

BN DiningOUT
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/bndiningout

Central Illinois Bi Women
www.centralillinoisbiwomen.com

Queer Manifesto: No heroes

By Gene Naden

Recovering alcoholics and drug addicts in Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous deliberately cultivate the surrender of one's will to that of “God.” These are from steps three and eleven of the famous Twelve Steps: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God...” and “... praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.” Those who take these steps seriously often achieve remarkable results. On the other hand, when I found my biological mother in San Francisco she turned out to be a veteran Unitarian Universalist and she stated that, for her, reference to “God's will for me” was a kind of personal turn-off. At the time she said it, my reaction was that her remark itself was a personal turn-off.

In these pages I have quoted Martin Luther King, I have applied his statements to our main political issue and I have even said that I fantasize about emulating him. Alas, were it all so simple! The University of Chicago African-American historian John Hope Franklin passed away this week and PBS broadcast a brief interview he had given some years ago on the subject of Martin Luther King's relationship to the civil rights movement and on the state of what is sometimes euphemistically referred to as “race relations.” Franklin acknowledged the importance of leadership. However, he felt that King was overvalued in the sense that focusing on him causes us to lose sight of the contribution of common people to social change. He went further to say that we depended on King to lead us and when King was assassinated that left us lost. He used a metaphor like “wandering in the wilderness” and seemed to be saying that even in the 21st century we are still wandering. (In fairness to Dr. King I must say that he apparently knew he would die and stayed his course anyway.)

Most people seem unconcerned about the state of the global economy and perhaps they think that Barack Obama can miraculously produce money out of thin air. Or pull it out of his... hat.

I am constructing a kind of analogy here between worship of “God” on one hand and a cult of personality on the other. At times I certainly wish there were a charismatic figure for me to follow around, be he an Episcopal Bishop (Gene Robinson) or a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (Harvey Milk). It would reduce the amount of effort I would have to spend on that most painful of all work activities: thinking.

... continued on back page

... continued on back page