

# March

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And we saw these men putting on their gas masks and they came toward us, beating us with night sticks, bull whips, trampling us with horses, releasing the tear gas," Lewis recounts.

"I thought I was going to die. I thought I saw death. And I sort of said to myself, 'I'm going to die here. This is my last protest.' I just heard people hollering and crying. And 40 years later, I don't recall how I made it back across that bridge, back to that little church."

The graphic violence shown on national television news programs that night helped to win empathy and compassion for the protesters who retreated to the Brown Chapel, where they had begun the march. Next Tuesday will mark the 40th



Photo Credit: Library of Congress/Federal Bureau of Investigation

Alabama State Troopers attack peaceful marchers with nightsticks and tear gas on Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965.

town to lead marches around the issue and help oust three council members opposed to honoring Dr. King. On February 1, the Greenville County Council voted 7-5 to begin observing the holiday next year.

"It's litigation, demonstration, legislation and registra-

tion, load of Klansmen as she and a young Black SCLC worker were on their way to Montgomery to return some demonstrators to Selma.

Three of the four Klansmen were charged with murder; the fourth was an undercover FBI informant. The first trial ended in a hung jury and the second in an acquittal. The three were finally convicted of violating Liuzzo's civil rights and each was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Moved by the continued violence against African-Americans and their supporters, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act that summer, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into law on Aug. 6, 1965, removing many of the barriers to Black political empowerment. Black elected officials increased from 300 in 1965 to 9,040 in 2000, according to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Civil rights issues of the 21st century, including the need for health care, quality education, anti-war policies, and continued protections for voting rights are more than enough reason to continue marching, says Lewis.

Lucy G. Barber, author of "Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Political Tradition," agrees that marching in America will increase — but for different reasons.

"It used to be something that's done by more liberal groups. Now, groups of all different stripes use protest at the local level and at the national level to publicize their causes and draw attention to it," says Barber, an archivist and historian for the California State Archives in Sacramento.

Recently, conservative groups have taken to the streets to highlight the issues of same-sex marriages and abortion.

Carl Mack, a former NAACP chapter president in Washington state and now

executive director of the National Society of Black Engineers, says marching will remain an effective tool.

"You have to sustain it. And, of course, when you do something as dramatic as march on the freeway in rush hour traffic, it is impactful," Mack says.

He was referring to his NAACP chapter's response to the 2002 shooting death of a Black motorist by an off-duty White sheriff in Seattle. They marched on the freeway to call attention to the issue, then continued marches and protests over the next two years.

On the opposite coast, Damu Smith, chairman and founder of Black Voices for Peace, says his group will join anti-war marches at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, N.C. on March 19 and on Sept. 10 in New York during a special session of the United Nations.

"We have not been able to compel a fundamental change in the policy, but we have put the Bush administration on the defensive about this war," Smith says.

Shanta Driver is a convener of BAMN (By Any Means Necessary), the group that organized at least 10,000



Photo credit: Library of Congress

The "Bloody Sunday" march from Selma to Montgomery

student marchers outside the U. S. Supreme Court two years ago as justices heard arguments in two University of Michigan affirmative action cases.

Driver is organizing a march for April 1 in Ann Arbor to oppose Black conservative Ward Connerly's ballot initiative to limit affirmative action in Michigan.

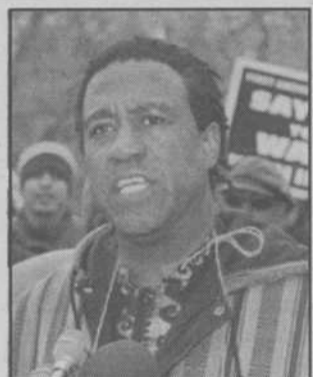
"We're calling it 'Operation King's Dream,'" Driver says. "We believe his methods of fighting and his vision are one."

Meanwhile, Lewis is preparing to commemorate Bloody Sunday by marching with a group back across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Sunday.

"More than anything, you have to have a group of people, dedicated, committed with a made up mind that are prepared, literally, to do the extraordinary," Lewis says. "They may not be beaten. They may not get arrested. But, simple, organized marching will appeal to the conscious of the people."

*"We have not been able to compel a fundamental change in the policy, but we have put the Bush administration on the defensive about this war."*

— Damu Smith, founder, Black Voices for Peace



anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

While no one questions the effectiveness of the Selma-to-Montgomery March, some ask whether marching is a tactic that has outlived its usefulness. "Dr. King said — and I think, after all these years later, it's still very relevant — he said, 'There is nothing more powerful than the marching feet of a determined people,'" Lewis recalls.

Jesse Jackson Sr., who dropped out of the Chicago Theological Seminary to participate in the Selma-to-Montgomery March, agrees. "Marching inspires people. It educates people," says Jackson, president and CEO of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

"When the mass march comes, the camera comes. The to-and-fro takes place. The anxiety rises. Involvement happens. Mass action gets mass results. Usually, class action gets class results. Inaction gets no results." Jackson points to his hometown, Greenville, S.C., as an example of how protest still works.

Greenville went for 19 years without recognizing the Martin Luther King holiday. Jackson returned to his home-

tion. It has always taken that combination," Jackson explains.

Nat Irvin, founder of Future Focus 220, a futuristic think tank at Wake Forest University in neighboring North Carolina, thinks marching is quickly becoming a thing of the past.

"It will be difficult to find one issue that will cause masses of Black people to take to the streets," Irvin predicts. "It would have to be really an egregious kind of thing directed at Black people intentionally to cause Black people to respond."

Jackson is not convinced. "It's always been those who didn't want to march and complained about marching, who didn't understand marching," he counters. "We're debating a time-tested winner."

John Lewis and protesters in Selma certainly emerged as winners. Eventually, more than 3,000 protesters marched across the bridge en route to Montgomery.

After the rally in Montgomery, violence struck again. Viola Gregg Liuzzo, 39, the wife of a Detroit Teamster official and mother of four who had gone South to support civil rights, had been shot to death by a car-

Let's Make  
Read Across America  
An Every Day



By  
Reg Weaver,  
President,  
National  
Education  
Association

Kids who read — and kids who are read to — do better in school and better in life. It's a fact supported by research and the common sense wisdom of parents everywhere.

This week, more than 45 million students, parents, grandparents, teachers, education support professionals, and others are taking part in the National Education Association's Read Across America day.

But reading can't be just a one day event. Kids need to experience the joy of reading every day. It's more than a way of helping students in school. Family reading helps strengthen families. Strong families help build strong communities. Reading and lifelong learning are at the core of our founding generation's highest aspirations for the United States of America.

NEA's Read Across America is one example of NEA's work to make sure every child has a public school as great as America's best public schools. NEA's Read Across America events bring others into the school community who might not otherwise get involved. School-based and community-based Read Across America events draw community leaders, politicians, athletes, musicians and actors into contact with students and with schools. Some of those connections between community leaders and schools evolve into ongoing efforts to be engaged with the school year-round.

In the same way, it provides an opportunity to highlight what NEA knows works in the classroom — the same ingredients that are supported by research by parents and by teachers and education support professionals: strong parental involvement, qualified and certified teachers, small class sizes that allow for individual attention, and books and materials aligned with high standards — and high expectations — for every child.

So on March 2 — and every day — take a moment and read with a child. Visit [NEA.org](http://NEA.org) to find out more about how you can get involved in activities in your area.

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too old,  
too wacky,  
too wild to  
pick up a book  
and read with  
a child.*



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