



*THE  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
OF THE  
FIRST FRIDAY  
BREAKFAST CLUB, INC.*

# *First Friday News & Views*

*JULY  
2006  
VOLUME  
II  
ISSUE  
7*

## **War On Terror by the Numbers**

**by Jonathan Wilson**

**T**he number of Americans who have died in the Iraq war has passed 2,500. The number injured exceeds 20,000. They were sent to make these sacrifices as a part of a larger war on the terror represented by the attack on 9/11 when some number over 3000 died in New York; Washington, D.C.; and a Pennsylvania field.

The American dead and wounded in Iraq are only the tip of an iceberg. The number doesn't include those killed and wounded in the companion war in Afghanistan. There we have lost over 300 dead and almost 1000 seriously injured. In both arenas, coalition forces have also been killed and wounded.

Those casualty totals don't include the companion casualties among Iraqis and Afghanis. Ignoring their military casualties, as we typically do, their civilian casualties now amount to over 100,000 dead and over 200,000 injured. Their total number of dead is now more than 30 times the number killed on 9/11. Just before they died, Iraq during the reign of Saddam had to have looked to them a lot like Iraq after Bush. They were not better off. Even Old Testament Christians, who believe in an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, should recognize the over-kill, particularly when the Iraqis had nothing to do with the 9/11 attack. For perspective, if the US had lost on 9/11 an equivalent percentage of the entire US population, we'd be looking at over 1,150,000 dead Americans! And we wonder why the insurgents are able to find recruits. Let someone slaughter that equivalent number of Americans, in the name of democracy or otherwise, and imagine the kind of push back there would, should, be.

There are now about 138,000 American soldiers stationed in Iraq, many on a second or third rotation, along with about 25,000 mercenaries. A second or third rotation has to be about as smart as another spin in Russian Roulette. While Bush is talking about troop reductions and actually increasing troop levels, I have to ask myself what goes through their minds. They must know there is a minimum number needed in order to have someone covering your back and someone available to evacuate you when a vengeful Iraqi shoots the target painted there. Who among them will want to be among those flirting with that minimum number.

The price in American lives lost and forever injured ignores the devastating loss to their friends and families. It also ignores the loss in cold, hard cash. We are spending over NINE BILLION DOLLARS per month to wage the Iraq war. It is estimated that it will eventually cost over ONE TRILLION DOLLARS, or more than \$3,300 for every man, woman, and child in America. Put another way, with Iowa's population percentage of that total, the entire budget for the state of Iowa could be funded, in full, for the next TWENTY YEARS without any state tax revenues whatsoever.



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### CALENDAR

- ▼ The next FFBC meeting is 7:00 A.M., Friday, July 7 at Hoyt Sherman Place.  
  
Our guest speaker will be Rick Clark, Des Moines City Manager.
- ▼ R.S.V.P. by Monday, July 3 to Jonathan.Wilson@lawiowa.com or 288-2500 by phone.

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Now get this number: with Bush's approval rating in the tank at around 30% of the US adult population believing still that he is handling the Iraq war well, there are 68,000,000 adults in this country who support the handling of this war. That seems incomprehensible to me, to think that 68,000,000 Americans fail to see the disconnect between the reality of 9/11, those admittedly responsible for it, and an invasion of the country of Iraq that had nothing to do with the 9/11 attack.

President Bush never tires of saying that the world is better off without Saddam Hussein. The statement is a non sequitur; assuming it's true, the same could be said for any number of despots, not the least of which would be Libya's Kaddafi, with whom Bush has recently re-established diplomatic relations. Besides, Bush was not elected (assuming that for the moment) president of the world. He took his oath to defend the United States of America, its people, and its interests.

The pertinent question, therefore, is whether the United States is better off, and so much so as to justify the human sacrifices in the Iraq war, the diversion of attention and resources from higher priority targets in the war on terror, and the loss of esteem around the world for our country. The numbers would suggest that we are not better off and we have not been made safer by the Iraq war that promises to tie down our military in a defensive posture for years to come.

—Jonathan Wilson

## BRIEFS & SHORTS

Be sure to RSVP to [Jonathan.Wilson@lawiowa.com](mailto:Jonathan.Wilson@lawiowa.com) no later than July 3 for the July 7 meeting. Our speaker will be Rick Clark, Des Moines City Manager. Jonathan can also be reached by phone at 288-2500.

It was a powerfully moving experience to see once again the hopeful faces of our annual scholarship recipients and their families. Recognizing their efforts to reduce homophobia across the state of Iowa is making a difference. You're reminded to consider a generous contribution to the scholarship fund. Without the fund, there are no scholarships. Contributions can be sent or given to Jonathan Wilson or David Teachout.

Announcement for those in or hopeful of a long-term, same-gender relationship: Counselors Rich Joens and Lonnie Cleland are conducting a one day workshop Saturday, July 8, 2006, from 9-5:30. Cost is \$100 per couple. For reservations call 279-6200.

## GAYELLOW PAGES™

INFORMING THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY SINCE 1973

Online edition updated May 2006

<http://www.gayellowpages.com/online.htm>

"The most reliable Gay print source in the Gay community. I've been using it since the 1970s." (Dr Charles Silverstein, co-author of 'The Joy of Gay Sex'.)

## New City Manager to Speak at July's Meeting



On February 6, 2006, Richard (Rick) Clark was appointed City Manager and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the City. As City Manager, Mr. Clark serves as the Chief Administrative Officer for the City, supervises all City departments and staff, serves as the primary advisor to the City Council, prepares the operating and capital improvements budgets for final approval, works with state and federal legislative issues, meets with citizens and neighborhood organizations, directs major economic development initiatives, and is the chief labor negotiator for city government.

Mr. Clark began his career with the City of Des Moines in the City's Planning Department in 1973 after obtaining a B.A. in Business and Economics from Cornell College and a Master's Degree in Community and Regional Planning from Iowa State University. In 1985, he became the Deputy City Manager. As Deputy City Manager, Mr. Clark was responsible for all economic development activity within the City including the rejuvenation of the downtown, which is currently experiencing over \$2 billion in new public and private construction. ▼

# June Scholars Hear First Lady Address Literacy & Learning

by Bruce Carr

**A**t our June meeting, Christie Vilsack, Iowa's First Lady, presented the FFBC Scholarship awards to the 2006 winners, and took the occasion of her opening remarks to make a quick and savvy point about how parents and educators must deal with the new way that young students (such as the scholarship winners present that morning) learn.

That new way is digital, she said, and to those of us who did not grow up with it—almost everybody else in the room—it is like a foreign language which we will always speak “with an accent.”

Mrs. Vilsack, who is renowned for her long-held and passionate devotion to the twin causes of literacy and libraries in Iowa, said that she has learned both in her family and in her travels throughout the state how very different the learning process has become. Parents have for centuries been concerned about the quality and quantity of their children's education, but now we have an added hurdle in helping our children to navigate the process safely: the process itself is no longer “native” to us. And Christie Vilsack's mission has become educating us “digital immigrants” how to achieve and to teach “critical literacy” in this digital age—to make sure that everybody is safe.

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Mrs. Vilsack's ideas are based in writings by Marc Prensky (whom she cited), particularly an article titled “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants,” excerpts from which follow:

“Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach. Today's students have not just changed incrementally from those of the past ... they have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age.... It is now clear that as a result of this ubiquitous environment and the sheer volume of their interaction with it, today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors.

“What should we call these “new” students of today? ...The most useful designation I have found for them is Digital Natives. Our students today are all “native speakers” of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet.

“So what does that make the rest of us? Those of

us who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology are, and always will be (compared to them), Digital Immigrants.

“The importance of the distinction is this: As Digital Immigrants learn—like all immigrants, some better than others—to adapt to their environment, they always retain, to some degree, their “accent,” that is, their foot in the past. The “digital immigrant accent” can be seen in such things as turning to the Internet for information second rather than first, or in reading the manual for a program rather than assuming that the program itself will teach us to use it. Today's older folk were “socialized” differently from their kids, and are now in the process of learning a new language....”

—Bruce Carr

## lions, and tigers, and bears—oh my!!!

**T**erry Rich is the CEO of the Blank Park Zoo and was recently named an American Zoological Professional Fellow. Prior to that, he was President of Rich Heritage, Inc., a national marketing and television production company. He is recognized as a cable television “Pioneer” and has won numerous innovator awards in television production and marketing. He has a BS in Speech from Iowa State University, was named “ISU Young Alumnus of the Year,” and is a member of the ISU Board of Governors.



Last year, the Des Moines Business Record named Terry “non-profit CEO of the year,” and this year City View named him one of the “people making a difference.”

You may have seen him as talent on national television ranging from the 30 million homes of Starz! to a panel guest appearance on “Johnny Carson's Tonight Show.” He has also served as co-host of the Bill Riley State Fair Talent Search.

As an Iowa entrepreneur, Terry has developed four other companies, along with Rich Heritage, Inc., including Pro Radio, US Digital Video, Newsletter Ease, and the World Championship Socker League, LLC.

On Friday morning, August 4, Terry will tell us about the future of Iowa's second largest attended cultural attraction....The Blank Park Zoo. ▼



# V for Vendetta

Starring  
Natalie Portman,  
Hugo Weaving,  
Stephen Rea, John  
Hurt, Stephen Fry,  
Natasha Wightman



Directed by James McTeigue

2Hr 11 Min

**V** for **Vendetta** is a highly charged political movie in which the people take back their government that has slowly but effectively eaten away at all their freedoms. The loudspeakers on the streets loudly announce the beginning of curfew by saying that all citizens need to be in their homes and those unauthorized personnel on the street are subject to arrest. “This is for your protection,” the loudspeaker voice assures those who are listening. This is a government that fabricates the news and controls all aspects of its people’s lives, including forbidding the possession of certain works of art, certain books (the Koran, for instance), and even certain music. It is a society that has gone incredibly wrong; that sorely needs a wake-up call. V provides that wake-up call.

The story has been artfully crafted by its writers, brothers Andy and Larry Wachowski, who together directed all three Matrix movies and the film is directed by the first assistant director in all three Matrix movies, James McTeigue. Although you never see the face of Hugo Weaving, who plays V, the writers have given him wonderfully articulate lines that gives V a panache and style unlike any other of the film heroes that have been based on comic book characters.

The film portrays a country that is an extension of our current times. If you take the direction this country has taken during the last 6 years and carry it to the extreme, this is the country that we would have. The story is placed in England, which safely avoids any direct comparison to the current American political situation; however, the connection is ob-

vious. England is a country ruled by fear. It is ruled by leaders who will endanger the citizens of the country just so the leaders can provide the cure and receive even more power from their unsuspecting, grateful subjects.

The film begins explaining Guy Fawkes Day, a day that is celebrated in England. Guy Fawkes had attempted to blow up Parliament along with the King on November 5<sup>th</sup> to end oppressions of the government on its people (persecution of Catholics). V states that although you can kill a man, you can’t kill the idea that the man represents, in this case the ending of oppression. V decides that the citizens of England need a wake-up call, so on November 5<sup>th</sup> he stages a magnificent blowing up of the old Bailey, the old high criminal court building in central London. Dressed dramatically in a Guy Fawkes mask and cape, V stages his event by first controlling the loudspeakers and playing the 1812 Overture while explosions and fireworks appear at the appropriate high points of the music. He later takes over a television station and announces to all of England that one-year from that day he wants the citizens of England to join him in blowing up Parliament. He points out that the government is terribly wrong, something that everyone secretly knows but no one discusses for fear of being detained. V tells Evey, a woman who he rescues from government officers when she was out after curfew, that “People should not be afraid of their governments, their governments should be afraid of its people.”

One of the most moving segments of the film is a portion that depicts the writings of a former prisoner who had been tortured by the government. It is the story of a lesbian detainee, Valerie. It tells how she developed her first relationship with a girlfriend in school, and although her first young girlfriend eventually grew out of loving women, Valerie did not. In 2002, she came out to her parents and she relates how holding hands with her lover was the only way she could endure the way she was treated by her parents who acted as if Valerie was no longer a member of the family. When chaos overcomes England and it turns to a religious-right leader who becomes Chancellor, he does “what has to be done.” Uniformity becomes the acclaimed strength of the country and those who do not fit in to his acceptable mold are detained, tortured and killed. The government comes for the Muslims; it comes for the homosexuals; it comes for anyone considered undesirable under the Chancellor’s

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vision of uniformity. The government eventually comes for Valerie, who is tortured, and whose life history is recorded by a diary she writes on toilet paper and hides in her cell so someone would eventually find it and know her story. Through this story Evey finds strength to endure all that her captors throw at her. And it is also how V developed his strength and courage to fight the government.

V is a master at throwing and using knives, and there are many Matrix-like moments where his wizardry of using knives in combat overwhelms those using bullets. Near the end V sends out hundreds of thousands of Guy Fawkes masks and capes to the citizens of London, which makes for a dramatic and exhilarating conclusion in which the populous does come out and takes back their government in a destructive fury of freedom at movie's end. A new day has dawned. England is once more free.

This movie is a must for anyone that thinks that freedoms are to be cherished and fought to be preserved. It illustrates that it is possible to take back our governments. It just needs the right person to lead the call. An excellent and well-crafted film.

—Gary Kaufman

## A Polite Rain

by Jay Thompson

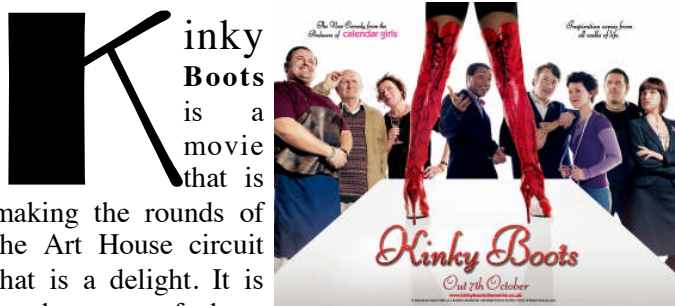
Permission to pour?  
inquires the sky at breakfast.  
Its kettle of condensation  
unable to keep  
the morning brew back.

Why, of course!  
my dry retort.

For when my brick throat  
& slick coat are thirsty,  
I like my clouds like my coffee —

thicker, billowing, & black.

## A HOLLYWOOD QUICKIE — KINKY BOOTS



**K**inky Boots is a movie that is making the rounds of the Art House circuit that is a delight. It is another one of those English movies where a town's future is bleak and they come up with some gimmick that saves the town. In "The Full Monte" it was by showing the full monte, in "Calendar Girls" it was coming out with a calendar of the girls gardening in the nude, in "Kinky Boots" the stodgy shoe factory in Northampton is about to close down when the son who inherited the factory tries to save it and the jobs the factory represents to the community by finding its niche market, making wild boot ware for drag queens. Like the others, it is based on a true story, and is enormously fun. Chiwetel Ejiofor's performance as Lola, the boot designing drag queen, is a joy to behold and worth the price of admission by itself.

—Gary Kaufman

## Potential

2500 dead.  
Bush's War  
What would they have been?

What would they have done?  
Think about it!  
2500 women and men.

Wives, husbands, mothers, fathers,  
Teachers, lawyers, doctors,  
Builders, inventors, bankers.  
Scientists, activists, counselors

Sons and daughters, Brothers and Sisters  
Think of the void they leave.  
Think of the changes in our world  
Because of their not being with us.

Bush's War  
What has it done?  
Without it  
What would have been?

Jay Cole Simser  
May 22, 2006

# FFBC

*First Friday  
News & Views*

*Des Moines, Iowa*

*JULY 2006*

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## From the Editor

### Living a Diminished Life

One year ago, I gave up what I hope was my last full time job ever. It wasn't that I disliked the position, because I enjoyed the work. It was simply time to move on. When I left, I gave up a lot of things: my income went down; my employer-paid health insurance was gone; and I left behind some wonderful people to work with. But I also came away with some great memories and a renewed sense of freedom.

That sense of freedom I hadn't felt since grade school when the year ended and vacation stretched into what seemed like a never-ending summer. This sense of freedom, however, was tempered by the fact that I still had to work, and I had to start paying for my own health insurance. The former was no problem because I was able to slip into more hours at my already part time job as a tour guide at the Capitol, and the latter was not prohibitive since I have an insurance policy that makes use of the highest deductibles possible.

I have found that a person doesn't really need all the things in life that society dictates to us that we are supposed to have. Does a person REALLY need to live in a house that is too big and mostly provides space for storage for things we haven't seen in years and don't really use? Does a person REALLY need to buy a new car every three or four years? Does a person REALLY need all those frills that are seldom used and usually find their way onto a garage sale after they have outlived their novelty? No, we don't need them!

When I was working at my last full time job, I traveled all over the state. I was paid mileage, and I enjoyed the work. Now that I am working part time, my world has become ever so much smaller. I no longer need to drive much of anywhere. I average about ten miles a week in my car for city driving. The high gas prices don't really affect me because I walk the mile to work at the Capitol and back, and I walk almost every place else. If I need to use transportation, I can catch a bus. Most of those ten miles per week in my car are spent driving to and from the grocery store, and even that I could do on the bus if I wanted to.

When I think about it, I actually began this process over a decade ago when I moved out of my 2500 square foot house into my condo of 700 square feet. Such a move forces a person to start getting rid of the superfluous and concentrate on keeping those things that mean the most. I could really empathize with the guy in Iowa City who was featured in the newspaper the other day for living in his specially-built house that was ten feet by seven feet. (Even THAT would be too small for me!)

None of this downsizing could have been accomplished without some planning, however. I have no house payment or no car payment. My monthly bills are exceedingly low, and by taking early retirement, that money more than pays for my expenses.

Oddly enough, my drop in income and increase in free time have actually afforded me the opportunity to travel more widely into the greater world. I have made two trips to Europe this year, and I have been able to travel in this country whenever I want to. Granted, I do not travel in luxury, but then I never did when I was working full time, either. I stay in nice places that would never make it on "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," but then, do any of us do that?

It is food for thought. I, at one time, wanted a large house and the ability to buy all kinds of things. Now, it is my job to get rid of as much as I can and enjoy my diminished life that is offering me so many more opportunities.

—Steve Person