



THE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
OF THE  
FIRST FRIDAY  
BREAKFAST CLUB, INC.

# First Friday News & Views

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3

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## CALENDAR

- ▼ The next FFBC meeting is 7:00 A.M., Friday, March 7, 2008 at Hoyt Sherman Place.  
Our guest speaker will be Iowa State Senator Matt McCoy.
- ▼ R.S.V.P. by Tuesday, March 4 to Jonathan Wilson @davisbrownlaw.com or 288-2500 by phone.

## No Impeachment No Pardon

by Jonathan Wilson

There has been talk of impeachment, and more than one member of Congress has co-sponsored legislation to that end, Dennis Kucinich chief among them. Certainly there are ample grounds for pursuing impeachment, whether or not a conviction would follow. The US Constitution provides that remedy as the ultimate check on an errant executive or judicial officeholder. If there's reason to believe that a high crime or misdemeanor has been committed, an officerholder can be "impeached" by the House of Representatives and tried before the Senate. If convicted, the officeholder is removed from office. As far out as such a remedy would appear to be, I never thought I'd live to see the attempt made against anyone. Yet those merely ten years old today were alive to see it tried against President Clinton for shading the truth and parsing his words about an illicit liaison with Monica Lewinsky. That's something, by the way, that cheating husbands have been doing for literally centuries. If supposedly lying about getting laid is grounds for impeachment, there is more than enough evidence of real crimes to pursue the impeachment of the current occupant of the White House.



Jonathan Wilson

No one of consequence has suffered any consequences for leaking a CIA operative's identity; secret prisons all over the world; or extra-ordinary renditions for no other conceivable reason than surrogate torture, a war crime. No one responsible has been held responsible for the suspension of habeas corpus, illegal torture of those in US custody, or an unprovoked war against another country based on false intelligence (cooked or otherwise, but still false). No one accountable has been held accountable for the slaughter of innocent civilians, spying on American citizens, flagrant violation of federal law under the guise of "signing statements," or abuse of the prosecutorial arm of the Justice Department. The current Administration has turned the Department of Justice into anything but that.

An impeachment attempt, however, despite ample grounds, would be a serious distraction. It would be a distraction from critically important, pending investigations. It would be a distraction from the important process of selecting a presidential successor. And it would be a distraction from pressing domestic demands on the talents and time of Congress. It should not be pursued. Assuming the current President voluntarily leaves office when his term ends, the time between now and then can be better spent on other things, and he can be marginalized in the meantime.

I haven't researched this and don't profess to be an expert, but it appears that the president could still face criminal prosecution after he leaves office. Provided he gets no blanket pardon. It appears so, in part, because of the apparent need to pardon Richard Nixon in order for him to avoid post-resignation prosecution for crimes committed in office. There are ample precedents for criminally prosecuting officeholders after they are out of office. Nuremberg comes to mind. So do the prosecutions of Pinochet and Saddam Hussein. Tellingly, such prosecutions do not require proof that the perpetrator personally committed atrocities. It is only necessary that he

(Continued on page 2)

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countenanced them. Moreover, the prosecution can be in another country.

Our nation and the world have been disserved by Bush's lack of worldly exposure prior to his presidency. Both would also be disserved if he were to be allowed to go unpunished for his misdeeds or to travel the world ambassador-style after his time in office ends. Perhaps that explains his recent interest in getting in some world travel while still in office. His future appears to hold tacit, if not enforced, house arrest in Crawford, Texas. I favor providing him with federally funded housing for a long time to come.

No impeachment . . . and no pardon. ▼

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*Irresponsibility by the numbers: Bush has proposed a "budget" of over one TRILLION dollars that would essentially freeze domestic spending, commit to military spending in excess of the combined defense budgets of all other nations of the world, is still in deficit by \$400,000,000, and leaves out inevitable expenditures for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.*

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## Red Valentine Party a Success

by Gary Moore

When entering through the large old double doors of the Hoyt Sherman Mansion February 1, guests were treated by the sound of Grant Baetz fingers dancing across the ivories of the old grand Steinway in the back parlor. Jazz filled the rooms. The magnificent piano could be heard throughout the two galleries and the mansion. Plumes of red feathers flourished in the entryway and around the room as you entered the historic Hoyt Sherman Place. The feathers introduced you to the main theme of red, with dapples of black and white polka dots that added a fresh and lively mood to the wonderful old galleries. Stuart Alexander, One Source Event Productions, had transformed the space with spandex, roses, and up-lighted table vases filled with roses, lilies, and small red-and-white orchids. The Red Valentine Party of the First Friday Breakfast Club was under way, and the décor looked wonderful.

The Party was planned to raise funds for the scholarships awarded annually by the FFBC to high school seniors. Scholarships are awarded without bias to gender orientation or gender. Over \$75,000 in scholarships have been awarded over the past 10 years to students from all around Iowa. The scholarships are awarded in June and are the highlight of the breakfast club's year. These are students who have contributed the most toward reducing homophobia and/or increasing awareness and understanding of gay and lesbian issues.



A Best Dressed in Red Contest, or undressed in Red, added to the festivities, as did a Chinese Auction. Many in attendance warmed the rooms further with splashes of red in their attire. They nibbled on prime rib sandwiches, divine little shish kabobs, and desserts that were catered by Brown Bag Deli. These were not served in brown bags. Wine and beer donated by the Blazing Saddle and Club Impulse met most everyone's need for refreshment as 75 to 100 people were introduced to Neil Giuliano, President of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) and former mayor of Tempe, Arizona.

Mr. Giuliano has appeared on **CNN**, **ABC World News Tonight**, **Showbiz Tonight**, and **Access Hollywood**. He has been quoted in **Newsweek** and **USA Today**, as well as numerous state and regional media outlets discussing LGBT images in the media. He is considered among the nation's most visible and effective leaders of the movement for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender equality, earning recognition as one of **Instinct Magazine's** Top 25 of 2005. He spoke of the Alliance's work but told attendees their presence and support at such events is what will change the heartland of America.

The Scholarship Committee noted that a few pledges are still outstanding but, once all pledges and donations are received, \$15,000 will have been raised. The party left those in attendance looking forward to the Second Annual event already scheduled for Friday, February 6, 2009. ▼

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*Note to self: Volunteer to baby sit for a sick kid; a low-grade temperature slows kids down to grandparent speed.*

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## BRIEFS & SHORTS

Be sure to RSVP for the March 7 meeting no later than March 4 to [JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com). He can also be reached by phone at 288-2500. Our speaker will be FFBC's own State Senator Matt McCoy.



Thanks to Byron Huff for his introduction of our February speaker, Neil Giuliano of GLAAD.



Thanks to webmaster Thatcher Williams, who designs and maintains FFBC's website.



Thanks to Brown Bag Deli & Catering for providing our monthly breakfast buffet.

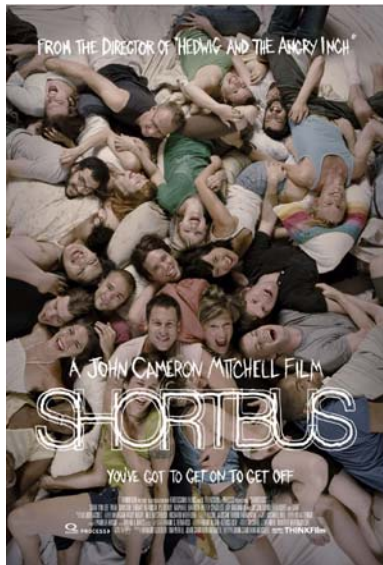


Archived issues of the FFBC newsletter are available on our web site: [www.ffbciaowa.org](http://www.ffbciaowa.org).

# Shortbus

Written and  
Directed by John  
Cameron Mitchell

Review by  
Gary Kaufman



With the current dearth of recently released

enjoyable movies, I've decided to review **Shortbus**, a gay-themed movie from 2006 that is currently available on DVD. **Shortbus** is the dream child of writer/director John Cameron Mitchell who brought us the delightful film, **Hedwig and the Angry Inch**. Mr. Mitchell wanted his next film to be about sex and sexuality. He had seen foreign films where the actors actually had sex on screen as part of the film, but he had not known of any English-language examples. He wanted to make the first, and what he has come up with is a delightful essay on sexual problems of a small group of people and their attempts to remedy those problems.

This movie is not rated, and the viewer immediately finds out why. The opening shot is of Lady Liberty in New York City with the soundtrack belting out the words, "Is you is or is you not my baby? The way you have been acting leaves me doubt." As the song goes on, the camera sails through the bedroom windows of several people while they are engaged in the most intimate of moments. Through the first window the audience sees a naked semi-erect man sitting in a bath tub taking film footage of his penis. Next is a zoom through the window of an S&M hooker spraying off her assortment of dildos while being questioned by her john. The audience is then taken back to the first man who is now filming himself trying to perform auto-fellatio. This is followed by a zoom through the window in an apartment where a man is performing cunnilingus on an Asian woman who is sitting naked on a grand piano. The couple then goes through a wide assortment of gymnastic contortions of sexual intimacy. Zooming into the fourth apartment, the audience sees a good looking man watching the guy in the first apartment filming his oral feat. Finally, all of the scenes end with orgasmic conclusions, including our john with the S&M dominatrix hooker ejaculating onto a Jackson Pollack-style painting where it strangely seems to fit in.

At first the viewer is shocked, but isn't this really closer to real life than what is typically portrayed? It seemed refreshingly frank.

There is a plot. It turns out that the man who was trying the acrobatic fellatio, James (Paul Dawson), has a gay lover, Jamie (P J DeBoy). His lover is very attached to him, but James is pushing away in the relationship, wanting more.

James wants them to try an open relationship. The Asian lady, Sofia (Sook-Yin Lee), with the acrobatic lover on the piano, is a sex therapist who has been faking her orgasms and actually had never had one in her life. James and Jamie come to her for advice and, through that relationship, they find Shortbus, a large home whose owner, Justin Bond, describes the place as, "You know school busses. This is the shortbus. This is a salon for the gifted and challenged!"

The shortbus features a wide variety of environments, all equally bizarre, including a sex party room. There is a cabaret room, a lesbian bar, and a diverse group of people, including the former mayor of New York. In this environment all of the principal characters introduced in the opening scenes work on their sexual problems. Sofia hooks up with the S&M hooker, Seve (Lindsay Beamish). As the hooker said, "I will help you discover how to have an orgasm, and you can teach me how to have a real human interaction with someone." James and Jamie find Seth, a handsome man, for a three-way romance; and the voyeur even finds a relationship fulfilled. The film ends in a carnival atmosphere where the cabaret vocalist is singing, "We all get it in the end," to the accompaniment of a marching polka band. Did I say the environment of **Shortbus** is a little bizarre?

**Shortbus** is a dramatic story of sexual conflicts and people trying to solve them. I heartily recommend it. Actually I was in the hospital the first time I saw the film, and it got my heart going again! Perhaps it will perform miracles for you as well. **Shortbus** is available at TLAVideo.com, Amazon.com, and other outlets. ▼

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*Money: Can buy sex, but not love.*

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## Scholarship Brochure Design

The supply of FFBC brochures used to publicize and provide information about the scholarship program is nearly exhausted. The current supply has lasted for several years. It is time for a fresh design and updated information.

Help is needed from anyone with graphic design ability. If this is you and you want to use your creative ability to design, or at least help design, the new brochure, please contact Allen Vander Linden, Scholarship Committee chair at [alvanlin@yahoo.com](mailto:alvanlin@yahoo.com) or 515-266-7638. Also, if you know someone you would recommend for this, please let us know, or discuss it with them.

Your contribution in this way to the scholarship program is needed and will be much appreciated. ▼



## Speaker Review

by Bruce Carr

The speaker at our February meeting was Neil G. Giuliano, President of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). GLAAD is the third-largest US LGBT organization (only the Human Rights Campaign and Lambda Legal are larger). It is dedicated to ensuring fair, accurate, and inclusive representation of LGBT people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Giuliano joined GLAAD in September of 2005.



Byron Huff, left, and Neil Giuliano.

Giuliano's chief point in his talk was summed up in his assertion that "what you say and how you talk and write don't make a **bit** of difference—they make **all** the difference." It is for this reason, he said, that GLAAD publishes the *GLAAD Media Reference Guide* (you can download it from the Web site at [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)).

Over the past two decades, Giuliano noted, Americans have experienced a significant evolution in their understanding and cultural acceptance of our lives. Consequently, media coverage of gay and lesbian issues—and increasingly, bisexual and transgender issues—has moved beyond simplistic political dichotomies and toward more fully realized representations not only of the diversity of our community, but also of our lives, our families, and our fundamental inclusion in the fabric of American society. Using the *GLAAD Media Reference Guide*, journalists and other media types have moved toward telling our stories in the same way they tell others—with fairness, integrity, and respect. They realize that LGBT people have the right to fair, accurate, and inclusive reporting of our stories and our issues. The Reference Guide, now in its seventh edition, offers the tools they can use to tell our stories in ways that bring out the best in such journalism.

Prior to his appointment as President by the GLAAD Board of Directors, Neil Giuliano served for ten years (1994-2004) as the mayor of Tempe, Arizona. Before that, he had a 25-year career as a senior ad-

ministrators at Arizona State University (his alma mater). His posts with ASU included directing student leadership development, alumni relations, federal government relations, and community relations. As mayor of Tempe, one of the largest cities (pop. 175,000, surrounded by metropolitan Phoenix) in the generally conservative state of Arizona, Giuliano was among the nation's most visible, openly gay elected officials. His track record of successful coalition building won him endorsement by the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund and overwhelming public support. First elected with 54% of the vote (he came out publicly in 1996), he was elected to his fourth term with a 70% of the vote. He chose not to seek a fifth term in 2004 and was consulting in the real estate development sector in Phoenix and Las Vegas at the time of his appointment at GLAAD.

*“What you say and how you talk and write don't make a bit of difference—they make all the difference.”*

GLAAD itself was founded in 1985 in New York City in response to the inaccurate, defamatory, and sensationalized coverage of the AIDS epidemic by the *New York Post*. GLAAD's influence soon spread to Los Angeles where organizers began working with the entertainment industry to change the way gay men and lesbians are portrayed on screen. GLAAD's work and influence within the entertainment industry, national and regional news organizations, and with journalists at all levels, has led to sweeping change in the ways that LGBT people are portrayed in the media. For example, the **2006 Associated Press Stylebook** now restricts use of the word "homosexual" to clinical contexts and prohibits references to "sexual preference."

A not inconsiderable factor in Neil Giuliano's national and local success is the fact that, besides being articulate and engaging, he is majorly cute. I think it's ok to write that. . . . ▼

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*The Pakistani government, in the lead up to elections, has indicated that exit polling will be banned. The US has expressed objection to the ban because exit polling is the chief "test" used internationally to determine whether an election has been fair or rigged. Think about it. According to exit polls, that most reliable of indicators, Al Gore won the 2000 US Presidential Election, and John Kerry won the 2004 US Presidential Election.*

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## Brokeback Mountain— the prequel

by James Nimmo

“ “ There were no gay men in America in the eighteenth century,” is the first sentence of a new book titled **Male-male Intimacy in Early America: Beyond Romantic Friendships**, published by Harrington Park Press, 2006. The author promptly admits it was just used to get the reader’s attention. The book, by William Benemann, is an historical survey of private letters, newspaper articles, court proceedings, and military tribunals covering both the famous, such as Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, to the completely obscure who are known only to genealogists and historical researchers.

Don’t let the word “historical” dim your bulb; it’s a very good introduction to our American gay heritage. The period covered is approximately 1660 to 1850, and centers on the time of the American Revolution and the following generation.

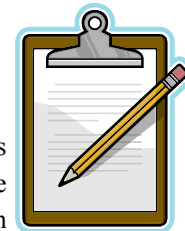
One point the author stresses is that the flowery writing style seen in private letters should not make us miss the point. For example, consider this quote: “Often too, he shared my pillow—or I his, and how sweet to sleep with him, hold his beloved form in my embrace, to have his arms about my neck, to imprint upon his face sweet kisses.” If those words were written by a young woman, we would reasonably assume that she and the man shared a sexual relationship. There is no justifiable grounds for changing that assumption when we learn that the words were actually written by Albert Dodd, a Yale undergraduate in the 1830s, describing his relationship with a fellow student, Anthony Hall.

The author even found what seems to be a New England version of **Brokeback Mountain**. Benjamin Walker and William North were in the Revolutionary Army under George Washington, served honorably, attained high rank, and were set on a well-to-do course in life after their discharge. Both of them served in the US House and Senate, representing New York State. They kept in touch through letters and visits when they were able.

As was the style at that time, close male friends would name a child in honor of the other; however, North’s wife would not allow their son to be so named. It’s thought by the author that Polly suspected her husband and his friend were soul mates and that prompted her naming objection.

As they both became widowers, North and Walker discussed living together in a larger city—guess where, wait for it—New York City! This in the first two decades of the

## Scholarship Applications Now Available



**FFBC** Scholarship applications are now available and are due March 31. If you know any Iowa high school seniors who have contributed to their school or community to address homophobia and/or provided education about GLBT issues, please refer them to this scholarship. Students’ gender orientation is not an issue in scholarship grants.

Applications can be obtained from the FFBC web site ([www.ffbc-iowa.org](http://www.ffbc-iowa.org)) or by contacting Allen Vander Linden, Scholarship Chair, at [alvanlin@yahoo.com](mailto:alvanlin@yahoo.com) or 515-266-7638. ▼

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*A person with courage makes a majority.*

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1800s—you gotta love it! Unfortunately, but also reminiscent of **Brokeback Mountain**, the friendship ends on a sad note with loneliness and unfulfilled hope.

There’s also the story of William Wirt and Dabney Carr, likewise lifelong male friends who did follow the naming custom. In their letters you read of their hope that this intermingling of names and blood lines, should their children marry, would incarnate the two men’s love through the next generation and, in an extended way, each man would become the mate of the other in a “type of double-helix intertwining of identities.”

Either this was very prescient on their part, or we in the 21st century are continuing the emotional, erotic needs of our gay/lesbian orientation and coming much closer than our forefathers ever could to realization. We are not the recent creation of anyone’s religious devil or representative of the decay of the Western World, but rather, the ever renewing vanguard of the need for committed same-gender companionship.

The book contains many more touching stories and topics, including entrapment in the Larry Craig tradition, cruising the docks, slang, masturbation, group sex in the military, and “specialty” bars. It’s a fascinating read. The book sometimes feels so modern—the need and desire for same-gendered love, affection, and camaraderie are still the same, only the ability to express and communicate them has changed. ▼

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*Courage is sometimes just a lack of options.*

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# FFBC

*First Friday  
News & Views*

*Des Moines, Iowa*

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## From the Editor

### Walking in the Dark

“We all walk in the dark, and each of us must turn on his own light,” wrote Evelyn Williams in the 1940 play, **The Corn Is Green**. While the play may be outdated now, that line certainly isn’t. I thought of it as I read Christopher Kennedy Lawford’s book, **Symptoms of Withdrawal**. It is his chronicle of a life of addiction and renewal.

Born in 1955 to parents Patricia Kennedy and Peter Lawford, Christopher Kennedy Lawford grew up in the public eye. “My mother gave birth to me in Saint John’s Hospital in Santa Monica, California, on the same day that Judy Garland gave birth to her son, Joe, in the same hospital....So Judy’s son, Joe, and I were born on the same day to movie star parents in Hollywood, California, and the media were paying attention.”

Peter Lawford, Christopher’s father, was a member of the famous—and some would say infamous—Rat Pack, headed by Frank Sinatra and also included such Hollywood icons as Dean Martin and Sammy Davis, Jr. It doesn’t seem far fetched to see where his addiction to illegal drugs and alcohol originated.

Christopher was only eight years old when his uncle, President Kennedy, was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963. He chose not to attend the funeral so he could have a friend over to spend the night. It was one of those decisions that he later regretted, but no one can blame an eight-year-old for the decisions he makes.

What I found interesting about the memoir was that none of the members of the Kennedy family ever talked with each other about the misfortunes that affected their lives. As Christopher says in the book, perhaps the fact that people who thought they were close to the family said all the things they thought the family were feeling was enough. Who knows?

Christopher’s drug use began at the age of thirteen. He entered his teenage years at the height of the drug-experimenting 60s, and the fact that he was rich and from a well-known family made his access to illegal drugs even easier. He used LSD, cocaine, heroine, and alcohol, to name a few. The fact that he managed to graduate from college and even get accepted into law school—twice—speaks volumes about his ability to cover up his addictions and his incredible luck in not killing himself from an overdose.

If you’ve ever known an addicted person, you know what Christopher Kennedy Lawford was doing not just to himself but also to his family and friends. The tug of the addiction is so strong that it overpowers all else. Addicted people feel incredibly guilty about their addictions and what they are doing to others and feel equally powerless to stop. It truly is a lose/lose situation for them.

Fortunately for Christopher Kennedy Lawford, he finally got sober in 1986 and has stayed that way ever since. I am not a person who especially likes reading memoirs about overcoming addiction, but this one is particularly poignant. I’d recommend it to anyone who is dealing with an addicted person.

—Steve Person

*Four seasons in Iowa: winter, still winter, almost  
winter, and construction.*

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