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# First Friday News & Views

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## “CHRISTIAN” TERRORISM

by Jonathan Wilson

It was reported in **The Des Moines Register** on August 23, 2010, that Kim Lehman, a Republican National Committee member from Iowa, had alleged that the President of the United States is a Muslim. When pressed, she premised her accusation on a speech he gave some time ago in Egypt in which (1) he said he is a Christian, and (2) he acknowledged that his lineage on his father’s side was Muslim and he could, therefore, appreciate the Muslim world view in a unique way. For my money, such an accusation is a bit like accusing him of being an adult male, an African-American or a Christian -- so what, if it’s true. Other than her perverse brand of Christian, any of those characteristics, of themselves, would be -- should be -- irrelevant to his qualifications to be President. In the present political climate that appeals to *un-American* theocratic principles, however, the accusation that our President is Muslim becomes relevant among some poor students of American civics and history lessons, and those who pander to them. Also, for my money, they should be the targets of a revived Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities. These folks give the historic Tea Party a bad name. They contribute to giving America a bad name around the world as well. Next thing you know they’ll be threatening to burn copies of the Quran. Oh, that’s right, they’ve already done that -- in a nation that supposedly prides itself on religious freedom embraced by its founders.

But that’s not my biggest problem with the views expressed by Lehman. In the same article, she was quoted as saying, “I am strictly a Christian. I believe that. I stand by that. I’ll die by that.” Are you kidding me?! I don’t know this woman, but I’m confident of one thing about her; if a Muslim (American citizen or not) made a comparable statement in support of his/her faith, she’d consider that person a terrorist. And, truth be known, anyone of either faith tradition who would express such a sentiment is, in my mind, a short step from actually being a terrorist. It’s only a logical, easy extension of such a sentiment to say that if I’m going to die for my faith, I might as well take out some non-believers with me. If you’re really nuts enough to die for your unprovable religious convictions, you’re nuts enough to kill some innocent bystanders as well. And this woman lives right here among us in Iowa and lays claim to respectability as a member of the Republican National Committee. Laying claim to it and deserving it are decidedly different. I think she’s an embarrassment. For many years, my law firm colleague, Steve Roberts, was a member of the National Republican Committee. He and I differed on countless topics to be sure, but he, to his credit, was *actually* respectful and respectable.

**“I am strictly a Christian. I believe that. I stand by that. I’ll die by that.” Kim Lehman**

Sadly, she’s not alone among those who call themselves Republican and Christian -- her brand of perverted Christianity and Republican have become synonymous terms. As far as I’m concerned, only her ilk; the unfocused, angry ignorant; and the not-too-bright who are nonetheless able to find their way to the polls, will be voting for Republican candidates in November. If you don’t readily believe me, consult the text of the Iowa Republican Party platform. Among other thoroughly nutty propositions, such as opposing imposition of Muslim Shariah law in the United States, they advocate for getting rid of the federal agriculture and energy departments, the federal and state education departments, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The test, mind you, is *not* whether you think,

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## CALENDAR

▼ The next FFBC meeting is 7:00 A.M., Friday, November 5, 2010 at Hoyt Sherman Place.

R.S.V.P. by November 2 to [JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com) or 288-2500 by phone.

if elected, they'd actually be able to accomplish those things. The test should be whether or not that's the direction you would like to see taken in our public policy.

Law abiding American citizens who appreciate, celebrate, and are not threatened by the diverse mosaic that makes up the actual fabric of our population today, will ignore at our peril the declared direction of modern-day Republicans. And to think that I used to call myself a Republican. But, I used to claim I was straight too. As the Bible says, the Truth sets us free. Voting, on the other hand, helps keep us free.

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*The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on the list.*

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## Kathie Obradovich

By Bruce Carr

Our speaker on the first of October was Kathie Obradovich, the **Register's** political editor, who treated us to a fairly bleak forecast of the mid-term elections a month away. ("I'm assuming you're all Democrats?" she asked, "Does anyone who isn't want to raise his hand?")

Basing her remarks in part on the **Register's** Iowa Poll, of which she was editor before becoming a columnist, she noted that below the top three races, the contests all still look competitive. But she didn't see how Governor Culver could overcome former Governor Branstad's apparent lead; even the voters' much-reported anti-incumbent sentiment hasn't much relevance in this case because "what we've got here, in effect, is two incumbents." Nor does anti-incumbency do a lot for Roxanne Conlin against Senator "Chuck" Grassley, because Iowa voters are basically so conservative -- "comfort is important to Iowans," she said -- that if it ain't hugely broke, they ain't inclined to fix it. Iowans appreciate that both of their senators have very significant seniority in Washington, and Roxanne has not been able to make headway against the economic and political benefits of that reality. At least the House race between Third District incumbent Leonard Boswell and former Urbandale mayor Brad Zaun may be closer to a toss-up.

Asked about the next presidential election, Obradovich cited the extraordinary importance of "retail politics" in Iowa, i.e., face time. Iowans expect to see and talk in person with candidates. As an aside, she noted how much she loves her job in Des Moines: "Where else," she asked, "could I get up in the morning, head out my front door and walk two blocks to my neighbors' back yard in Beaverdale and meet and question President Obama himself?"

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Kathie Obradovich is **The Des Moines Register's** political editor, a post she assumed in June 2009, succeeding David Yepson -- a previous FFBC speaker. "Kathie earned this role by covering politics and government in Iowa for 20 years. Born and raised in Iowa and with those years of perspective,

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*We never really grow up. We just learn how to act in public.*

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she is uniquely suited to carry on the responsibility of the four **Des Moines Register** political columnists who preceded her," remarked **Register** VP and Editor Carolyn Washburn (yet another FFBC speaker), upon her appointment.

Obradovich first joined the **Register** in 2003 as its political editor, directing coverage of Iowa's first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses, the Iowa Statehouse and Congress. She collaborated with online staff in planning and executing online political coverage, oversaw the reporters who provide content and coordinated their efforts with those of photo, video and data staff. She has been the lead editor of the award-winning Iowa Poll, developing questionnaires and coordinating reporting of the results. Before coming to the **Register** in 2003, Obradovich was Des Moines Statehouse bureau chief for Lee Enterprises' five daily newspapers, including the **Quad-City Times** in Davenport. She worked at the **Quad City Times** from 1987 to 1993, where her jobs ranged from night cops reporter and various city, county and court beats, to assistant city editor and regional editor.

Obradovich's honors include Iowa Associated Press Managing Editors first-place award for her online special project for Iowa caucus coverage, **Des Moines Register** employee of the year, and Gannett Newspaper Newsroom Supervisor Award. She grew up in Ames and is a graduate of Iowa State University with a bachelor's degree in journalism/mass communications. You can contact Kathie Obradovich at [kobradov@dmreg.com](mailto:kobradov@dmreg.com), (515) 284-8126, and follow her on Twitter @kobradovich.

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## What FFBC Has Meant to Me and Can for You

By Ryan Weidner

The following is a personal account of how the FFBC has impacted my life.

About three years ago I started on the arduous journey of coming out. It was a scary time for me, because I had a spouse and two young children. Despite the progress that has been made at this point, it is not easy, safe, or fun to come out. Once we're comfortably out, it can "appear" easy, but it was anything but easy in the position in which I found myself!

By chance, an attorney that I had located through **Accessline** mentioned Jonathan's name and also that he was the president of the FFBC. Jonathan invited me to attend a meeting as a guest. It still took several months (over a year) before I finally considered myself out -- a healthy, fully integrated personality for the first time in my life.

In addition to fearing the worst with my family, I also feared the worst when it came to my career success. There I sat at my first meeting, realizing that the host of the event, Jonathan, was a successful attorney. Next to me sat an Iowa senator. Someone else mentioned that there were also two other financial advisors in the room. I was able to realize that life "out" would be okay.

I have made so many friends, many of whom have also

## It's Kind of a Funny Story

Review by Gary Kaufman

In **It's Kind of A Funny Story**, Craig (Keir Gilchrist) is a troubled high school student who has thoughts of suicide, so he seeks admission to the psych ward in a hospital two blocks from his home. He tells the intake doctor (played by Aasif Mandvi of **The Daily Show with Jon Stewart**), who was reluctant to admit him, that he doesn't feel that he wants to be an outpatient because Craig feels like he needs help now. "Everything is sort of building up. Everyone else seems to handle it. But not me. I don't want to go back. I might do something. Just help me!" The intake doctor decides to help the kid and admits Craig, but Craig soon finds that once you are inside a psych ward, it is a lot harder to get out!

Plus, since they are remodeling the minors' psych ward, all the patients, including the minors, are in the adult ward. There he finds adults who seem to have a lot more troubles than he does. In the process, he befriends one of the patients, Bobby (Zach Gaffigan), and even finds a love interest, Noelle (Emma Roberts, Julia Roberts's niece). All three of the central characters are in the hospital because of depression. I have had several friends say they also suffer from depression, which I could never really understand. So I personally appreciated the portrayal of the disease in this film and its debilitating properties.

I also appreciated some of the cinema tricks of the two directors (Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden). They have the film's central character, Craig, show how his mind is interpreting events of the past and present. These visuals are done in sort of an over-the-top manner. The best is Craig's mind's vision of himself singing "Under Pressure" (the Queen/David Bowie song) with the psych hospital's Music Experimentation class accompanying him. In his mind all the patients in the psych ward are transformed into a wildly dressed glamour rock band that is hot and a real hoot.

Craig discovers that in life if you are not busy being born, then you are busy dying. He eventually gets out of the psych ward, only this time, with a new and different attitude. He is able to look forward to doing all sorts of things in his life. He gets to the point that he wants to live life and not dwell on his fears.

The film has a really strong emotional ending; both my friends and I were hiding tears in the theater. I definitely recommend seeing the film.

## What FFBC Has Meant to Me and Can for You

(cont. from page 2)

introduced me to others not even in the club! One of those individuals has become the best friend I have ever had in my life! I cannot imagine life without his friendship. We have traveled together on three vacations over the last few years. Seldom does a week go by that we are not going for dinner, taking the kids to do something, or chatting over coffee. I am truly blessed to have a best friend that I realize I would not have if it weren't for the FFBC.

The club has had a huge impact, not only on my personal life, but also on my professional growth.

If I could formulate a motto for this indispensable aspect of the club, it would be this: "If you are not 'out' yet, know that you are always welcome here. We have been in your shoes before, and we'll be there to support you as a friend when and as you make the decision to come out."

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*You don't need a parachute to skydive. You need a parachute to skydive twice.*

*War doesn't determine who's right—just who's left.*

*A clear conscience is too often a sign of a bad memory.*

### BRIEFS & SHORTS

Be sure to RSVP for the November 5 meeting no later than November 2. E-mail [JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com) or call him at 288-2500. Our speaker will be Cyndi Pederson, Director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.



Thanks to Scott Johnson for introducing our October speaker, Kathie Obradovich of **The Des Moines Register**.



Be sure to peruse the front table for a book you might like to read. Book donations are always welcome.



November 2 is Election Day—VOTE!



Consider a tax-deductible contribution to the FFBC Scholarship Fund or designating FFBC for your United Way contribution, or both.



# FFBC

*First Friday  
News & Views  
Des Moines, Iowa*

**NOVEMBER 2010**

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## My M.O. (Monthly Observations) Magnificence in the Heart of Tastelessness

Steve Person

After Labor Day, my long-time friend and fellow FFBC member, John Tompkins, and I took a road trip back east. Our destination was Niagara Falls which I had never seen before but he had. On the return trip, we planned to visit the capitols in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Columbus, Ohio. Since neither John nor I had ever spent much time in Canada, we decided to drive to Niagara Falls through Ontario and stay on the Canadian side for our visit there. It proved to be an enlightening experience!

Once we crossed into Canada via Detroit to Windsor, our discovery tour of Canada began. According to the road signs in Windsor, it is a city of 218,000. If that number is true, the residents seem to be well hidden. We drove through quite a large part of that city and felt the population number had been exaggerated. Likewise, as we drove east through Ontario, we passed road signs for cities such as Essex, purportedly a city of some 30,000 souls. The only problem was, we never saw any evidence of Essex. London, Ontario, was supposedly a city of some 300,000 people, but we certainly didn't see any evidence of that. We concluded that Canadian cartographers must count any person, living or dead, who ever resided in that particular place! About the only population sign that seemed genuine was for Hamilton with its more than half million residents.

Upon reaching Niagara Falls, Ontario, we discovered the awesome beauty of the falls, both American and Canadian sides. Unfortunately, the city of Niagara Falls, Ontario, has become one of the tackiest places I have ever visited, surpassed only by Las Vegas, Nevada, and Branson, Missouri. How sad that people cannot content themselves with visiting one of the world's great natural wonders. The city is a veritable collection of silly tourist traps that purportedly appeal to children and families. In addition, gambling casinos abound, and the city takes advantage of visitors by providing next to no on-street parking and charging people exorbitant sums to park their vehicles. It was a relief to cross the Rainbow Bridge and get back into the USA.

Up-state New York and north central Pennsylvania are feasts for the eyes. The mountains and valleys are a delight to drive through. The capitol in Harrisburg, supposedly the most beautiful of all state capitols, is indeed impressive—a bit too much in my estimation. It reminds me of a wedding cake that has been decorated with just way too much frosting. Still, it is a sight to behold. The capitol in Columbus, on the other hand, dazzles the visitor with the simplicity similar to an ancient Greek temple. Even though it is dwarfed by tall buildings in downtown Columbus, the building is a gem. Neither of those capitols, however, can compare to the Iowa capitol. We are lucky that over the years our grounds have been expanded so that the beauty of our building is not marred by surrounding structures.

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*Success comes before work only in the dictionary.*

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*The early bird may get the worm, but it's the second mouse that gets the cheese.*

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