



First Friday News & Views

February, 2016

Volume 21

Issue 2

*The Monthly Newsletter
of the First Friday
Breakfast Club, Inc.*

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Ignorant, and the
Inane
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Calendar

▼ The next FFBC Meeting is 7:00am,
Friday, February 5, 2016, at Hoyt
Sherman Place, 15th & Woodland,
Des Moines, IA

▼ RSVP by February 2 to
JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com,
or phone 515-288-2500

Of Slobs, the Ignorant, and the Inane by Jonathan Wilson

We share the world with all sorts of people. Some are just plain slobs. You know the type. The ones who throw cigarettes out of the car window after smoking with kids in the car. The ones who don't flush a public toilet or who leave pieces of toilet paper on the floor behind them. The ones who leave debris behind after a picnic in a public park. The ones who change their minds about something at the grocery store and put it back on any shelf.

Some are out right illiterate, walking testimonials to the failure of our public education system. They don't read and, as a result, have substantially lost the ability to read anything more challenging than a third-grade level of comprehension. They can't speak with clarity or proper grammar. I've heard plenty of them -- college "students" -- interviewed in their football uniforms and destined to making millions of dollars in the pros. Too often, in their heart-of-hearts, these folks know some of these limitations and, as a consequence, tend to over-compensate with bravado or with abuse of what little power or authority they may have over others. We've all encountered them in the workplace with too much frequency. They give even the Peter Principle a bad name.

Some are ignorant despite their literacy. They cling to stereotypes and preconceived notions on a host of topics even though contrary information is readily accessible. Their motto seems to be, "Don't confuse me with the facts; I've made up my mind." Gay people have been the particular target of bigotry and prejudice at the hands of this group. So was Columbus.

Some are boorishly rude; they drive slowly in the "fast lane;" they park so as to take up two spaces; they cut in line; and they bemoan "political correctness" because they are too insensitive and/or too lazy to keep up with what may offend those who are culturally different from themselves.

Some are singularly selfish -- the ultra-conservative capitalists among us, particularly, who have not yet had to face, for example, capricious health challenges that can drive almost all but the ultra-rich or the very well-insured into bankruptcy, an early grave, or both. Medical expenses account for more bankruptcies than any other cause. This group couldn't care less; it hasn't happened to them -- yet.

Some folks . . . well, let's be kind . . . are not terribly discerning. For lack of a better word they're inane. At the end, George W. Bush still had favorability rating of something like 30% of eligible voters or less. Now that's an historically low *percentage*, obviously, but numerically it

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still represents more than 50 *million* of our fellow citizens who thought the guy was doing a fine job. Is it any surprise that it's possible to find folks from that group to kick up a ruckus at town hall meetings about health care reform? It doesn't surprise me. With numbers like that among those who lack the capacity for discernment, is it any wonder that presidential candidates can find, numerically, lots of support for demagoguery, for hatefulness, for selfishness, for unlimited access to guns. Is it any wonder we can find some number of lawless -- clueless -- folks who think it's okay and productive to trespass upon and occupy a federal wildlife sanctuary in Oregon.

It has always been thus, and always will be. So, what's to be done about it?

First, it's important to take a couple of deep breaths when any of these folks are encountered.

Second, it's important to remind our friends to do the same when they would otherwise have a hissy-fit and compromise their blood pressure and digestive system.

And third, it's important to follow as best we can the Biblical admonition to be innocent as a dove and cunning as a serpent. We really can out-think these folks. We can out-organize them. We can put forth more energy and demonstrate more tenacity than they are willing to do. This is the burden of enlightenment and civilization in every generation.

Everyone is born ignorant and selfish, and the newly minted ignorant and selfish are arriving daily. Progress is measured in small increments and over long periods of time. Flat earth adherents are finally marginalized completely and nearing extinction. You'd be hard pressed now to find anyone willing to fight another civil war to preserve slavery. Those who believe that men are inherently superior to women, or that women should be denied the right to vote, are becoming more and more marginalized, at least in the developed world. Can the death knell of heterosexism be far behind? It's a joy to behold.

On this the Bible is also right.

The Truth -- over time -- will set us free.

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Briefs & Shorts

Be sure to RSVP for the February 5, 2016, meeting by calling 515-288-2500, or on line at: JonathanWilson@DavisBrownLaw.com. Our scheduled speaker will be Suzanna deBaca, the CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland.

Thanks to Penny Kai [rhymes with "sky"] McGee (CEO of AFFIRM, the Iowa statewide LGBT foster care advocacy group), for her introduction of Governor Martin O'Malley.

Volunteers Needed!!!! Our traditional Red Party fundraiser that means everything to our fundraising efforts to generate resources for our scholarship program is being re-formatted in 2016. It will, again, be on the first Friday of February 2016, but it will be held as an Open House Reception at the home of Jonathan Wilson and Scott Kuknyo. Volunteers are needed for set-up, clean-up, and logistics in between. Volunteers attend at no charge. If you want to volunteer, contact Rick Miller at erik2000dsm@aol.com.

Be sure to peruse the front table for a book you might like to read. **Book donations are always welcome.** Thanks to Scott Kuknyo for helping coordinate the book exchange.



Consider a tax deductible contribution to the FFBC scholarship fund, or a tax exempt testamentary gift, or both. Contact Jonathan Wilson for details.

There are reports of an increase in counterfeit currency schemes in Iowa and elsewhere. The government has continued to make changes in the appearance of our currency to make it tougher for counterfeit artists. The unintended, paradoxical consequence is that it also makes it more difficult for law-abiding citizens to spot the counterfeits.



The Next Leader of the Free World?

By Bruce Carr

Our guest speaker on Friday morning, January 8, 2016, was Martin O'Malley, the former governor of Maryland, who is campaigning to become the Democratic Party's nominee in the 2016 presidential election.

An immensely articulate and appealing speaker, O'Malley sped quickly through a concise stump-speech in order to get to what he called "the fun part: Q&A." On the question of the President's executive role in keeping the country safe from foreign attack, he made the rather cogent point that it was two former governors who had successfully led us to victory in the last century's two World Wars. Asked how he could expect to work with Congress in its currently dysfunctional mode, he pointed out that he would represent truly new national leadership: he would arrive in the White House with the least baggage of any of the three Democrats running.

Among his accomplishments in the progressive issues that particularly concern our group, he cited the facts that as governor, he had signed in 2011 a law that would make those illegal immigrants brought to the United States as children [on Friday morning he sensibly called them "as-yet-unauthorized immigrants"] eligible for in-state college tuition, and in 2012 he signed a law to legalize same-sex marriage in Maryland. Each of these laws was subsequently put to voter referendum and upheld by a majority of the voting public.

Showing a certain impatience with some Party members' attempts to freeze him out of the national debates, O'Malley nevertheless demonstrated to many of us an inspiring optimism that should serve him well in his political future.

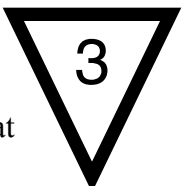
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Martin Joseph O'Malley served as the 61st Governor of Maryland from 2007 to 2015. Before that, he had been Mayor of Baltimore from 1999 to 2007, and a Baltimore City Councilor from 1991 to 1999. He was born (1963) and grew up in Washington DC, attending the Our Lady of Lourdes School in Bethesda and Gonzaga College High School in Washington. He graduated from The Catholic University of America in 1985 and earned his Juris Doctor from the School of Law of the University of Maryland in Baltimore in 1988, passing the bar that same year. In 1986, while in law school, O'Malley was named by Congresswoman Barbara Mikulski as state field director for her successful campaigns for the U.S. Senate. In 1987-88 he served as a legislative fellow in Mikulski's office, and in 1988 was hired as an assistant State's Attorney for the City of Baltimore, holding that position until 1990.

O'Malley served as the chair of the Democratic Governors Association from 2011 to 2013, while serving as governor of Maryland. Following his departure from public office in early 2015, he was appointed to the Johns Hopkins University's Carey Business School as a visiting professor focusing on government, business, and urban issues. He is married to the former Katie Curran, a Baltimore District Court judge, and they are the parents of four grown children. Martin O'Malley publicly announced his candidacy in the 2016 presidential election in May 2015; he can be contacted at [<martinomalley.com>](mailto:martinomalley.com).

**Two thirds of Trump's wives
were immigrants...**

**Proving once again we need
immigrants to do jobs most
Americans won't do.**





BETTER TRAINING & EDUCATION WILL HELP EXPAND IOWA'S MIDDLE CLASS

We should do all that we can to help more workers and their families join Iowa's middle class.

As Iowa continues its recovery from the national economic recession, we are making steady progress, but many Iowans are still out of work or unable to find the jobs they want.

According to the Iowa Policy Project, the state is [short about 35,000 jobs](#) needed to keep up with the population growth we've seen in recent years. And when it comes to the jobs that are available, many Iowans don't have the skills needed to fill them.

CNBC once again has put Iowa in the [top 10 states for doing business](#) this year for our low costs and quality of life, but they say our workforce development is lacking.

That's why Senate Democrats continue to fight for education and training that prepares Iowans to fill skilled jobs—those that are currently available and the ones we want to attract. We support investments in job training, apprenticeships, high school completion, skills certification and credentials that will put more Iowans on the path to good jobs. To strengthen Iowa's economy, these opportunities must be accessible to all who want to improve their prospects.

[Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grants](#) are making a better future a reality for thousands of Iowans. Iowa residents preparing for in-demand jobs at our community colleges may be eligible for this need-based financial aid, which covers up to half of the average tuition and fees for two years.

A [new report](#) tells us how the Legislature's \$5 million investment in this grant program helped students during the 2014-15 school year. Among the highlights:

- 4,926 recipients were awarded all available funds.
- 52 percent of recipients were 25 years old or older, training for better-paying work.
- About 49 percent of the funds assisted students studying nursing and allied health, an area of particular need with Iowa's aging population.

In other job training news, Iowa has been hailed as a national leader in creating more job opportunities for people with disabilities, the largest pool of untapped, work-ready individuals in the state, according to Iowa Workforce Development. Iowa has been awarded nearly \$2.5 million in federal [Disability Employment Initiative](#) funds to further improve opportunities to compete for high-demand jobs and help close the skills gap.

Additional information

This is a legislative update from Senator Matt McCoy, representing west part of Des Moines, portions of West Des Moines and Cumming in northwest Warren County. For newsletters, photos and further information, go to www.senate.iowa.gov/senator/mccoy.



To contact Senator McCoy during the week, call the Senate Switchboard at 515-281-3371. Otherwise he can be reached at home at 515-274-0561. E-mail him at matt.mccoy@legis.iowa.gov.

Senator McCoy is an Assistant Senate Majority Leader, chair of the Commerce Committee and chair of the Transportation & Infrastructure Budget Subcommittee. He also serves on the Appropriations, State Government, Transportation and Ways & Means committees.

Carol

Review by Gary Kaufman

Carol is a film that begins during the 1951 Holiday Season. Carol (Cate Blanchett) is a wealthy lady going through an ugly divorce and who had, prior to her marriage, a relationship with a woman who had been her childhood girl friend since they were both 10 years old. But it is also the story of the sexual awakening of Therese (Rooney Mara). Carol meets Therese, who wait is waiting on Carol in a large department store while she is getting a Christmas present for Carol's daughter. For Therese it is a period of discovering the sexual world around her, and she ultimately is drawn to Carol and discovers the

possibility of having a relationship with a woman rather than a man. Carol is, of course, already aware of these feelings, but her husband decides that if he cannot have Carol then Carol was not going to be allowed to see their daughter. He files a motion in Court seeking exclusive custody of the daughter based on moral grounds -- that Carol was not a fit mother due to her lesbianism. Ultimately, Carol makes the decision that all of us have to make, that there is nothing wrong with being homosexual and, if you can't accept that, things are going to get ugly! **Carol** is a strong movie about fighting inequality and for the right to love who you wish. I highly recommend seeing it.

P o n d e r T h i s

How can someone who believes in the imminent, literal coming again of Jesus and the End Times be trusted to care one whit about imbalances in the federal budget or a burgeoning national debt? Or climate change? Or projected deficits in the Social Security Trust Fund? Or repairing our crumbling infrastructure? Candidates, particularly Republican presidential candidates, keep touting their religious beliefs on the campaign trail. Okay then, those candidates have some "splainin' to do regarding deficit spending, the national debt, climate change, Social Security, and infrastructure repairs. Unless they don't really believe that religious baloney and are playing as chumps those who do.

There are reports of an increase in counterfeit currency schemes in Iowa and elsewhere. The government has continued to make changes in the appearance of our currency to make it tougher for counterfeit artists. The unintended, paradoxical consequence is that it also makes it more difficult for law-abiding citizens to spot the counterfeits.

A question for presidential candidates: if the end is imminent, why should we worry about deficit spending and a burgeoning national debt?

Statistically speaking, the vast majority of cops is well-intentioned and they do a terrific job in difficult situations. That's the fact. The isolated anecdotes are nonetheless eroding the public's perception of law enforcement. The solution: increase funding to attract more of the higher caliber cop candidates, intensify training for all cops, and expand the use of vehicle and body cameras. That will increase the numbers of that vast majority to more nearly 100%. We aim for 100% when it comes to skilled commercial pilots. We should strive similarly when it comes to cops; we entrust our lives to both. Cops are also entrusted with our civil liberties. With the stakes so high, the cost of the solution should be no issue. We'll still have disquieting anecdotes, but there will be far fewer of them -- the same as with commercial pilots.

Out of Africa: if you see a piece of tail in a tree it's likely attached to a leopard.

Out of Africa II: hunting the Big Five takes two spears, one for attack and then one for defense.

Nuts should be found in nut shells, not on the campaign trail.

The dickless half of the human race often has more balls than their testosterone-laden counterparts.



FFBC

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Des Moines, Iowa

February, 2016

*First Friday
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Newsletter

BRUCE SANDERS LEHNERTZ,
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MADE ON A  MAC

MY M.O. (MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS)

“WE’RE OFF TO SEA TODAY! HOORAY! HORRAY! HOORAY!”

By Steve Person

The second week of December, I went with friends on a cruise of the western Caribbean. Departing from New Orleans, the cruise schedule included four ports of call: Cozumel, Mexico; Roatan Island, Honduras; Belize City, Belize; and Costa Maya, Mexico. The Norwegian Dawn cruise ship accommodated approximately 2,500 passengers and 1,100 crewmembers. All food and most drinks were included in the price of the cruise. The weather was hot and humid, especially in Belize and Costa Maya.

I took three cruise-sanctioned shore excursions. The first was a van trip around Roatan Island, a beautiful jewel of land about twenty miles off the coast of Honduras. The excursion included a boat trip exploring the reef that surrounds the island including close-up glimpses of the mangroves that provide a natural breakwater when high seas or hurricanes threaten the land. An unintended aspect of the van ride exposed the incredible poverty that most residents of the island must endure day after beautiful day. I often wonder what those people must think when they witness these gleaming cruise ships anchored off shore discharging hordes of mostly fat and loud Americans tromping on shore, drinking too much booze, talking too loudly, and generally making themselves obnoxious. Their only saving grace is the dollars they spend in the hokey shops lining the dock. The same was true in Cozumel, Belize City, and Costa Maya.

Fortunately, the land excursions were worth the price and each provided expert guides who were knowledgeable and fun. In Belize, we went to the Mayan ruins in Altun Ha. About one-third of the ruins have been reclaimed from the jungle that enveloped them after the decline of the Mayan civilization. I made the rather difficult climb to the top of the Temple of the Sun God at Altun Ha, and the view from the top provided beautiful sights in all directions.

In Costa Maya, my travel companions decided not to visit the Mayan ruins there, so I went anyway. The ruins at Chacchoben were larger than those at Altun Ha, and the guide explained to us that the larger the city/state, the more influence it wielded. The guide also gave detailed information about the highly accurate Mayan calendar and the details about how the various pyramids were constructed and the symbolism of the carvings. Both visits to the ruins turned out to be informational and well worth the effort to get to them.

When I questioned our guide (Jesus) about the decline of the Mayan civilization, he explained that the city/states were at war with each other almost constantly and that agriculture contributed to their downfall. The ancient farmers did not know about crop rotation, and as they continued to plant the same crops year after year, the soil just gave out. Still, most natives of these Central American countries can trace their origins to their Mayan ancestors. That could keep Ancestry.com busy for decades!