



First Friday News & Views

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

The World Food Prize's Disservice to Borlaug

By Jonathan Wilson

I don't like to rain on a parade, but I feel compelled to join with those expressing some reservation over the near-deification of Norman Borlaug. In the **Des Moines Register**, Sharon Donovan wrote an article that, ever-so-gently, called attention to the potentially adverse environmental impact of genetically modified agricultural practices (GMOs) and, in particular, the use of compatible fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides that have tended to devastate small, more sustainable farmers in favor of "capital-intensive, high fertilizer, pesticide, and irrigation use" by large corporate farming operations.

In a separate article Rekha Basu makes a similar point but casts it in the context of the resulting distribution of wealth growing from the shift to GMO agricultural practices. No doubt, there's money to be made in agricultural and those with money tend to be the more "industrial" farming operations. That money gives them political power and they can be expected to wield that power in favor of making more money.

She quotes the World Food Prize President, Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, as saying that all perspectives are welcome at its workshops. "We will address numerous issues that affect all farmers, from water shortages to soil quality." . . . "We will endeavor to bring together all stakeholders to be part of the solution to nutritiously and sustainably feed our growing population."

As it happens, Ambassador Quinn was a speaker at the First Friday Breakfast Club and, during the Q/A following his formal remarks, he was asked about the ramifications of feeding the multitudes with Borlaug-modified wheat without, at the same time, providing resources for family planning and birth control. His response was that the World Food Prize attempts to pursue its feed-the-multitudes mission without getting involved in politics.

It had been a hot political issue thanks to the George W. Bush administration's mammoth global anti-AIDS initiative, the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, that poured billions of dollars into Africa and elsewhere but prohibited groups from spending any of it on family planning services or counseling programs. Couple that with Bush's 2002 Global Gag Rule as a condition to US foreign aid, and the budgets for those services flat-lined. As a result, lives were saved from AIDS infection, people were fed thanks to Borlaug, but there was a population explosion.

And therein lies the *political* problem that Ambassador *Continued on p. 2*

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▼ The next FFBC Meeting is 7:00am, Friday, November 7, 2014, at Hoyt Sherman Place, 15th & Woodland, Des Moines, IA

▼ RSVP by November 5 to JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com, or phone 515-288-2500

Quinn would apparently like to ignore. I've been to Africa multiple times on photographic safari. Among other things, I've learned that animal populations explode when food is plentiful. If it rains, plants grow. When plants grow, herbivores thrive. When herbivores thrive, carnivore populations balloon until the food supply is exhausted. When it stops raining, the reverse in that food chain happens. Simple as that. Humans are animals; if we are fed, we reproduce. And we'll continue to do so until either we exhaust the available food supply or we, intelligently, intervene to stop the population explosion. "Lesser" animals aren't capable of such intervention; we human beings should be capable of it.

An article in the Des Moines Register by Bill Leonard makes this point in Borlaug's own words taken from his speech accepting the Nobel Peace Prize. **"There can be no permanent progress in the battle against hunger until the agencies that fight for increased food production and those that fight for population control unite in a common effort."**

The word needs to go out to Ambassador Quinn and the World Food Prize that there is no escaping politics. Unless the continuing efforts of the World Food Prize are not forcefully coupled with the call for increased funding for birth control and family planning, the singular mission to feed more people is a fool's mission and a disservice to the memory and work of Norman Borlaug. The world population is now at over 7 billion souls, and it's targeted to reach 8.9 billion (8,900,000,000) by the year 2050. The resources for producing and distributing more food cannot possibly keep up, which means that our success will breed our failure (pun intended).

The World Food Prize needs to get more political, not less, and use its access to media to make the point that increasing food production is only good if we provide developing countries with family planning resources (read: birth control) and with answers to challenges to the environment and more sustainable small farms.

There's no escaping politics. President Obama rescinded the Bush administration's ban on US support for family planning and birth control. Elections matter.

I'm sure I've missed some other aspects of my family's diverse nature, but I thought it important to point out just a few of the seen and unseen differences that I get to share a meal with every week.

It's a lively crowd and one that is always welcoming to additional guests. This always leaves me anticipating, but not fearing, just who's coming to Sunday dinner this week?

In the home or in the workplace, welcoming, and not fearing, the diversity among us is the healthiest and most productive thing we can do.

Briefs & Shorts

Be sure to RSVP for the November 7 meeting no later than November 5. Contact Jonathan at 288-2500 or email him at JonathanWilson@DavisBrownLaw.com. Our scheduled speaker will be Kathie Obradovich, political columnist for the Des Moines Register.

Thanks to Ryan Crane for his introduction of our September speaker, US Representative Bruce Braley, candidate for election to the US Senate.



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

Consider a tax deductible contribution to the FFBC scholarship fund, or a tax exempt testamentary gift, or both.

Legacy Gifts to FFBC

By Brad Holland

The vast majority of legacy gifts to nonprofits are made through wills and beneficiary designations. It's really very easy to get started - simply name the First Friday Breakfast Club (FFBC) as a beneficiary to your IRA, 401(k) or insurance. Another alternative is to add language to your will which instructs the executor of your estate to give a specific sum of money or a specific asset (for instance the proceeds from the sale of a car, house or portfolio of stocks) to FFBC. If you currently have a will in place, FFBC has a specimen codicil (essentially an addition or modification to your existing will) which can be used. Both the codicil and beneficiary designation are simple steps any interested donor could easily implement. Your gift will leave a lasting legacy which can memorialize yourself, your husband or life companion, or even your family name.

More options. More choices. Less taxes now and in the future. A legacy gift will reduce the taxes paid by you, your estate, and your taxable beneficiaries. Using the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, you can access additional tax avoidance strategies like the Endow Iowa Tax Credits, or leverage the resources of an organization created to enrich Central Iowa today, tomorrow, and in the future. www.desmoinesfoundation.org

Resources. FFBC members who can assist you:

Rick Davis, CFP | 278-2347 | rldavis@wradvisors.com

Ryan Weidner | 278-2347 | rweidner@wradvisors.com

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None of us will be taking it with us. Each of us, nonetheless, can be intentional about where our assets go when we are no longer in need of them.

Gone Girl

Review by Gary Kaufman

Starring Ben Affleck, Rosamund Pike, Tyler Perry, Neil Patrick Harris, David Clennon, Missi Pyle & Kim Dickens

Directed by David Fincher

2Hrs 25 Min

Gone Girl opens with a man looking at his wife's hair wondering the eternal questions in a marriage: "What are you thinking? What are you feeling? What are we doing to each other?" What follows is a missing person story that has been creatively written for the screen by the author of the book, Gillian Flynn. She writes the movie in a way in which there are two narratives being told, one out to time sync with the other in a way that the second fills in some of what went on before which totally changes your interpretation of what actually occurred. The two timelines do eventually converge. The film is a scintillating drama that builds to a very dramatic and startling conclusion. You will be in for quite a ride if you see this movie, and it won't necessarily all be pleasurable.

Nick, played by Ben Affleck, heads home after a day at the bar for his 5th wedding anniversary with his wife, Amy Dunne (Rosamond Pike), who was the child of all the popular **Amazing Amy** books written and published by her parents. Almost everyone loved the character Amazing Amy. The real Amy is not quite as loveable. Anyway, Nick comes home for his fifth anniversary only to find the home empty and the living room table has been overturned and shattered to pieces. What happened to his wife? I won't tell you any more of the story, as it would ruin your experience if you see the film. The joy is in the twists and turns on which the story takes you and how your mind tries to figure out what actually is going on. It is a great journey!



PROTECTIONS FOR VULNERABLE IOWA SENIORS

Thousands of older Americans face abuse, neglect and exploitation every year. Some are particularly vulnerable because they depend on others to help them with the most basic activities of daily living. With about one-fifth of Iowans over age 60, issues affecting seniors are increasingly important.

That's why the Legislature has taken important steps over the last two years to protect seniors and improve their quality of life. These steps include:

- **Protecting seniors from financial exploitation:** Many seniors give power of attorney to someone they trust so that person can make financial decisions on their behalf, including managing their money, paying their bills and purchasing necessities. Power of attorney is exercised responsibly by most Iowans, but there is growing evidence of unethical people who prey on vulnerable seniors. The Iowa Uniform Power of Attorney Act will help prevent this exploitation. AARP has hailed the new law as "the most important tool Iowa can use to combat the devastating problem of financial exploitation of elders."

- **Cracking down on elder abuse:** We defined elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation in Iowa law and allow victims to secure protective orders to stop the abuse. In addition, new funding for Aging & Disability Resource Centers will be used to prevent elder abuse and to help victims.

- **Enhancing patient advocacy:** To better address long-term care concerns, two new positions have been added in the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman: a specialist to assist those discharged from long-term care facilities; and a certified volunteer long-term care ombudsman to coordinate and train local volunteer advocates.

- **Trusted assistance for those in need:** Many vulnerable adults have no one to turn to when they need help managing their physical health or financial resources. To ensure all Iowans have access to someone who can serve in a position of trust and confidence, we reopened the Office of Substitute Decision-Maker, which was closed due to budget cuts during the recession.

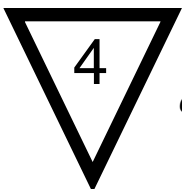
- **Ensuring high-quality services:** We made services and funding more available so that those seeking to maintain their independence can stay in their own homes and avoid moving to expensive care facilities.

Senate Democrats are working to establish a comprehensive system to prevent elder abuse, provide community support, offer legal options when intervention is necessary and go after those who hurt vulnerable older Iowans.

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.



Elections Matter

By Bruce Carr

Our guest speaker on Friday morning, October 3, was Bruce Braley, US Congressman from Iowa's First District since the beginning of 2007. Braley is running for election on November 4 to succeed Tom Harkin as Iowa's junior US Senator.

Braley was mostly preaching to the choir, since his positions on political and social issues almost exactly match those of the clear majority of FFBC members. He gave a concise but pointed outline of his personal history and his current campaign, highlighting especially the truly astounding amounts of outside-Iowa money that have poured in to support his opponent. In Q&A, Braley showed his exceptional mastery of the legislative detail -- and cooperative negotiations -- required to pass equality measures in Congress, including hate crimes legislation; repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"; workplace, veteran, and student nondiscrimination; and a host of others. He was particularly forceful on the need to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10.

So, all that remains is for us to vote, and tell like-minded others to vote. Keeping a Democratic majority in the Senate may well depend on it.

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Bruce Braley's campaign biography notes that he grew up in Brooklyn (Iowa), the son of a Marine veteran and a schoolteacher. When he was a child, his father was severely injured in a fall at the grain elevator where he worked. To help support the family, Bruce's mother returned to school so that she could earn her four-year teaching degree. Because of her hard work, the safety net of workers compensation, and the support of family and friends, the family was able to get by.

Like many Iowans who grew up in a working family, Bruce worked his way through college (ISU, where he graduated in 1980), doing jobs in road construction for the Poweshiek County Roads Department, at a grain elevator, and waiting tables; he then taught social studies at Waterloo West High School. Motivated in part by his family's experience dealing with his father's accident, Bruce went to law school at the University of Iowa so he could stand up for others hit by hard times. He earned his JD from the UI College of Law in 1983, and has worked as a trial lawyer in Waterloo since then. He can be reached at his campaign website, www.brucebraley.com. The First Congressional District now comprises the northeast quadrant of the state; its largest metropolitan centers are Cedar Rapids, Davenport/Bettendorf, Dubuque, Marshalltown, and Waterloo/Cedar Falls.

Ponder This

Sometimes what you're most afraid of doing is the very thing that will set you free -- come out of the closet. Katie Tennant paraphrased

Life is good when you can love a good joke, enjoy a good glass of wine, have good family relationships, and be loved by a good man. Life is good for me. J. Wilson

Life Begins at Viability. Genesis 2:7

The Bible is for reading, not thumping. God

Your stomach thinks all potatoes are mashed.

Over consumption of alcohol simply borrows happiness from tomorrow.

If Hillary were to win in 2016, it would be the first time two presidents have slept together.



FFBC

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Des Moines, Iowa

November 2014

*First Friday
Breakfast Club*

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MADE ON A  MAC

Guest Contributor

In Praise of Diversity

By Matthew Wilson

I was born in Canberra, Australia in the fall of 1972. My parents were/are both native southern Iowans, and I happened along while my father was teaching law at the Australian National University. About a year and a half after I was born my parents moved back to Iowa in order to be closer to family. From the age of 1 ½ until I graduated from High School and headed off to college, I lived in homogenous Iowa. In early 1997 I took a job in Jacksonville Beach, Florida. The decision to leave Des Moines and close proximity to my parents and younger sister was a difficult one but I made it. For the next three years I worked, traveled, and lived in Florida and Memphis, Tennessee, and was exposed to some greater diversity. In the spring of 2000 I moved back to Des Moines.

Not long after my return a new tradition began: “*Sunday Dinner at Dad’s.*” For the last 14 years, on *almost* every Sunday, my entire family gathers at my dad’s place in Des Moines to have dinner together. Wow, I just did the math...that’s about 728 dinners!!

In common with any family, mine has evolved over that 14 year period. Marriages, divorces, remarriages, kids born, grandparents passing, diseases contracted, etc. etc. So, as I sat at the dinner table this past Sunday I took note of the amazing diversity that I am blessed to be surrounded by every single week. At the dinner table sat a representation of the following...

- Gay/Straight
- Black/White
- Men/Women
- Divorcees and remarriages
- Children (Boys & Girls)
- Ages 5 months to 69 years
- Education from daycare- to advanced degrees
- Citizens from 3 different countries
- Multi Professions (Attorney, Teacher, IT, Construction, Corporate Management)
- Interracial Marriage
- Mixed race children
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- ADHD
- Auto immune disease
- Arthritis
- High Blood Pressure
- Democrats & Independents
- Iowa Hawkeye fans (our only thing in common)
- Step Siblings
- Catholic, Agnostic, Presbyterian, Monotheist, Lutheran, Methodist

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