



# First Friday News & Views

April 2016

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Issue 4

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

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and the Bible  
by Jonathan Wilson*

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▼ The next FFBC Meeting is 7:00am,  
Friday, April 1, 2016, at Hoyt  
Sherman Place, 15th & Woodland,  
Des Moines, IA

▼ RSVP by March 30 to  
[JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com),  
or phone 515-288-2500

## Homosexuality and the Bible: A Primer

By Jonathan Wilson

Like so many before me and many yet today in the uber-Christian environment that is 21st Century America, I struggled with my homosexuality and my Bible-based upbringing as the son of a minister.

I knew, of course, that there are gay children of God (to put it in Christian parlance); I am one. But it was not until perusing a **Webster's Unabridged Dictionary**, copyright 1910, that I had my "eureka" moment and discovered a capital T truth in the Bible that had eluded me before that. I looked for the word "homosexual" in that unabridged dictionary, and it wasn't there. With a little more research I discovered that a same-sex *orientation* was not recognized until early in the 1900s. Until then, about one thousand nine hundred years after the Bible was penned, all of God's children were presumed straight -- every last one of them -- and same-gender intimacy was therefore an example of *behavior* by straight people acting badly.

It helped to think about it with these steps:

1. The Biblical writers believed that the earth was flat, with heaven above and hell below.
2. They were wrong. (think Columbus in 1492 and think Tower of Babel)
3. The Biblical writers believed that the earth was the center of all creation and that the sun revolved around the earth.
4. They were wrong. (think Copernicus)
5. Those statements are incontrovertible. Those statements don't denigrate or diminish the Bible or its authority.
6. Believers simply have to recalibrate the Scriptures in order to latch onto the capital T truths that they impart.
7. The Biblical writers believed that all of God's children are straight.
8. They were wrong. If they'd been right, then, pretty clearly, same gender intimacy would be unnatural, contrary to nature, and inappropriate behavior for straight persons.
9. We need to be similarly forgiving of the Biblical writers as we are about their misperception of a flat earth and the Earth as the center of the Universe. We need to recalibrate the Scriptures accordingly without losing the capital T truths therein.
10. The admonition against same gender intimacy in Leviticus, for example, should be re-calibrated to read: "You should not be intimate with another person inconsistent with your sexual orientation -- it

*Continued on p. 2*

will be unnatural, contrary to your nature, and inappropriate.” Said another way, gay men should stop marrying unsuspecting straight women because of societal or church pressure to conform.

11. We need to recognize the difference between what’s “normal” and what’s “normative.” The former can be perfectly ok and valid – like a four-leafed clover or a \$2 bill; the latter is merely what is more common among all clovers or all currency.
12. Also be forever mindful of John 3:16 – “Whosoever believes shall not perish and will have eternal life.” Gay people are “whosoever.” Nothing – NOTHING – even death, can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:39)..

With those twelve steps gay people can confidently claim validation from the Bible itself -- the capital T truth in the Bible – and the Truth sets us free.

## Briefs & Shorts

Be sure to RSVP for the April 1, 2016, meeting by calling 515-288-2500, or on line at:

[JonathanWilson@DavisBrownLaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@DavisBrownLaw.com). Our scheduled speaker will be Iowa Senator Joe Bolkcom to discuss Death With Dignity legislation in Iowa.

Thanks to Taylor Vande Kroel for the introduction of Dr. Andy McGuire, head of the Iowa Democratic Party, at our meeting in February.

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.



## Where To Invade Next

Review by Gary Kaufman

Michael Moore’s **Where to Invade Next** is Mr. Moore’s search into other mostly Caucasian-populated countries in the world to “capture” their good ideas and take them back for America to claim as our own. He noted that although there are problems in other countries, he was there “to pick the flowers not the weeds.”

The first place he “invaded” was Italy to discover that, by law, the workers in Italy receive 8 weeks of paid vacation every year. They also get paid for a fictitious month in December (double pay) so that the workers have money to take a vacation in the next year as in, “What is the sense of allowing time for a vacation if you can’t afford to go on one?” In addition, the women in Italy get five months of maternity leave, as in, “Who would want the mother not to be with her child during this important early period of the child’s life.” When Michael told the entrepreneurs that they could make more money using the American approach, one of them laughed and said, “What would be the point of making more money?” The relationship with the people who work for them is extremely important, plus, when they come back from their vacations, they are rested and more productive. In fact, Italy and the United States have the top productivity in the world.

In France, Michael discovered that the children in school all have a gourmet multi-course meal for lunch. In fact it is not a 20 minute stand-in-line thing but considered a class and is a full hour long. The school children are seated, their tables having both china and glassware, and they are served by the chefs at the students’ tables. The children are taught manners, how to be civilized with each other, serve each other, and have proper diets. All schools have this quality of school lunches because Italy has a law allowing no one to charge tuition for K-12 schooling. Thus there are virtually no private schools. With the rich sending their children to the same local neighborhood school as the students from poor families, they make sure that every school has excellent facilities. The school menus are even

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## Dr. Andy McGuire

By Bruce Carr

The FFBC speaker on March 5, 2016, was Dr. Andy McGuire, newly elected Chair (in January of 2015) of the Iowa Democratic Party. Dr. McGuire's attractive, no-nonsense presentation urged her intention of pressing the accomplishments of local and national Democratic politicians into the ears – the consciousness – of Iowans in all 99 counties of the state.

Preaching to the choir, Dr. McGuire emphasized that Iowa Democrats have a proud tradition of fighting for expanded opportunity, equal rights, and an economy that works for all. The Iowa Democratic Party is inclusive and diverse, she said, focused on improving lives for Iowa's working families by tackling the wage gap, making education affordable, and (especially in light of her own medical career) ensuring that everyone has access to quality, affordable health care.

Dr. McGuire was excited and grateful for the Party's success at preparing and executing the Iowa Caucuses, which covered 1,681 precincts plus online and telephonic caucuses – "171,000 Democrats showed up" she bragged (nicely). On the question of using coin-tosses to decide a few tie-votes, she noted that those decisions matched anyone's probability statistics down the line. Asked why she has taken on such a heavy work-load at this point in her life, she said "For my family. I don't want any of my kids to have to live in a red state...."

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Dr. Andy McGuire is a life-long Iowan. Originally from Waterloo, she attended Creighton University in Omaha, where she earned her B.S. in Chemistry and her M.D. degree. She later returned to graduate school and earned an MBA from Kennesaw State University. Andy has spent her career in the field of health care, first as a practicing physician and medical researcher specializing in nuclear medicine, and, after earning her MBA, as a health care executive. Most recently, she served as President of Meridian Health, a company she led from zero to over 50,000 members across 44 counties in Iowa.

Currently Chair of the UI College of Public Health Board of Advisors, she also serves on the Des Moines Civic Center Board of Directors and as a board member of the Des Moines Partnership, and she was a Founding Member of the Women's Leadership Connection for United Way of Central Iowa.

In 2006, Dr. McGuire ran (unsuccessfully) for Lieutenant Governor of Iowa alongside Democrat Mike Blouin, and she has continued to be extremely active in Democratic politics. In March she stepped down as President of Meridian Health to devote herself full-time to the IDP; she oversaw the 2016 First-in-the-Nation Caucuses on February 1, and will guide the efforts of Iowa Democrats in the 2016 General Election. She and her husband, Dr. Dan McGuire, an orthopedic spine surgeon, have lived in Des Moines for over 25 years; they have seven children ranging in ages from 18 to 28, and a brand-new grandson. Dr. Andy McGuire can be contacted at the Iowa Democratic Party, 5661 Fleur Drive, Des Moines, IA 50321, 515-244-7292 and <[iowademocrats.org](http://iowademocrats.org)>.

## P o m d e r   T h i s

*Candidate Trump has threatened to send his supporters to disrupt Sanders' events. Do you suppose he'll have them wear brown shirts so we'll know who they are?*

*The death penalty may have a niche: in those cases where someone serving a life sentence for murder kills a guard or a fellow inmate. J. Wilson*

*The death penalty may have another niche: in those cases where there's a stand-off with police and there are hostages, and the perpetrator kills any hostage after negotiating with authorities. In those negotiations, perpetrators are consciously weighing*

*their options and implicitly doing a cost/benefit analysis. J. Wilson*

*Some people approach every problem with an open mouth. Adlai Stevenson*

*In real life folks are not as homophobic as they think they are supposed to be. Barney Frank*

*Even those who don't know what the word bellicose means can recognize it when they see and hear it. J. Wilson*

*The measure of a person is found in how they handle defeat, not victory.*





## SENATE VOTES TO EXPAND HATE CRIMES LAW

I led debate on the Iowa Senate vote to expand Iowa's hate crime laws to include some of the most vulnerable Iowans.

Iowa's hate crimes statute currently covers Iowans based on race, skin color, religion, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, age, disability and nationality. [SF 2284](#), approved on a bipartisan vote, adds "gender identity" and "gender expression" to Iowa's hate crime laws. With this change, a crime against a person because of their gender identity or gender expression can be prosecuted as a hate crime.

Transgender Iowans are four times more likely to be assaulted because they are different. Bullying reports indicate that 80 percent of Iowa's transgender kids are bullied daily at school. However, violence against transgender Iowans is an under-reported crime because of fear of retaliation and exposure, according to Judy Bradshaw, head of the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy.

Iowa's Civil Rights Act already includes nondiscrimination provisions for housing, accommodation and employment for gender identity among the protected classes. [SF 2284](#) is now in the Iowa House.

### Additional information

*This is a legislative update from Senator Matt McCoy, representing the west part of Des Moines, portions of West Des Moines and northwest Warren County.*

*For newsletters, photos and further information, go to [www.senate.iowa.gov/senator/mccoy](http://www.senate.iowa.gov/senator/mccoy) or [www.matt-mccoy.com](http://www.matt-mccoy.com). Follow Senator McCoy on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/senatormccoy](https://www.facebook.com/senatormccoy).*

*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](mailto:matt.mccoy@legis.iowa.gov).*

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

## **(Cont'd) Where To Invade Next**

by Gary Kaufman

menus are even reviewed with local officials and dieticians. When Michael Moore showed students at the French schools the meals that were served for lunch in the United States, they all said "Yuck!" When the photos were shown to the chef at the school, he did not think what he saw even qualified as food and the chef said, "Those poor people!" Michael Moore noted, "You know things are bad in your country when the French pity you!"

Finland is No. 1 in education (the U.S. is 29<sup>th</sup>), and they believe it is based on their limited hours of education for the kids. They believe the children need time to be kids -- to socialize, to discover things on their own, to enjoy life. No one has more than 20 minutes of home work and usually it is none. There are no multiple choice exams because students are expected to know the answer and not have it suggested to them in a process of elimination. And they let a

student study what interests them, to discover what is their special calling.

In Slovenia, college tuition is free for everyone, including foreigners just there to get an education. One of the institutions has over 100 classes in English as well. The Slovenians view education as a public good.

He also ventures to Germany, Portugal, Norway, Tunisia, and Iceland. The last is noted for having the first elected female president in the world, and that the only bank in Iceland that did not fail during the recent financial collapse was run by females. The country also was not against prosecuting the presidents of 70 banks that did fail and sent many of them to prison.

I found Michael's journey both informative and emotional, cheering for certain aspects of human existence that have been made better in other countries *using techniques often originating in the United States*. Progress is being made! What can we learn from this to benefit our own society?

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## **Ole's 2016**

By Rick Davis

On August 8, 1933, prohibition in Nebraska came to an end and at 12:01 a.m. on August 9<sup>th</sup> of the same year, Ole opened his tavern on the main street in Paxton, Nebraska.

Having sprung for a season pass to ski the Rockies this season, I've been spending a bit more time on the highway between Iowa and Colorado. The monthly trips have taught me that the best way to experience Nebraska is at 84 mph and at night. That is, unless I'm open to a quirky adventure. Enter Ole's Big Game Steakhouse & Lounge (open 7am-10pm Monday-Saturday).

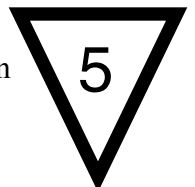
My ski partner and travel companion, Randy Swarts, enjoys changing it up every now and then. He had received a recommendation from a hygienist in his office to make a stop at Ole's for lunch on one of our trips to and from Colorado. It meant we'd have to alter our departure time to early morning, but we were assured it would be worth it. Hard to imagine any 4 hour stretch across land so flat you can see your dog run away for a week would be worth it, but the recommendation was glowing.

Only a couple of miles off I-80, Ole's draws from both passing motorist and locals. This was apparent from the number of pickup trucks with local

license plates and autos from out-of-state. We arrived with stomachs growling, and made our way through the entry to be greeted by a full size, stuffed polar bear in a LARGE glass case. Our booth, as with all others, was adorned by a prized mount from one of Ole's hunting adventures. Each booth also had a series of black and white pictures dating back some 70 years. They were fascinating and proved the old saying that "a picture paints a thousand words." Some of the mounts are truly exotic, much like many of Ole's hunting expeditions. Over a 35 year period ending in 1973, Ole ventured to every continent and returned with a prized mount which now dress the walls of his old tavern. They number over 200.

For those willing to traverse the flat lands of Nebraska during the day and are open to a quirky adventure, I recommend Ole's Big Game Steakhouse & Lounge, where you will experience one of the largest private displays of exotic animals in North America. It's also where you can get a great home cooked meal.

In the interest of full disclosure, you will find the following footnote on the menu. "For your health, we fry in a corn & canola vegetable blend, Supreme Fry-On. Low in saturated fats and no cholesterol."



# FFBC

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## MY M.O. (MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS) SHE STILL AIN'T DOWN

By Steve Person

**MAKE 'EM LAUGH: SHORT-TERM MEMORIES OF LONGTIME FRIENDS** By Debbie Reynolds and Dorian Hannaway

In the June 2013 FFBC newsletter, I reviewed Debbie Reynolds's memoir **Unsinkable**, the actress's look at the first eight decades of her remarkable life. This second "memoir" is written in a different style and presents vignettes of encounters with many of the people she worked with during her long career in movies, on stage, on television, and in cabaret shows. Most of her memories are pleasant and she presents people at their best—most of the time. There is one extraordinary exception: Milton Berle.

I'm sure many people who grew up during the 1950s remember Milton Berle. Nicknamed "Uncle Miltie," Berle's **Texaco Star Theatre** drew millions of viewers on Tuesday nights and helped sell television sets across the country. Reynolds recalled the times she met him at parties and professional venues as less than positive. At one of the parties he hosted, he hired a very well endowed man to display his endowment on a silver tray, surrounded by parsley and other garnishes, posing it as a sausage. Said Reynolds, "People would try to pick it up from the tray and keep going and going until they realized they weren't holding an actual sausage, then yank their empty hands away. Not my idea of funny." The last time she saw him was at a Friars Club event where Jack Carter was onstage doing his act. Berle heckled Carter from the wings and started to go onstage to interrupt him. Reynolds pulled him back by his shirt, and they got into a fight. She took a swing at him and called him a son of a bitch. She closed the Berle episode by saying, "I really don't like disparaging people, so I'll end by just saying that while I respected Milton's talent, I didn't enjoy being around him."

Reynolds was close friends with the Gabor sisters and liked Eva the best. "Eva and I were very close friends. Sometimes when I drove around town after the kids were in bed, I'd stop at Eva's to visit. If she was busy entertaining a gentleman friend, she would shout out to me, 'I can't see you now, darling, I'm all tied up.' I'm not sure if she meant this literally, but I got the message that she was 'occupied.'"

Is it great literature? Certainly not, but it is a fun and relaxing read from a character who has created and met many characters in her life—everyone from Lana Turner to Elizabeth Taylor. They all had a part in Debbie's life. Even though Taylor married Debbie's first husband—Eddie Fisher—in one of Hollywood's greatest scandals in the 1950s, Reynolds always liked and befriended her.

In December, Reynolds received the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. Unfortunately, she could not attend the ceremony because of recovery from surgery. That was one really over-due Oscar!