

First Friday News & Views

May, 2017

Volume 22

Issue 5

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

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The next FFBC Meeting is 7:00am,
Friday, May 5, 2017, at Hoyt
Sherman Place, 15th & Woodland,
Des Moines, IA

RSVP by May 3 to
JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com,
or phone 515-288-2500

There's been bad news and good news, and either one could still become the other.

First the good news. The 9th US Court of Appeals upheld a district court decision that put a hold on President [sic] Trump's first crack at a Muslim immigration ban. Notably, the 9th Circuit decision wasn't appealed to the US Supreme Court, partly because such an appeal would have taken considerable time and partly because it would almost certainly have been a losing proposition, on the merits and because the Supreme Court at that time had only eight justices. An evenly divided Supreme Court translates into upholding the lower court decision no matter what it was.

Next, a district court in Hawaii put a hold on President [sic] Trump's second crack at a Muslim immigration ban. Hawaii is also in the 9th Circuit, so the appeal from that district court decision goes back to the same Circuit Court that upheld the first injunction. That doesn't necessarily mean that it will do the same with the second ban attempt, because some revisions were made in that second attempt. But at least we know that the 9th Circuit is not afraid to stop implementation of an Executive Order of the President [sic]. Oral argument before the 9th Circuit is scheduled for May 15.

Next, the 7th US Circuit Court of Appeals overruled the decision of a three-judge panel of that Court and held that the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. It was the first such decision by any US Circuit Court. The lack of federal protection meant that such protections were entirely dependent upon state law. Iowa has the protection, but Florida doesn't. Without protection at the federal level, means that Monday after the Orlando massacre, anyone at that bar who was interviewed on television could be fired from their job the following Monday. In fact, only weeks prior to the 7th Circuit decision, the 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals (Florida is in the 11th Circuit) ruled exactly the opposite way.

Now the bad news. The Senate has confirmed Neil Gorsuch's nomination to the US Supreme Court. That restores the conservative leaning "balance" that existed before Justice Scalia died. The 11th and 7th Circuit Court decisions will almost certainly be appealed to the US Supreme Court by the losing parties. That bodes ill for the longevity of the 7th Circuit Court decision and probably means that employers in Florida can continue to discriminate with impunity based on actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Two further observations:

First, in Florida, I think gay and gay-supportive employers should launch a **Fire A Straight Day**, and on that day call in an employee who is perceived to be heterosexual and fire them *for that* **Cont'd on P. 2**

reason and for that reason only. It would make an important point and just might bring such discrimination into clearer focus. It really can go both ways. That clearer focus just might prompt a much needed change in the Florida law.

Legalization of gay marriage is probably not in immediate jeopardy. It was legalized nation-wide by a US Supreme Court that had the same conservative tilt that has now been recreated by the appointment of Justice Gorsuch. Justice Kennedy wrote that decision for a 5-4 majority, and he's still there. If any one of those five justices dies or retires, gay marriage is at least theoretically at risk, but still unlikely. The longer it exists, the more normalized it becomes and the world doesn't end as predicted. Besides, reversing the decision after hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of gay marriages have already happened would be an incomprehensible legal nightmare. That reality would help insure its survival.

Am I a critic? by Brian Taylor Carlson

My new role as the food and dining reporter for *The Des Moines Register* has been amazing. Every day, I'm discovering more about the burgeoning food scene of our great little city, and I'm able to bring my readers along in this journey of discovery.

Sometimes, I'm introduced to people as "the new food critic." I find myself explaining that I'm not a critic, but a reporter and, at most, a reviewer. But some people ask, "What's the difference?" And, I've been trying to wrap my head around a suitable answer.

"Critic" conjures images of a curmudgeonly gentleman shoving his plate away in disgust if the dish does not measure up to his benchmarks of culinary excellence. I envision him using sentences like, "This chef wouldn't know how to prepare a parsnip purée even if all of the ingredients were already in the blender and all he had to do was push the 'on' button."

Continued, p. 3

Ponderables

Some days the supply of curse words is insufficient to meet my demands.

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I'm here to kick ass and drink whiskey. And Pilgrim, I'm out of whiskey. John Wayne

Be sure to RSVP by May 3 for the May 5, 2017, meeting by calling 515-288-2500, or on line at: JonathanWilson@DavisBrownLaw.com. Our speaker in May will be Bob Hopper, CEO of the Iowa chapter of Boy Scouts of America. BSA has recently approved participation by transgender boys. You won't want to miss. You are encouraged to invite some of your friends to attend!!

Thanks to Jordan Duesenberg for introducing our April speaker, Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel, the Executive Director of One Iowa.

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. Thanks to Steve Person for going out of his way to help get out another issue of our newsletter.

Consider a tax deductible contribution to the FFBC scholarship fund, or a tax exempt testamentary gift, or both. We're all going to die, and we can't take it with us. Contact Jonathan Wilson for details.

Thanks to those who gave to the scholarship program. We are awarding eight scholarships this year.

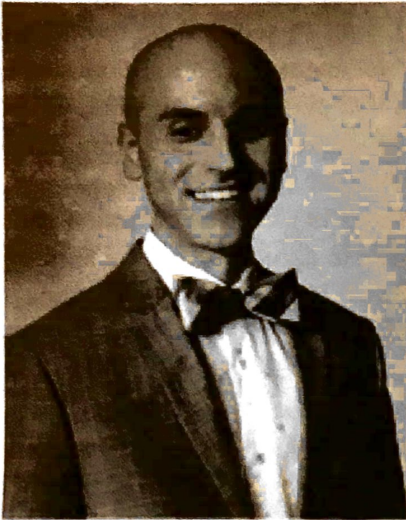
I believe in free speech – but not free anonymous speech. J. Wilson

If we never did anything we shouldn't, we wouldn't be able to feel good about doing the things that we should. House of Cards

The gift of a good liar is one who convinces you he is not a good liar. House of Cards

One Iowa Moving Forward

By Bruce Carr



Our guest speaker on Friday, April 7, 2017, was Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel, who became the new executive director of One Iowa last January. "Iowa is where I was born and raised," Hoffman-Zinnel told us. "I am excited and ready to continue working toward making the state I love more welcoming, safe, and inclusive for all Iowans, including the LGBTQ community."

Daniel began by describing his farming youth, showing sheep in 4-H; and his small-town school days, excelling both in classes and at sports (he played them all but his favorite was track). He's a colorful and entertaining speaker, as well as a thoughtful and well-organized planner, and you can listen to the whole speech again (or for the first time) by going online to our Web site, <ffbc-iowa.org>, and clicking on the "Speakers" tab. Daniel described his own coming-out process as a series of three overlapping stages (Misery, Adversity, and Championship) that

he later outlined in his Ed.D. dissertation, *Resilient Leadership: A case study about a gay man's journey of coming out and running for public office*, on the coming-out and career of Iowa Senator (and FFBC member) Matt McCoy, who was present at the breakfast.

About his new post at One Iowa, Daniel noted that he was now at Day 97 of the First 100 Days, a marker he had set for himself, during which his self-assigned tasks were to listen, learn, and assess the organization, in order to report to his board and prepare to create a new Strategic Plan – particularly in 2017's new political atmosphere. His goals are likely to focus on 1) renewed focus on grassroots organization, particularly around Trans issues; 2) intersectionality – working legislatively with similar progressive organizations on the whole range of civil rights issues; 3) partnering with business and industry to promote welcoming and supportive environments for all workers and customers; and 4) exploring the creation of civic-leadership development programs, particularly for LGBTQ young adults.

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Daniel Zinnel was born in Lake City and grew up on a farm outside Pomeroy, Iowa (pop. 650, in the far north of Calhoun County, about 30 miles west of Fort Dodge). After finishing high school and earning an A.A. from Iowa Central Community College, he moved to Des Moines, where he began to identify openly as gay, and finished his B.A. at Grand View University in liberal arts with minors in sociology and psychology. He holds an M.A. in health studies from the University of Alabama, and a Doctorate of Education in Leadership from Creighton University in Omaha.

Daniel met the man who would become his husband after moving to Des Moines; he and Charles Hoffman were married seven years ago at the Urbandale United Church of Christ. Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel has over 10 years of nonprofit experience working with minority groups including the LGBTQ community, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, the Latino community, and individuals with disabilities as a respite provider with Lutheran Services in Iowa. He is also adjunct faculty at Iowa Central Community College and at Des Moines University. Before being picked last fall to head One Iowa, Daniel served as director of education and leadership at Planned Parenthood of the Heartland. In 2012, he received the Karen Packer Spirit of Collaboration Award at the Iowa Cancer Summit, and in 2015 he was named one of the Des Moines Business Record's "Forty under 40" awardees. He was recently chosen to participate in the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute's Community Leadership Program.

Daniel lives in Bondurant with his husband Charles and their three dogs. He can be reached at the offices of One Iowa: <daniel@oneiowa.org> and 515/288-4019 x208.

Carlson, Cont'd from P. 2 I think of Pete Wells of *The New York Times*, who possesses the power to shut a place down with just a few keystrokes. I could never do such a thing. I have my opinions, and I have been disappointed in restaurants that I had high hopes of enjoying, but my mantra is, "If it's not good, just don't write about it." Some would say that no news is good news but, in my case, no news means it wasn't worth writing about. I'd rather not write about something than write something scathing and get myself into a predicament where I could be sued for libel.

Carlson, Cont'd to Page 5

My Take on Logo's *Fire Island*

by Jordan Duesenberg

About a month ago, Logo dropped a trailer for their upcoming reality show **Fire Island**, which documents the lives of a group of young, attractive gay men who spend their summer partying away on Fire Island. I figured there were going to be the typical complaints in the comments section about how this was going to be trash television, but there was an article I read on **The Advocate** titled "Logo's *Fire Island* Contributes to Gay America's Moral Decline," that particularly rubbed me the wrong way.

In the article, the author basically says that the show is presenting an image of gay men that's rife with stereotypes (aka nonstop partying, perfect bodies, drama, promiscuity, etc.), that will essentially give bigots ammo against us (especially in the current political climate), poison the minds of gay teens and, ultimately, doesn't deserve to be aired. While the author's view isn't unfounded by any means, it really annoyed me that there's somehow this sentiment that, in order for people to treat us like human beings, we need to present ourselves with only high moral standards, at all times. Personally, I think that's homophobic in and of itself.

First and foremost, I personally don't want to see the only representation of LGBTQ individuals as married

couples with children who have their lives all figured out. While I certainly do want to see that representation, that's not the reality for everyone in the community, nor is that something that everyone may want. Circuit queens exist just as much as the adorable gay couple who just moved in down the street.

Also, **Fire Island** is a reality television show. Do straight people have to apologize for the antics on **The Real Housewives**? [Or the real life antics of straight people at Marde Gra? Ed.] Did all Italian Americans have to assure everyone that they weren't like the cast members on **The Jersey Shore**? I don't think we should have to do so. I don't keep up with the Kardashians so I can learn about overcoming adversity, I do so because I want to forget about how annoying Linda from accounting is and how stressed I am about an upcoming deadline.

I'm sure people disagree with me on this (actually I know they do, I posted about this on Facebook and the comments feed blew up with people arguing), but I just think it's a bunch of bull that we should always have to present ourselves how straight people feel (somewhat) comfortable seeing us, without worrying about them thinking we don't deserve basic human rights. I think representation for all spectrums of LGBT culture is important on television, the good and the bad, and you better believe I'll be watching whatever that may be.

Ponder This

"You can't con people, at least not for long. * [If you don't deliver the goods, people will eventually catch on.] The Art of the Deal by its purported author, Donald J. Trump.**

Where the road ends, the insurgency begins. Ambassador Kenneth Quinn

If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately. US Secretary of Defense James Mattis

Job interviewer: "What is your greatest weakness?"

Applicant: "My honesty."

Job interviewer: "I don't think that honesty is a weakness."

Applicant: "Honestly, I don't care what you think."

Guns are for pussies, people who can't land a punch or take a punch. S. Kuknyo

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Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people. Harry Emerson Fosdick

It seems to be a law of nature, inflexible and inexorable, that those who will not risk cannot win.
John Paul Jones

The Boss Baby

Review by Gary Kaufman

The Boss Baby is probably the most creative animated feature film I've ever seen. The brainstorming sessions must have been wild. The story is told by an imaginative child as he imagined it. He would be talking about battling pirates with the visual being him brilliantly fighting those nasty pirates, then he is quickly called back to the real world where he is seen with a wooden sword standing in a simply constructed boat in the living room when his momma calls him. But zoom, he's back in his imaginary world. This lends the film toward incredible visuals.

The story is based on the common occurrence of the first born being blessed with all the attention and love of the household, but the attention and love dies with the advent of a new baby in the family. This is no ordinary baby. We learn of the "real" place where babies come from, a place called "Baby Co." In Baby Co., newborn babies are either placed in families or sent to middle management where they remain babies forever. This baby is on a mission to find out what their competitor, "Forever Puppy," is up to. You see, puppies have been so adorable that they are displacing love of babies, and there is only so much love to go around.

Elec Baldwin is incredible as the voice of Boss Baby. At the drop of a hat, the character can go from being a stern, no-nonsense boss to a cute cuddly little baby. The writers did a great job in coming up with a script that should appeal to all ages. There is cut-up slapstick comedy, yet also witty verbal repartee. There are homages to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Julia Child*, *Mary Poppins* ("Scary Poppins"), and *Moby Dick*, included with stylized animation of the 50's and comedic facial expressions often used in Warner Brother's cartoons in their heyday.

If you see the film, I highly recommend you see it in 3-D. **The Boss Baby** has the best use of 3-D since Katy Perry's concert film, *The Movie Part of Me*. After 3-D film reached the mainstream, it has been very disappointingly used by directors. But the director of **The Boss Baby** staged the action so that it would maximize the 3-D impact of the scene. The final affect is incredible.

The lesson of the entire film is the need to be loved by someone. Who can beat that! So if you like animated film, see **The Boss Baby**. For a special treat, see it in 3-D. You deserve it!

Am I a critic? By Brian Tavlör Carlson, *Continued from P. 3*

For instance, there was one restaurant where I dined in Palm Springs that I did not write about because the experience just wasn't worth mentioning. Would I ever write about that? No. No one will know about it because I refuse to write about something that just isn't good. That's it. I don't want to invite that kind of karma into my life.

Getting back to the subject at hand, I think of myself more as a food writer instead of a food critic. Criticism, to me, is more about testing whether a chef's dishes measure up to strict standards of culinary technique, presentation, precision, flavor and balance. But a dining reporter tells more about what dishes the restaurant offers, and includes details on price points, atmosphere, and the backstory behind the food. Because food can't happen without people. And a restaurant is invariably a ballet of teamwork. And because I'm not there to criticize. I am there to give the facts. My job is to be as fair and honest as possible, but at the same time, to elevate the Des Moines food scene and to get us on the culinary map. We are already doing a great job of that.

The more I do this job, the more I like the fact that I am absolved from having to give opinions or to make calls of action. The Datebook Diner writer, Emily Ekle, is responsible for going to restaurants and doing a full write-up on things they are doing well and not so well. Originally, I had applied for this position because I had never worked for a newsroom before. But the more I see how people react, the more I am liking not getting so much backlash.

I've had my fair share of criticism of my own writing, of course, and I go above and beyond to make reparations and corrections. Recently, after writing about an award-winning bakery in Ames, I received an email chastising me for not mentioning that it was the staff and the bakery manager that helped the restaurant win the award and not just the owner, who I had interviewed for the piece. I made sure to make those changes to the online article quickly. I remember full well what it was like to work for a restaurant owner who took all the credit for his restaurant's success while those of us who worked in the trenches were treated like serfs on the vassal. And I always said that I was going to give credit where credit was due. I find myself asking owners and managers if there are any valuable members of their team that they'd like to mention. And it just adds more depth to the story—and gets me on the good side of the people that work behind the scenes to make things happen. I don't think this is what a critic would do.

Another thing that I love to do is to find the little hole-in-the-wall kinds of places that people don't know about, taste as much as I can, and write about it in a way that would make people curious about checking the place out. My first week on the job, I wrote about a Nepalese restaurant here in town. I interviewed the owners (three brothers and their uncle) and discovered that when they were fleeing Nepal and Bhutan, they had not seen one another in years. They reunited in Des Moines after many years of being separated. That story would never have been told by a food critic. I've always told people that I don't care if a chef is serving barbecue in the middle of a corn field from an old, rusty barrel that's been cut in half and transformed into a smoker. If it's good, I want to taste it, and I want to write about it.

When people introduce me as the new food critic for *The Des Moines Register*, I don't correct them anymore. That got old quickly. I just smile and let it happen. I know I'm not a critic. Yes, I have had bad experiences. Yes, I can cook just as well as some chefs, and love to learn about technique and I love to experiment. Yes, I love fine dining as much as a burger and fries. But I will never put out a negative piece on a place or a chef. Things happen. Restaurants are a family of team members, and sometimes things happen in life. You never know if your server has a terminally ill family member, or if a chef is going through a divorce, or if a bartender just found out her husband is cheating on her, or if a delivery didn't come that day or if a restaurant owner is facing bankruptcy. Who could criticize that? I couldn't and I won't.

A MATTER OF CONCERN (X 3)

By Steve Person

In the 1964 film version of Tennessee Williams's play **The Night of the Iguana**, Deborah Kerr's character of Hannah Jelkes remarks to Richard Burton's characterization of a debauched preacher, "Nothing human disturbs me unless it is unkind or violent."

An individual I know who works at our State Capitol expressed grave concerns to me recently about the conditions existing within that building. Never in her many years of experience has she seen such a regressive and repressive legislative agenda that is currently sailing through both houses abetted, of course, by an executive who deplores the very state workers who prop up his regime.

Of the many issues my friend expressed doubt about, three stand out. First is the dismantling of Iowa's collective bargaining law. It is no secret that the law, pushed through the legislature with valiant protests by public employees, is patterned after the debacle that occurred in the state of Wisconsin a few years back under the "leadership" of that state's governor, Scott Walker. Iowa's governor, in a show of profiles in cowardice, signed the bill into law in a private ceremony attended by this state's lobbyist for the Koch brothers. Enough said about that.

Her second concern is the effort to remove funding for Planned Parenthood. One of this state's more pitiful examples of a state senator stated that his constituents let him know that they didn't want any part of their state taxes going to support abortions. If this man—and his cadre of pro lifers—had any pretense to education, they would know that Planned Parenthood is not allowed to use tax dollars to provide abortions. Further, my friend continued, what business do **any** men have meddling into the medical decisions that women have to make regarding their own bodies? As Gloria Steinem said many years ago, "If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament." Planned Parenthood does so many things to provide health care not only for women but also for men, especially those who are less advantaged. As RayGun's owner Mike Draper put on one of his company's tee shirts, "Planned Parenthood is better than unplanned parenthood."

A third matter is the bill soon-to-become-law regarding "stand your ground" and allowing guns to be brought into the State Capitol. Currently, a large sign at the security entrances to the Capitol states that no weapons or explosives are allowed in the building. Countess legislators who waltz into the building with their guns have ignored this mandate and no one stops them. The sponsor for this bill is a representative who owns a gun store in his hometown. I don't know what your definition of a conflict of interest is but, to my friend, this is a blatant example. No one, apparently, pointed this out. Ironically, the security teams who check people into the building—almost all of whom are retired police or state troopers well-trained in the use of fire arms—are not allowed to carry weapons on the job. Hmmm.



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