

First Friday News & Views

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

July 2020

Volume 25

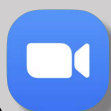
Issue 7

The next FFBC meeting is
Friday, August 7,
2020
7:00 a.m.



FFBC Meeting Location:

In Person?
ZOOM?



AUGUST MEETING

Current
Information
Inside This
Newsletter
(page 2)

FFBC Website:
www.ffbciaowa.org



What is Evil

by Jonathan Wilson and
Captain Gustave M. Gilbert



A few issues ago in the FFBC newsletter, there appeared an article that recognized that in a diverse society such as exists in the United States, no leader or candidate can personally embody the characteristics and life experience of each and every citizen. Accordingly, it was postulated that, in order to be effective, voters should seek out those candidates who are willing and able to listen, learn, empathize, and then lead. The following reinforces that postulate -- read on:

Captain Gustave M. Gilbert (1911-1977) was an American-born, German-speaking Army intelligence officer, psychologist assigned to observe the military and civilian leaders of the Nazi regime who were defendants at the Nuremberg War Crimes trials, 1945-49. Captain Gilbert was granted free access by the Allies to interview any and all of the prisoners being held in the Nuremberg jail. Some of his conclusions should send a chill down your spine:



"Fascism arrives as your friend. It will restore your honor, make you feel proud, protect your house, give you a job, clean up your neighborhood, remind you of how great you once were, clear out the venal and the corrupt, remove anything you feel is unlike you."

"In my work with the defendants I was searching for the nature of evil, and now I think I have come close to defining it. A lack of empathy. It's the one characteristic that connects all the defendants, a genuine incapacity to deal with their fellowman."

"Evil, I think, is the absence of empathy."

Let that soak in, and let it guide your choice among candidates for office at every level.

Remember

There will be NO meeting (in person or otherwise) on the first Friday of July.

1

FFBC August Meeting???

There's no meeting, in-person or otherwise on the first Friday of July. Also, there will be no social that was previously scheduled for July 18. A decision has not yet been made regarding a meeting on the first Friday of August.

If there is not an in-person meeting in August, there will be a virtual meeting using ZOOM, and the announcement about that will be circulated on-line. Make sure we have your current email address so you don't miss out on future announcements. If we meet again virtually, instructions for participating in the meeting will be communicated on-line. We've done this before in April, May, and June, and participation was good in April, increased in May, and increased again in June. You can contact David Cotton for assistance figuring out how to participate if you need that personal assistance.



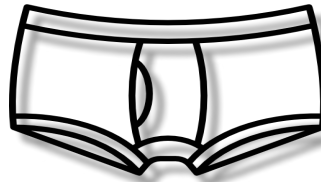
STAY TUNED...

COMING SOON

We will be transitioning soon to a new data-based system for meeting reminders, RSVPs, and on-line payment options for dues. This should make these activities much more convenient and efficient, and much less labor intensive. There is some cost associated with setting it up and operating the new systems. **Those costs are being underwritten by FFBC members Brad Holland, Joe Raetz, and Ascendant Wealth Management Group**, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC.

Thank You!

Briefs & Shorts:



Thanks to **David Cotton** for introducing our June speaker, **Dr. Ryan Price**, former Executive Director of the Iowa Department of Education and the new Dean of the Drake University College of Education. Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter production editor. Thanks to **David Cotton** and **Ryan Weidner** for their work as our technology gurus. Thanks to **Nicholas Williams** for managing our website. *Thanks to all our contributors to the monthly newsletter!*

A special thank-you to those FFBC members and friends who have chosen to designate FFBC through the **Donor Direct** program of **United Way**. The contributions through United Way are tax deductible. Those who have chosen this means of supporting FFBC have gone to the trouble of completing their United Way campaign worksheet by designating FFBC as the beneficiary of their generosity. FFBC is an eligible recipient of such funding designations.



United Way



Thanks also to all those **Amazon shoppers** who designate FFBC as the beneficiary when shopping **smile.amazon.com**. Doing your Amazon shopping using smile.amazon.com means that a small contribution to FFBC will be made with every purchase. Proverbial, found money.

Our fundraising efforts are ongoing to fund our scholarship program. To date we have raised over **\$325,000** for scholarships that are awarded to Iowa high school seniors who have done remarkable, courageous things to reduce homophobia and teach about LGBTQ issues in their schools and communities. Please consider a contribution on-line or by sending a check.

The next copy deadline for the FFBC newsletter will be **July 13, 2020**. If you have something on your mind, put it on paper and get it to me by the copy deadline. It'll be interesting, good therapy, or both. Caring is sharing.

Consider a tax-deductible contribution to the First Friday Breakfast Club 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 about legacy giving.

Don't Miss the
DEADLINE!

Here Comes Bigot-Killing EDUCATION

by Jonathan Wilson

I had two – count them – two articles already written for inclusion in this newsletter, both on various perspectives arising from the George Floyd homicide at the knee of a Minnesota police officer. Those will have to wait in the wake of the historic, game-changing 6-3 decision of the United States Supreme Court on the right of LGBT citizens to claim coverage against workplace discrimination under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This may not be all that coherent since, at this writing, I've been repeatedly toasting this incredible victory for equality and its inevitable aftermath. **You ain't seen nothin' yet, and most people don't have a handle on what's coming!**

Yes, the decision does give LGBTQ citizens the right to sue because of workplace discrimination. That's a good thing. It applies nationwide. That's a good thing too, since about half of the states still allowed for such discrimination without any legal recourse. In those states, you could get married on Sunday to your same-sex fiancé, and get fired on Monday. Tough...not sorry to put a damper on your honeymoon. But, no longer! The landscape has been changed overnight by a singular decision of the United States Supreme Court.

Thanks to this landmark decision, any gay, lesbian, or trans employee or anyone perceived to be gay, lesbian, or trans, who suffers workplace discrimination because of it, has legal recourse under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. But, that's just what is obvious on the surface. Most protected people don't pursue claims in court because it is expensive or difficult to find a competent attorney to take a case on a contingent fee basis. The real power and consequences of the decision are less apparent to folks unfamiliar with employment law.

Employers know that it is expensive – very expensive -- to defend civil rights discrimination claims on whatever protected characteristic, regardless of the merits and, if proven (on the mere balance of probabilities), the penalties can also be very expensive. Such expenses go straight (no pun intended) to the bottom line. Employers, obviously and prudently, want to avoid or, at least, reduce the risk of a civil rights complaint (meritorious or not). One of the questions asked by a civil rights complaint investigator is something like, "Do you provide diversity training for your employees, and does that training include all protected characteristics?" Employers want to be able to check the YES box. So, they engage HR employees, consultants, or knowledgeable attorneys to present continuing, diversity education and trainings for all employees. **Education.** Now, thanks to the Supreme Court decision, anyone conducting those continuing education and training sessions would be committing malpractice if they neglected to include education about lesbian, gay, and trans topics.

That's the hidden power of the Supreme Court decision. Bigotry toward GLBT children of God, or others, is nothing more than prideful, arrogant, unapologetic ignorance. Education attacks ignorance; education attacks bigotry at its very core. Thanks to the Supreme Court decision, going forward, there's going to be a lot more education on LGBT issues in nearly every workplace across the nation. That's the unheralded, real power of the Supreme Court decision.



August
Speaker:



**Tim
Thompson**



Our speaker in August will be **Tim Thompson**, either virtually or in-person (that decision remains pending).

The topic will be the ManKind Project with focus on their GBTQ efforts referred to as ManKind Pride mankindpride.mkpusa.org If you click on "Talk to a GBTQ Man," Tim is listed under "Central Plains." You won't want to miss and, if the meeting is virtual, there's no reason why you should not be able to participate.

You are also encouraged to invite some of your friends to attend virtually -- simply share the participation instructions!

You won't want to miss this. You are also encouraged to invite some of your friends to attend!! Provide the name(s) of any anticipated guest(s) so we can have name tags for them at the registration desk.



New Drake School of Education is Wise

by Bruce Carr



Our guest speaker on Friday morning, June 5, 2020, was Dr. Ryan Wise, new Dean of the School of Education at Drake University. Wise's main role at the meeting, which was held over ZOOM, was to congratulate, honor, and present the awards to FFBC's 2020 class of scholarship winners. These seven, amazing high-schoolers -- six of whom were in virtual attendance -- inspired us all with their energy and their dreams and their already-accomplished deeds of inclusivity and education in their schools and communities all around Iowa.

Before that presentation, Dr. Wise gave a quick account of his time at the Iowa Department of Education, which he directed from 2015 to 2020. He said that his four wishes for every student in Iowa were that each of them should be: safe, healthy, engaged, and prepared, through their school experience. He had tried to visit classrooms in every one of Iowa's 367 school districts, and he noted that every one of them could thrive with increased resources. "Put something on the line for someone who can use the support," he urged. In the limited time available for questions, Dr. Wise showed his facility for encouraging partnerships and cooperative ventures, and disinclination to be drawn into controversy. The morning was a time for celebration.

If you click on the Speakers tab at our website, <ffbc-iowa.org>, you can listen to a complete audio recording of Ryan Wise's remarks, and of the Q&A which followed.



*Meeting
conducted
via Zoom*



Biography

Originally from South Dakota, Ryan Wise earned his B.A. in history at Creighton University in Omaha in 1998. He began his career in education as a history teacher in underperforming high schools in Mississippi and Nebraska, in both urban and rural areas. He then returned to South Dakota in order to begin and lead a Teach for America (TFA) program on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations, aiming to enhance educational opportunities in under-resourced schools. From 2003 to 2008, Wise was the South Dakota executive director for TFA, and in 2008 he earned a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Nebraska – Omaha and became managing director for growth strategy and development for Teach for All, the international network of educational entrepreneurs.

Part of the first cohort of Harvard University's Doctor of Education Leadership (EdLD) program, Wise came to Iowa in 2012 to manage the task force that led to the creation of the Iowa Teacher Leadership and Compensation System. The Iowa Legislature adopted that system in 2013, and Wise became the deputy director of the Iowa Department of Education. He also completed his doctorate at Harvard that year, and in 2015, Governor Branstad promoted him to succeed department director Brad Buck, who resigned to head the Cedar Rapids school district. Named the 2017 Policy Leader of the Year by the National Association of State Boards of Education, Ryan Wise was re-appointed director of the Iowa department by Governor Reynolds in January 2017. As Iowa's education director, Wise also served as a member of numerous state boards and committees focused on education and workforce development, and he co-chaired the board charged with developing a mental health system for Iowa's children. During his time at the department, he also supported the development of the state's early literacy initiative, and championed efforts to expand work-based learning, computer science instruction, and high-quality career and technical education.

Last December Wise was named as the new dean of Drake University's School of Education, where he now leads one of the largest schools of education in the Midwest with more than 1,000 students and a wide range of programs at the undergraduate, masters, specialist, and doctoral levels. In addition to partnerships with school districts throughout Iowa, the school is home to the largest Head Start early childhood education program in the state, and collaborates with the recently-opened Gregory & Suzie Glazer Burt Boys & Girls Club on campus. Drake's announcement noted that Wise is "an authentic leader in education for the state of Iowa, has a stellar reputation building trust and developing partnerships, and brings a wealth of experience and unique understanding to the role of dean." Ryan and his wife, Sacha Wise, live in Des Moines with their two teen-aged sons. He can be reached at Drake by telephone at (515) 271-3829 and by e-mail at ryan.wise@drake.edu.

LGBTQ Documentaries

on Racism

By Jordan Duesenberg

DESTROY RACISM



Well it's Pride month once again, but it looks like it's going to be much different from previous years. Obviously COVID-19 has made it so we are unable to physically celebrate Pride outside and amongst a large group of friends. With recent events going on with protests regarding police brutality towards the Black Community, the prevalence of racism in our communities is also now at the forefront.

Although many people can't physically be at the protests for a variety of reasons, there are still things we can do to aid. Of course, you can sign petitions and you can donate to organizations, but another important thing you can do is educate yourself on racism. Since it's Pride month, I decided it would be a great idea to show some LGBTQ+ documentaries that are either about racism within our own communities or that show how racism has affected our communities to some extent. Below are my top three picks:

Tongues Untied – from 1989 that looks at racism and homophobia and what it means to come of age as a black gay man in the United States. The film features gay poets Marlon Riggs (which the film was directed by), Essex Hemphill, Brian Freeman, among others. The film seeks to “shatter the nation’s brutalizing silence on matters of sexual and racial difference.” The film blends documentary footage with personal accounts and poetry in an attempt to depict the specificity of Black gay identity. Riggs experienced this in San Francisco in the Castro District (a place many of us still identify with being one of the most freeing and accepting places in this country). Riggs also displays footage of homophobia within Black communities as well within the church and among Black political activists at the time, to show how that complicates the lives of gay Black identities as well. A fantastic watch for all and highly recommended. (Google *Tongues Untied* and you can find a link on Vimeo or possibly YouTube)



Paris is Burning – In my opinion, one of the most important and influential pieces of LGBTQ+ media ever. The film dives into the ball scene of 1980s New York made up of largely Queer and trans Black and Latinx youth. The documentary weaves in lessons on ball vernacular (such as “reading,” “shade,” etc. which now 14-year-old straight cis white girls use with their friends), but also talks about the ball participants’ tough lives, as many of them simply struggle to survive; the balls are their way to escapism. Sadly, the majority of the documentary’s subjects are no longer alive whether they died of AIDS-related complications or were murdered, which is all the more tragic when you see that many of them were teens or young adults when they filmed this. (Stream on Netflix or Amazon)

The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson – The film follows activist Victoria Cruz, who fights the tide of violence against trans women, as she probes the suspicious 1992 death of her friend, trans activist Marsha P. Johnson, who you may know as the Black transgendered woman and drag queen who threw “the shot glass heard around the world,” when she hurled a shot glass at a mirror at the Stonewall Inn amid a police raid kicking off the Stonewall riots on June 28, 1969. While the film does a great deal trying to uncover what really happened with the Johnson’s death, it also highlights her life and how important she was to gay liberation, which is often overlooked. (Stream on Netflix)



A Day in Jail

By Ken Hanson



Several years ago, I was helping out with a church youth group. One of the ice breaker activities with the kids was for the leaders to come up with interesting statements about ourselves. The youth then had to guess which statement came from each of the leaders. One of my statements was "I was in jail last week." None of the kids guessed that this statement was attributable to me. Most guessed it was the fairly new youth pastor. They assumed the pastor had visited someone in jail. It was then funny seeing them try to figure out what terrible trouble I had gotten myself into to land in jail. I'm not sure if they were relieved to find out that I work at a jail, or if they were sad that they didn't have a more interesting story to tell their parents about one of the new church youth group leaders.

So, I'm one of those people who goes to jail at least five times a week. You see, I've been in foodservice management for 35 years now, and the last 13+ of those years have been at the Polk County Jail in Des Moines. I'm directly and indirectly responsible for providing 1.2 million meals per year. We normally feed between 850 and 1000 inmates three times each day and provide food once per day for a staff of up to 250.

Many people assume that what they've seen on the TV series *Orange is the New Black* is what I encounter each day. I can assure you it is not. One of the big differences is that I run a jail foodservice operation and not a prison operation. In a prison operation, the inmates are serving fairly long sentences so they can be trained to cook. In the jail setting, the inmates are serving shorter sentences or are spending time in jail waiting for their trial or

arraignment or someone to bond them out, so they are not usually in jail longer than a few months. There are exceptions to that of course, but it is not the norm. This means that we cannot really train them to cook and oversee production independently.

I have a staff of only seven cooks. Usually only four work per day. Two oversee breakfast and lunch, and two supervise the lunch clean-up and dinner service. We do utilize between 24 and 28 inmate workers during peak periods, usually only about two hours per meal time. We operate two tray-lines simultaneously to assemble the 850 to 1000 trays in under 40 minutes. Everything in jail is on a very tight schedule, so meal delivery must happen at certain times as to not interfere with visits from family or attorneys, transportation to court, program classes like GED preparation, anger management, AA meetings etc.

Unlike some prison operations with a central dining facility, the inmates at the Polk County Jail eat in their housing units, so the meal trays are delivered to them and an officer oversees the tray dispersal and collection. The inmate workers are trained in basic sanitation and food handling in order to assist with the assembly of the trays and the cleanup after each meal. My staff have to be skilled managers as well as cooks in order to supervise a continuing rotation of inmate workers. I often use the example that it should be easy to show someone how to dish up a ½ cup of peas and place them in a section of a tray and repeat that 400-500 times, but some people cannot accomplish that task. Sometimes it is due to poor motor skills from alcohol or drug abuse or the fact that it is just something that they've never had to do. My cooks will then have to find a task that this inmate worker can handle with

minimal oversight. It can be a constant struggle to find the right worker for the right job.

They also have to prepare a variety of medical and religious diets, from diabetic, to renal, to vegetarian, as well as kosher and food allergies. Our menus follow the Health Eating Pattern recommendation of the USDA. I'm proud of the fact that we serve our population more fruits and vegetables than most are probably used to eating regularly due to poverty and access to affordable nutritious food. Due to very tight budgetary constraints, we are not serving fancy meals. They do include bologna or turkey sandwiches, chicken patties, hamburgers, tacos, etc., but also casserole type meals like chicken and noodles, spaghetti with meat sauce, beef and potatoes and others. If the food doesn't taste good, it can cause trouble for our officers in the housing units who are supervising up to 64 inmates per officer in the housing units. It is nice to occasionally receive a compliment or recipe request from an inmate.

We've also received thanks from inmate workers for teaching them some cooking methods. Since many have never learned to cook, it is always nice to hear that they've learned some basics from us. More than once we've heard that they feel comfortable applying for restaurant jobs after having worked with us in the jail kitchen.

I never thought I'd end up going to jail on a regular basis, but it's been an interesting journey there. If you ever encounter me out and about, especially if around strangers, say loudly, "So I heard you were in jail today." It's always fun to see people's expressions, just like those youth group kids several years ago.

When They See Us

A Netflix Limited Series Review by Mark Turnage

In 1989, five teenagers—Raymond Santana, Kevin Richardson, Yusef Salaam, Antron McCray, and Korey Wise—were wrongfully arrested and charged with the assault and rape of a white female jogger in Central Park. *When They See Us* is the story of those kids, known collectively as “the Central Park Five,” their police coercions, their years-long trials and incarcerations, and ultimately their exonerations and their difficulty reintegrating back into society after prison. Ava DuVernay, who also directed the 2014 Oscar-nominated *Selma*, produced, co-wrote, and directed this Emmy-nominated four-part Netflix miniseries, and examines institutional racism with a “tough love” approach that handles the subject matter gracefully while also giving insight into the lives and culture of the five kids’ families. Even considering the recent media spotlight on police brutality towards people of color, it’s no easy watch, but *When They See Us* is a fantastically-acted piece of ensemble acting that exposes the horrors of a racially-biased justice system and its personal ramifications for people and families of color.

The miniseries is divided neatly into four parts, with the first episode covering the boys’ arrests in April 1989. DuVernay’s introduction to their Harlem neighborhood is a modern take on Spike Lee’s *Do the Right Thing*, complete with Public Enemy’s “Fight the Power” playing on a giant chrome boombox as the kids head to the park and convince their friends to join them for a night out. We gain insight into the families of each boy before their fateful trip—the Latinx Santana family’s lively household illustrating how tight-knit they are, the underlying tension between Antron McCray and his father’s history of abandoning his family, and the closeness of Korey Wise to his mother and brother, to name a few examples. These moments become important comparing and contrasting points later in the series. We also don’t see the crime they’re accused of happen at all—just the response of the police to reports of assaults in Central Park. When they do arrive, the viewer experiences it as the Central Park Five did: suddenly and without warning.

Prosecutor Linda Fairstein (Felicity Huffman) examines the crime scene, but until she arrives at the police station and sees the Central Park Five in holding, her theory is of a single attacker. Fairstein revises her theory, pinning the guilt on the five boys, and convinces the police to interrogate them. Following their arrest, these white cops violently subject these kids into falsely admitting guilt without parents or lawyers present, even planting the idea to implicate one another in recorded “confessions” which they later use as evidence. When the boys are ultimately convicted, less airtime is spent on the juveniles’ time in jail and more on their difficulty readjusting to society and their families, some of whom have moved on without them. Others turn to drug trafficking when their criminal records prevent them from getting work. Cooperation between the families is also strained, often with an “every son for himself” attitude—but with a system stacked against them, their attitudes arise from a place of futility far more than selfishness.

When They See Us can be overwhelming because much of the moments of optimism are subverted by bigger moments of defeat, especially during the boys’ trial and imprisonment. Elizabeth Lederer (Vera Farmiga), the lawyer for the prosecution, is conflicted between ensuring a successful conviction and the threadbare case supporting Fairstein’s theory; in a TV movie, she would act on her crisis of conscience, but here, she chooses to ignore it. Korey Wise, a 16 year old, is tried as an adult and is imprisoned at Riker’s Island. When he is repeatedly beaten by inmates (encouraged and facilitated by corrupt prison staff), he asks for a transfer, thinking “all his bad luck is used up” and ends up someplace far worse, with an even more sadistic corrections officer. The fourth episode that covers Wise’s imprisonment, much of which is spent in solitary confinement, is some truly incredible acting on the part of Jharrel Jerome (*Moonlight*).

When They See Us is a powerhouse of ensemble acting—and worth seeing, not just because of its direction and world-building, but of the institutional racism it depicts and its impact on innocent lives. See it on Netflix streaming services.



MEN'S GROUP

Imagine

a group of men willing to talk honestly about anything – even the stuff we're supposed to hide. Imagine building community with men committed to supporting and challenging one another to live with integrity, compassion, and purpose. Imagine getting skills to be the kind of man you want to be, with men who drop the facade and speak from the heart. You can have it. We'll save you a chair.

FREE - Confidential - Non-religious - Contact Name Email & phone number

THE
ManKind Project
mkpusa.org U S A

Relationships vs. Reportships

By David Cotton

I go through my day contacting family, friends, and acquaintances reporting what's happening in my life, sharing my emotions, hopes, dreams, fears, desires and aspirations. I hope for the same from them. I do this attempting to build a connection, a friendship, a relationship with the other person. I extend and expose myself. I'm vulnerable. I take risks.

Sometimes I'm successful and it begins or strengthens a relationship. Too often it just ends up being a "reportship," a relatively safe and unsatisfying state where there is no real connection or bond, a state of trading unemotional facts and record of events.

In your life, what do you have, and what do you value? Reportships or relationships?

If you're a man in the Des Moines area, consider participating in the Des Moines Personal Mastery Workgroup Online Open Men's Group. Meetings are on the first Monday of every month via Zoom. It's free...invest time in yourself.

The group will be hosted by a group of diverse men from the Des Moines ManKind Project.

Want to know more? Go to one of these on-line links...you're worth taking some time for yourself. Do it even if you're not interested; you may know a man that might be. Forward to him. Show him you care.



Go to these links if interested:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/12HdLvXfCW4C05cTnLAv_xLE3pzzBiCQM/view?usp=sharing

<https://forms.gle/mgmt18RKU7ExFWyx8>



“When all Americans are treated as equal, no matter who they are or whom they love, we are all more free.”

-- President Barack Obama



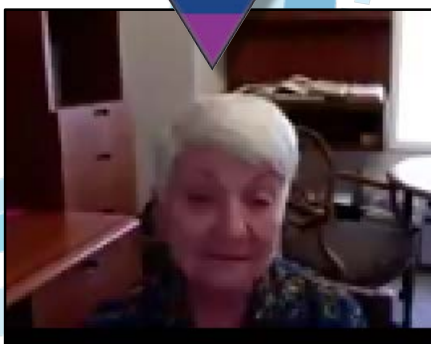
FFBC Photo Gallery



Randy Swarts introduces the
FFBC 2020 Scholarship Winners



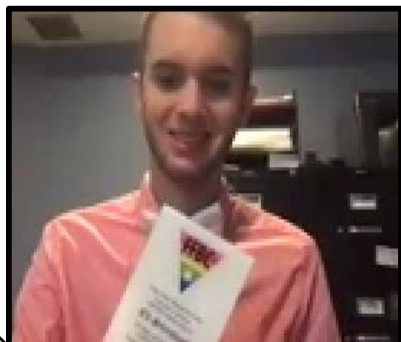
David Cotton introduces Ryan
Wise, the June speaker



Scholarship Sponsor, Trudy Hurd



First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners



Eli Steenhoek (Colfax-Mingo High School)

Eli Steenhoek is a graduate of Colfax-Mingo High School, and plans to attend the University of Iowa for an advanced degree focused on mental health. As an 8th grader, Eli helped a high school friend create their school's GSA group. At first this group had to be underground, but after a presentation and discussion in front of the district school board, the GSA group became official. He lives with Pride, exemplified by telling his coming out story for speech competition, first in a district and state competitions, then in front of the generally conservative community of Colfax. Eli demonstrates courage and poise, and we see him going far!



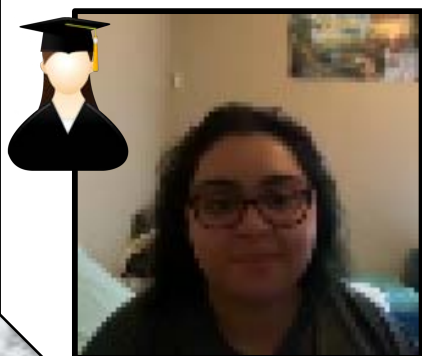
Lilli Duncan (Iowa City West High School)

Lilli Duncan is an intelligent and confident graduate of Iowa City West High School who identifies as queer. Lilli was a member of the Colors club, her school's GSA all thru high school, and in her senior year was co-leader. One outstanding accomplishment Lilli lead was to ensure that any teacher who displayed a "Safe Zone" sticker in their classroom actually had taken the training that supported that designation. It turned out most had not, but by working with the school board, Lilli and the Colors group ensured that many teachers were trained and could be clearly identified as true Safe Zone advocates. Lilli plans to focus her future studies on Psychology, and to be a leader in addressing LGBTQ mental health issues. We are proud to support her goals!



Brenton Renaud (Ankeny Centennial High School)

Benton Renaud is a graduate of Ankeny Centennial High School. The primary word that defines Benton is Leader. His high school experiences include creation of a Diversity Day at his high school, focused on highlighting all marginalized communities. He has been a member of the Iowa Safe Schools Student Leadership Council for 2 years, and was the keynote speaker at that organization's annual fundraising event. He has been recognized locally, state-wide and nationally for his leadership skills. Yet his stories of coming out to each of his parents demonstrate that regardless of accomplishments, self-acceptance and "family" acceptance can still be one of the greatest achievements. We see amazing things in your future Benton!



Isis Walle (Knoxville High School)

Isis Walle is defined by her perseverance and determination. She is a graduate of Knoxville High School. In her sophomore year, Isis and a friend worked at creating the school's first GSA. Teacher supporters were identified, but no one would sign on as the organization sponsor until Isis reached out to Iowa Safe Schools for help. In the beginning, the group and its members experienced homophobia and vandalism – today it is a thriving part of the school culture. Having experienced conversion therapy and other challenges as a result of her identity, Isis continues to move forward. Keep going Isis, we proudly support you!!

First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners



Payson Rea (Kee High School)

Payson Rea lives in Lansing, and graduated from Kee High School in Northeast Iowa with a graduating class of 37 students. And he has lived as an openly gay person for several years. Payson experienced many extreme challenges and difficulties related to his sexuality while growing up, only to finally realize that his self-acceptance is what truly mattered. In his junior year he formulated a plan, and this past year started "Haven", an LGBTQ support organization focused on one-on-one interactions at Kee High School, for other kids on the journey of self-acceptance in a rural, conservative area of Iowa. Payson demonstrates courage and resiliency that we find incredibly admirable. Congratulations Payson!



Skylar Manna (Valley High School, West Des Moines)

Skylar Manna attended Valley High School in West Des Moines and will be attending Iowa State University in the fall. Skylar's focus is on identity, particularly for transgender students. As a member of the Spectrum group at Valley, she participated in trainings with teachers about gender identity and using correct pronouns of choice with their students. She also was among the group of students removed from the state capitol building earlier this year for using the bathrooms in line with their gender identity. Skylar is a true student activist with an interest in mental health issues affecting the LGBTQ community. Keep up the great work Skylar!



Isabelle Hase (West Burlington High School)

Isabelle Hase graduated from West Burlington High. She plans to attend the University of Iowa for college with a long-term goal of becoming a pediatrician. Isabelle is this year's "activist ally" on our list of 2020 scholarship recipients. She helped start the GSA at West Burlington and is an officer of the club. Isabelle's stories of addressing homophobia in her school and in her family tells us that she will be supportive of the LGBTQ community for many years to come! Thank you and congratulations Isabelle!



Each scholar will receive a scholarship of **\$3000**, in two installments, to be used for **any** expenses incurred during their post-high school educational endeavors. It matters not whether that endeavor is in college somewhere or a technical school. The scholarships are awarded to deserving students, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, or other personal characteristic.

They join dozens of others who have received scholarships over the past 25 years who have gone on to further distinguish themselves in myriad ways. One hundred percent of the money raised goes to the scholarships; contributions are not used to raise the money, a somewhat unique thing that can be said about the FFBC scholarship program and fundraising. The more money raised, the more money that will be given in scholarships.

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Stoned

By Aja Raden

A Book Review by Steve Person



STONED

JEWELRY, OBSESSION,
AND HOW DESIRE
SHAPES THE WORLD

AJA RADEN

When I tell people I am reading a book called *Stoned*, they immediately think it is something to do with drugs. It isn't—and yet—could be. The subtitle is, *Jewelry, Obsession, and How Desire Shapes the World*. Those characteristics can very well be applied to the world of legal and illegal drugs, but they have nothing to do with this book.

The author divided her book into three parts: Want, Take, and Have. Each section is devoted to an object that explains its worth, its desirability, and its influence on world events. For example, she begins the first section with the purchase of Manhattan on May 4, 1626, for about twenty-four dollars' worth "of beads, buttons, and trinkets." Probably like me, you were taught in school that the Indians had been taken advantage of with this purchase. As it turns out, those Indians didn't think much of the island to begin with. They mainly harvested oysters from it. They had never before seen beads, buttons, and trinkets, and felt they had made the better deal with the Dutch in the transaction. As the author points out, it all depends on your point of view. She goes on to describe the "Want" of diamonds. She scoffs that diamonds are a rare commodity. She claims they are not rare, but that the DeBeers took control of the diamond industry and thus created the idea of rarity.

In the "Take" section, Raden claims it was a necklace that started the French Revolution. The saga of the necklace is fascinating. It purportedly was first made for Madame duBarry, a mistress of Louis XV. Before duBarry could take ownership of this spectacular necklace, Louis XV died. The jewelers who made this monstrosity then tried to have Louis XVI purchase it for his wife, Marie Antoinette. Antoinette didn't want anything to do with a piece she considered gaudy and meant to adorn the neck of a whore. Intrigue follows. Through an incredibly roundabout tale of misinformation, false names, and truly weird events, the French peasants believed Antoinette did indeed have the necklace, but she never did. The fact that the facts didn't matter was of no concern to them. Antoinette represented all that was wrong in France, yet they were unaware that she spent very little time in the Palace of Versailles. She tired of the cloistered atmosphere and spent most of her days at the Trianon, a house she had on the grounds of Versailles where she could indulge her whim of being a country lass. The fact that she was also an Austrian didn't set well with the French people, either. And, she never said, "Let them eat cake." Ultimately, she lost her head.

In the "Have" section, the author traces the advent of the wristwatch. "The first wristwatch was made by Patek Phillippe in 1868 for a lady named Countess Koscowicz. It was a silly bauble—which had some very serious and lasting effects." The wristwatch, Raden claims, helped the Allies win World War I. With the popularity of the pocket watch in vogue at the war's inception, it soon became obvious that taking a watch out of a pocket and trying to coordinate a machine gun attack or a bombardment with cannons or hand grenades was just too time consuming. By the war's end, the British soldiers were all supplied with wristwatches.

There are so many other incidents in the book that are fascinating including the invention of cultured pearls, the House of Faberge in Russia before that country's revolution, and the reason for England's war with Spain during the reign of Elizabeth I. They all had to do with jewelry in one way or another.