



First Friday News & Views

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

Scholarships



Edition

August 2021

Volume 26

Issue 8

Next Meeting:

**Friday,
August 6
7:00 a.m.**



Meeting Location:

**Hoyt Sherman Place
15th & Woodland
Des Moines**



August Speaker:

**Ian Lawrence-
Tourinho**



FFBC Website:

ffbc-iowa.org

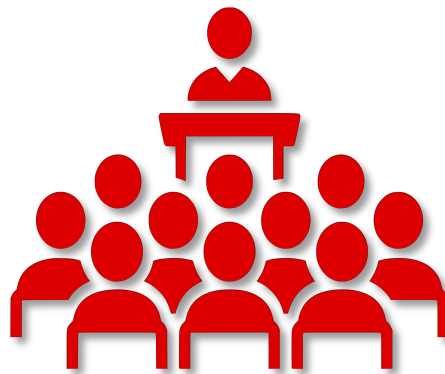


Return to In-Person Meetings

by Byron Huff, Board President

On behalf of myself and the First Friday Breakfast Club Board of Directors, we would like to welcome our members and guests to Hoyt Sherman Place for our first in-person meeting since March 2020! Our August speaker will be presenting via Zoom on a large projector screen, but the excitement of seeing old friends and socializing with others will make this a truly memorable event.

FFBC quickly transitioned to virtual presentations that have improved over the past 17 months as we all became more comfortable with the format. While this has allowed us to stay connected, it is no substitute for physical interaction. The plan for the future would be to have mostly live in-person speakers with occasional virtual speakers. The complexity and time to set up for virtual presentations make this something we will utilize only when a desired speaker cannot be present.



The downside to our return to Hoyt Sherman is that ***we will be unable to broadcast our live meetings for those who cannot attend in person.*** While we recognize there are some who have enjoyed joining us from remote locations, the logistics of facilitating this are currently far too complex. Please keep in mind that we are posting voice recordings of most speakers on our website, and we have started to include YouTube videos as well. Go to YouTube and subscribe to our channel and set up notifications of new videos.

While membership in the First Friday Breakfast Club is for men who self-identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender, we welcome all guests, regardless of sexual orientation or gender, to our meetings.

Sign up to attend online. I look forward to seeing all of your smiling faces on **August 6th!**

**Breakfast Club Returns to
In-Person Meetings at
Hoyt Sherman in August!**

Back To Breakfast Club

In-Person Meeting Information

Meeting Schedule

- 6:30 a.m. Doors open
- 6:45 a.m. Breakfast service begins
- 7:00 a.m. Meeting begins



Masks

You are welcome to wear a mask if you so choose, though they are not required. We'll have free masks available at the door.

How To R.S.V.P.

Please R.S.V.P. online by responding to the email invitation that you received. It will ensure that our caterer, Gateway Market, has hot breakfast prepared for you.

Membership

FFBC membership is open to men who self-identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender. We welcome all guests, regardless of sexual orientation or gender. Meetings are held the first Friday of every month from 7 a.m. – 8 a.m. at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines. The membership and guest rates help us cover our food and facility costs.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Rates

- Annual Rate: \$180, if paid before March 1 each year
- Quarterly Rate: \$48, three consecutive meetings
- Month-by-Month: \$18
- First Time/One Time Attendee: \$15
- Full-time Student: \$8

Guest Rates

- First Time/One Time Attendee: \$15
- Month-By-Month: \$18
- Full-time Student: \$8

Payment Options

- Cash or check at the meeting
- Credit card prior to the meeting at www.ffbciaowa.org; visit the Membership tab
- You can also pay via your mobile phone on our website



Some FFBC members have a paid dues credit (from prior to the pandemic when dues payments were suspended) and have been contacted by the FFBC Treasurer regarding this status. This information will be on file at the Hoyt Sherman check-in table.

Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **Michael Egel** for introducing **Kevin Newbury**, our July speaker. Thanks to **David Cotton** for managing our website and to **Nicholas Williams** for managing all of our Microsoft IT infrastructure. Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter editor. *Thank you to all our contributors to the newsletter!*

The next **deadline** for the FFBC **September newsletter** will be **August 23**. If you have something on your mind, put it on paper and email it to Wade by the copy deadline (wadecpetersen@gmail.com).

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**. Your shopping with 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 **\$450,000** 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 tax-deductible **contribution online** or by sending a check.

Please consider a **tax-exempt testamentary gift**. Our first legacy gift to the FFBC scholarship program came from **Cliff Paulsen** to the tune of over **\$67,000!** Contact **Byron Huff** for details or with any questions.



Paying It Forward

by Jonathan Wilson

I was seated in an upscale restaurant in Phoenix, Arizona. The hostess seated a black man across from me and easily in my line of sight. I was able to monitor the situation without it being obvious, while I continued my interactions with friends who were having dinner with me. The black man was quite modestly attired, had a scruffy beard, and was eating alone. I could see the entire restaurant, and he was the only person of color that I could see. As it happened, it appeared that he ordered the same entrée and sides that I was enjoying. It was delicious food, and he and I enjoyed our meals.

As we were finishing up, I noticed that the waiter also brought his check to him. Some conversation ensued between the two of them, and the waiter left briefly, returned, and there was more conversation. This happened one more time before the waiter left again. I could not overhear any of the conversations. At that point, my tab was paid and we were about to depart. Before doing so, however, I went to the register where the wait-staff runs credit cards and otherwise closes out each customer's transaction. I approached the waiter, who I recognized, and said that I had noticed that there was apparently some issue with the black patron when it came time for him to pay. I said I was not interested in knowing what the issue was; he had the same thing that I had had and enjoyed. I simply wanted to pay his tab, and I handed over my credit card. I also said that I did not want the man to know who I was, or that I had paid his obligation. I said that he should merely be told that everything was good and his tab had been "taken care of; come back again soon." The waiter seemed in disbelief -- and relieved -- as if a difficult burden had been lifted from his shoulders. He expressed gratitude on behalf of the black patron, saying he'd never had a similar experience before. He would do as I requested.

I don't know what the issue was. I didn't know whether the black man was in the wrong, in the right, or running a scam. I didn't know whether he was dissatisfied with the food or the service (I'd been quite satisfied with both), or simply didn't have the money to pay the tab. For all I knew it was his backdoor way of applying for a job (to work off the obligation he'd incurred). It didn't matter. I felt that the optics were simply awful if some level of confrontation were to have materialized, or the police would have been summoned. I had no interest in witnessing an incident where the only patron of color in the entire restaurant was confronted for whatever reason, not when it was well within my capacity to avoid that outcome, period. I didn't offer a "blank check"; he and I had ordered and consumed the same meal.



I have no idea who the man was or the specifics of his interactions with the wait-staff. Bad optics and a potentially charged situation were averted. I was "paying it forward." The day could certainly come when I will be the beneficiary of someone paying it forward, or not. No matter. It was not about potential repayment for a good deed; it was about *doing* a good deed. When it's done, it's done, and you walk away with an unmitigated good feeling (until another opportunity to pay it forward presents itself).

We can pay it forward in myriad ways, and I recommend it. Paying a stranger's restaurant tab is one way. There are others. You can do similarly; you can pay someone's tab at the grocery store; you can do snow removal for a neighbor; you can mow the neighbor's lawn; you can take party leftovers in individual bags and deliver them to people living in homeless camps around town (which I have also done); you can give a fast-food coupon to someone panhandling (which I do occasionally); you can give transportation to someone in need of a ride to the grocery store or the doctor's office. There are countless other opportunities if we're paying attention to our surroundings and those around us. Each such act of paying it forward contributes to the greater good and to a better world. It is done without judging the recipient for decisions made that contributed to their circumstances. It's no excuse to think they are able-bodied and can work, or that they shouldn't have dropped out of high school, or that they shouldn't have gotten pregnant, or that they should have sought counseling for their PTSD after serving in the military. Paying it forward is nonjudgmental.

I was the "winner" in the situation, believing as I do that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). It certainly felt that way. And the beauty of it was that I felt like a "winner" without anyone else being a "loser."

You too can experience that wonderful feeling. Doing good for others without expectation of recompense is something tangible that each of us can do, without being asked and without obligation. I would recommend that you pay it forward for a better world.



August Speaker

amBi

Ian Lawrence-Tourinho



Ian Lawrence-Tourinho is the Director of The Bi Foundation and founder of the amBi network, a growing, international collaborative of socially-focused bi communities. What is amBi? amBi is a social club with a mission. Their website states, "We are here to build a world in which our bisexuality is a clear source of pride, joy, and strength. amBi is a community for bi people, our partners, and allies. Anyone who is bi-friendly is welcome to join, regardless of sexual orientation. Our organizers host a variety of fun events, meet-ups, and other activities. With chapters in several cities, amBi is the largest bi club in the world."

As an activist, he is particularly interested in the role positive, affirming support networks can serve as a health and human rights intervention for bi people. In 2013, Ian created bi.org which has grown to become the largest online resource about bisexuality in the world.

Water Quality Woes: Is Help on the Way?

by Ryan Crane, FFBC Vice President

If you are anything like me, the headlines running the last few weeks have gotten your attention. Dry summer months, runoff and waste from Big Ag, and even drilling for new water supplies are enough to concern environmentalists and everyday citizens alike. Coupled with headlines about extreme droughts to our west, you might wonder about our future.



There is hope! A bond referendum will be on the ballot this fall -- yes, there are local elections. Mark your calendar for **November 2**. The bond will protect drinking water sources; protect the water quality of rivers, lakes, and streams; protect the water quality of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers and their tributaries; and help prevent flooding. It will also improve public access and safety to the Raccoon and Des Moines River and other creeks in Polk County for floating, boating, and fishing.

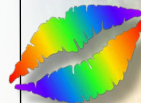
Keep an eye out for billboards, information in the *Des Moines Register*, and your mailbox to learn more! Or, reach out to your friendly conservation-minded vice president...Ryan Crane!



"Being gay is
like glitter.

It never goes
away."

(LADY GAGA)



Bridging Generations

by Gary Moore

This first Friday of July, FFBC again was fortunate to have a talented speaker, **Kevin Newbury**. Kevin Newbury is a theater, opera, and film director based in New York City but was coming to FFBC via Zoom from Cincinnati where he was working with local artists on a new opera.

Kevin has directed over 70 original productions, and his work has been presented by many opera companies, festivals, theaters, and orchestras, including the Park Avenue Armory, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, BAM's Next Wave Festival, Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, American Repertory Theatre, and many more.

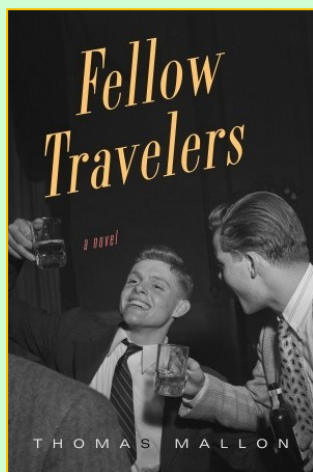
Kevin is especially committed to developing and directing new work. At 43 years of age, Kevin sees himself as a bridge between generations, a generation that lived and fought many of the battles for LGBTQ rights and a younger generation that did not live through the Lavender Scare, Stonewall, or the HIV epidemic. All have stories that are too often lost in our history.

After extensive research into the **Lavender Scare** and this neglected period in American history, he developed a new opera, **Fellow Travelers** based on that learning and around Thomas Mallon's book of the same name. Kevin spoke to the First Friday Breakfast Club about turning this powerful, tragic, and ultimately beautiful chapter in Queer history, and turning it into an award-winning work of art for all to learn from and enjoy.

The opera is set during the McCarthy era of the 1950s and focuses on the **Lavender Scare**, a witch hunt and mass firings of gay people from the United States government. It is estimated that three to four thousand lost jobs, families, and some, their lives. The story centers on the love affair between two men working for the federal government: Hawkins "Hawk" Fuller, a State Department official, and Timothy Laughlin, a recent college graduate working in a senator's office. As Kevin said, the piece is more a love story showing intimacy and how it is influenced by those lurking in the shadows.

The show demonstrates the feeling that, anytime, somebody can come in and take your world away, a feeling so many in the LGBTQ+ world so readily understand but perhaps the broader population does not fully comprehend. It is this sense of shared trauma that can and should bring the community together. **Fellow Travelers** is being performed July 17 in Des Moines' own Hoyt Sherman Place by the Des Moines Metro Opera.

After a brief interaction with members, Kevin then had the opportunity to hear brief bios with stories of the nine FFBC Scholars who were being recognized and honored with **\$4,500** scholarships from the First Friday Breakfast Club. It was indeed a special day.



July Speaker

July Speaker:

Kevin Newbury



July Speaker
Introduced by

Michael Egel

First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarships

At the FFBC meeting on July 2, 2021, people gathered online via Zoom to celebrate this year's group of Iowa high school seniors who have distinguished themselves with efforts to reduce homophobia and educate about LGBTQ issues in their schools and communities. Quite apart from their distinguished academic records, each of these nine, remarkable young people undertook courageous efforts to advance the cause of civil equality for all people.

Each scholar will receive a scholarship of **\$4,500**, 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 26 years who have gone on to further distinguish themselves in myriad ways. Thus far, more than **\$450,000** has been awarded, thanks to the generosity of FFBC members and LGBTQ+ allies. In 2020-21, a record-setting **\$50,000** was raised during our pandemic year of Covid-19 restricted activities. 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.

This year we honored: **Moir Blue**, **Allissa Cox**, **Leah Kaminsky**, **Keon Kruse**, **Maverick Meimann**, **Emmaline Mitchell**, **Greyson Pullen**, **Michael Rosenberg**, and **Lennon Schriever**. As you can see from their brief backgrounds on the following pages, their collective efforts have reached all across the state of Iowa.

Bigotry is merely prideful ignorance. Being ignorant and clinging to ignorance are choices, and education attacks ignorance, thereby attacking bigotry at its source. These outstanding students (and their wonderfully supportive families) are educating the ignorant. Thanks go to these students and those who have gone before them. The progress that has been made has not been by accident; it's been because of courageous, enlightened, principled advocacy. Further progress is not assured; it depends on continued efforts because more ignorant people are being born everyday who will inevitably be drawn into prideful ignorance about LGBTQ+ people by parents who have not yet been enlightened.

Inspiration and recommitment to the cause of civil equality can be taken from these scholars and their families. Consider making a contribution to the scholarship program -- our fundraising goes on year round. You can contribute conveniently on the FFBC website: www.ffbc-iowa.org. To those who have given and those who are willing to do so, thank you.

2020-2021 Scholarship Committee

Randy Swarts
(Chair)

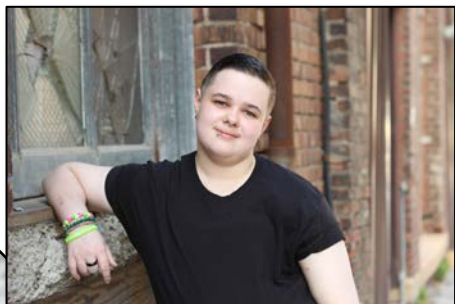
Brett Burk
Ryan Crane
Ken Hanson
Byron Huff
Rick Miller
Tim Scheck
David Wilfahrt
Phil Williams



2021 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

Moira Buie

Fort Dodge High School



Moira Buie is a graduate of Fort Dodge Senior High School, with plans to continue her education at Iowa State University. Reading Moira's application reminded us how meaningful acts of empathy and compassion can be in a person's life, and in the lives of others. Moira is a strong advocate, and even before fully understanding her identity as non-binary and queer, Moira was the person other queer friends would turn to. Moira is an activist and was inspired to take a lead in expanding on and strengthening the GSA at Fort Dodge High School. Even though Moira only moved to the town of Fort Dodge at the beginning of her junior year, she soon realized that she was the person who had to lead the GSA, implement structure, and create a much more safe and welcoming space, for all the students. Through writing and artistic outreach, Moira intends to continue to fight for all members of the queer community, and to expose apathy if we ever think "we've done enough." Congratulations, Moira!

Allissa Cox

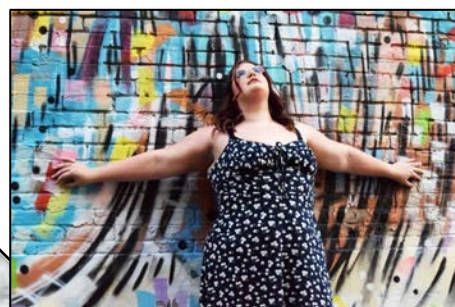
Louisa-Muscatine High School



Allissa Cox came out in seventh grade as bisexual in what could have been a classic *Mean Girls* event. But Allissa was direct and true to herself, and has been ever since. Allissa's high school does not have a GSA or "safe" space, so Allissa created one. We did not get the full story of how it happened, but Allissa had a room to herself at the school. Initially it was meant to be a space where she could take some breaths and keep marching through the day - then other kids started showing up. While not an official GSA, this is the room where all are welcome, and all are accepted. Allissa is a leader and achiever. What also impressed us were her two letters of recommendation coming from varsity coaches for basketball and softball, who think the world of her, and wish she could stay forever with their teams because she is a natural leader, true to herself and caring of others. We see all good things in the future for Allissa as she attends the University of Iowa with plans to become an attorney. Congratulations, Allissa!

Leah Kaminsky

Mt. Vernon High School



Leah began her application essays with the simple statement "Everyone is born different." The question is, why do those differences take on so much negative meaning as we grow older? This question, and personal experiences, drive Leah's passion to eliminate all injustices and inequities. Leah shared, "People deserve equality and justice, and it is something I will never stop being passionate about." As a freshman at Mt. Vernon High School, Leah joined the newly formed social justice student board, knowing that there needed to be someone focused on LGBTQ+ community issues. She was concerned with making her school a more inclusive and safer environment for every student. Leah is a big, beautiful bisexual, and she also made it her mission to point out how her school's dress code was biased against girls, especially bigger girls. We had to acknowledge Leah for bringing her voice, figuratively and literally, to her advocacy. Leah is a multi-talented musician who will be attending the Berklee School of Music. Well done, Leah!

2021 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

Keon Kruse

Options Academy, Des Moines



Keon Kruse has experienced some of the worst elements of homophobia and transphobia. Before their sophomore year, Keon was working through the stages of transitioning and decided he would become the first openly transgender student at his suburban high school. While he had open support from a couple teachers, and some accommodation from the administration, the student body response was very different. It started with name-calling and teasing, but eventually escalated to physical taunting, threats and terror, simply for wanting to use a restroom. But Keon is a survivor, and, through a family friend, transferred to Options Academy in Des Moines. Keon found a space to be himself, and flourished. In 2019, Keon presented a Trans 101 talk at First Unitarian Church, and later helped to organize a Trans Lives Fest at the church, bringing in trans individuals from across the state for a day of sharing. Keon's application essays provided examples of how simply being oneself can change minds and attitudes, in a group setting, or one-on-one.

Maverick Meimann

Boone High School



Maverick is intelligent, focused, and filled with empathy. And he is a trans man. Maverick told his family he was trans in 2017 and was fortunate to receive acceptance and many questions. This helped Maverick to understand his need to be an educator, by joining and eventually leading the GSA group in Boone. A focus for their GSA is safety, which is important in a conservative town. Maverick joined the Iowa Safe Schools Student Leadership Council, helping to better define safe and rewarding student events across the state. He also was a featured speaker at the 2019 Trans Summit. In selecting Maverick, we saw someone who was very fortunate to have a supportive coming-out experience with most family, but who also understood that so many young people do not have that experience. Maverick knows that being visible and using his voice is the best way to create acceptance for all members of the queer community. We hope you have an amazing college experience at the University of Iowa. Congratulations, Maverick!

Emmaline Mitchell

East Union High School



Emmaline came out as gay in eighth grade in a small SW Iowa town and immediately felt the scorn of her community. Family members rejected her and fellow students called her names and physically attacked her; it got to the point that Emmaline did not know if she wanted to live. But as with all of our scholarship recipients, Emmaline rose above, which can be hard in a senior class of 41 students. Emmaline knew she could not be the only queer person at her school, so she created a GSA. And students came, for the simple opportunity of identifying others like themselves, and having a community. Emmaline became vice-president of the Iowa Safe Schools Student Leadership Council. One of Emmaline's letters of recommendation called her "a beacon of safety" for other students, many of whom identified Emmaline as the person who showed them it was okay to come out and be who they really are. Emmaline will attend Kirkwood Community College with plans to be a professional journalist. We look forward to your future stories, Emmaline!

2021 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

Greyson Pullen

East Sac County High School



Greyson is the first transgender student to attend and graduate from East Sac High School, with a senior class of 55 students. Greyson's story is one of tenacity and determination. He came out as transgender early and spent four years of high school facing challenges on every front. In his junior year, Greyson proposed starting a GSA but was denied that opportunity by administration forces. His senior year was spent in a learning environment outside the school building, where he continued to build awareness in his community that LGBTQ+ kids are everywhere, having conversations with several others in the school. Thanks to Greyson's supportive family, he is here to tell his story. His efforts have resulted in some teachers and counselors starting to understand the need for a safe space at East Sac High School, and we have to believe that comes from knowing and seeing Greyson for who he truly is. Greyson plans to attend Nossi College of Art in Tennessee, with hopes to become a professional photographer. Congratulations, Greyson!

Michael Rosenberg

Hampton-Dumont High School



Michael Rosenberg's story is another twist on a theme this year. Once again, we have a student from a small graduating class of 87 students. Michael has been openly gay for quite a while, and he lived his life openly while competing in cross country for four years, participating in music and speech performance, and being very politically active. In his junior year, Michael led the efforts to start a GSA group at Hampton-Dumont High School and had the group up and running well until the Covid outbreak restricted the opportunities to meet with others. What makes Michael special in the 2021 scholarship class is that he is also Jewish, which could be yet another outlier for a kid living in a small Iowa town. And so, this scholarship goes to Michael for living his life fully. We also want to acknowledge his community for working to be more open to diversity and acceptance of kids for who they are. Michael will be attending the University of Iowa in the fall with future plans to teach English. Congratulations, Michael!

Lennon Schriever

Ogden High School



Lennon Schriever described the things he has done to fight homophobia as "simple acts," but what a difference they have made! Lennon grew up in a very conservative household regarding the LGBTQ community, and so he waited until his junior/senior years to fully come out as gay. Since then, he has created awareness and acceptance by using his speech and musical talents. Lennon organized students to perform pieces in speech competition from *The Prom*, a musical centered around two girls who want to attend prom, together, on a date. For his solo speech work, he chose selections from *Falsettos*, a musical about gay men and love in the height of the AIDS crisis. Lennon is a leader, having been class president, a member of the student council, and an athlete. Since coming out, he has become a touchpoint for other kids with questions about their sexuality or coming-out process. Lennon attend Wartburg College to pursue his music passions, and we look forward to hearing sweet sounds from him in the years to come. All the best, Lennon!



FFBC Scholarship Photo Gallery



Scholarship Committee Chair
& Awards Presenter:

Randy Swarts



Michael Rosenberg



Emmaline Mitchell



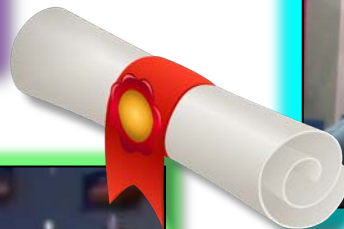
Greyson Pullen



Keon Kruse



Maverick Meimann



Moira Buie



Lennon Schriever



Leah Kaminsky



Allissa Cox

Congratulations!

Get Ready for Gala!

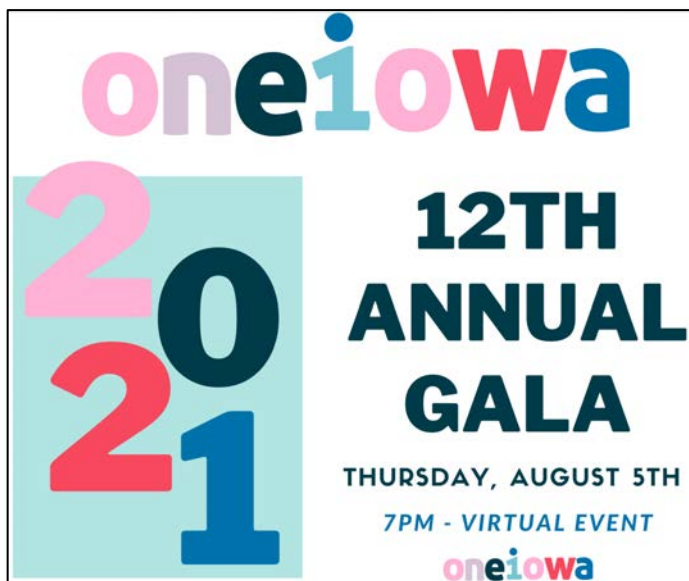
by Maddie Rocha Smith

I'm so excited for the [One Iowa Virtual Gala](#) on **Thursday, August 5!** This year will be a fantastic celebration of our history and the work that is being done to improve the lives of LGBTQ Iowans. The Gala is a great time for us to come together and celebrate all we have accomplished together. So far this year, we are on track to train more than 2,000 Iowans on LGBTQ best practices, we are kicking off the fourth year of the LGBTQ Leadership Institute, we helped stop 15 anti-LGBTQ bills from passing the Iowa Legislature, and are fighting for LGBTQ Iowans year-round.

This year we are encouraging folks to host watch parties with their friends, family, or just themselves! Those who make an upfront watch party donation from \$25-\$1,500 will get a DSM mini pride flag and stickers, custom print by a local artist, and stickers and One Iowa swag in the mail! We'll send party boxes to those who make an upfront donation of \$1,500 with Almost Famous Rainbow Summer Lovin' Popcorn, a tote bag from Side Garage, more One Iowa swag (koozies, stickers, custom prints, and DSM pride flag and stickers, and more! **Plus if you register a watch party at any level before July 22 - you'll be entered to win TWO VIP Hinterland tickets!**



You can learn more and register your watch party under the "tickets & sponsorships" tab of our website. Even if you don't host a watch party, and want the swag bag or the chance to win the Hinterland tickets, we'll send the goodies either way with that upfront donation! We've also got a raffle with over \$1,000 in prizes from Des Moines local businesses you can enter on our website at oneiowa.org/galaraffle2021. You can find tickets and all gala info on our registration page!



**Mark
Your
Calendar!**

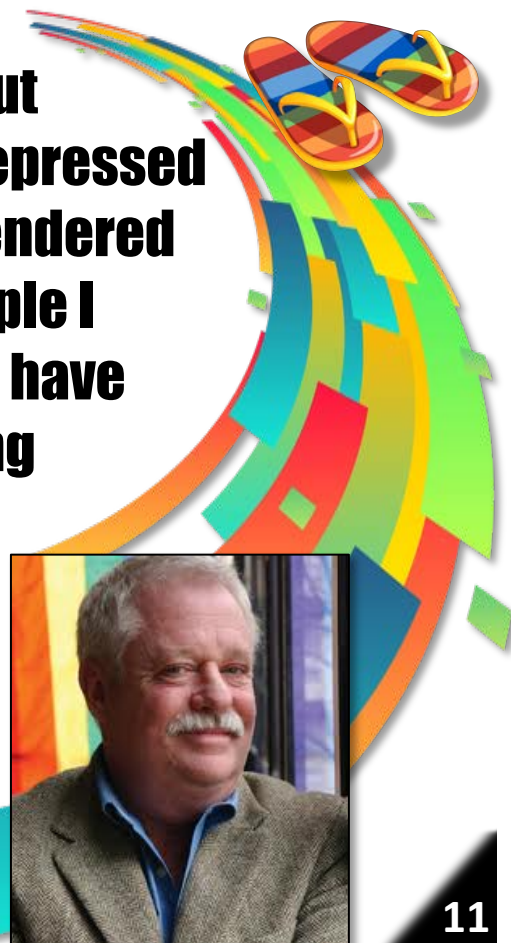
**FFBC
Future
Speaker
Announced**



September 3
**Edith
Crawford**
Alzheimer's
Association of Iowa

"My only regret about being gay is that I repressed it for so long. I surrendered my youth to the people I feared when I could have been out there loving someone. Don't make that mistake yourself. Life's too damn short."

**Armistead
Maupin**



Hope for Ending Homelessness in Polk County

by Supervisor Matt McCoy
Polk County, 5th District



If you have driven through the city of Des Moines, you undoubtedly have witnessed individuals working on the corners, holding signs and panhandling for money. If you look deeper, you might notice campsites and tents adjoining recreational trails or under bridges in your neighborhoods. On any given night, approximately 200 individuals are experiencing homelessness in our community. Many receive assistance through traditional shelters like Central Iowa Shelter and Services, Door of Faith, or Hope Ministries. Many families that experienced homelessness during the pandemic were immediately moved into housing through Polk County General Services, who stepped up to ensure that no family living in Polk County should live without a roof over their head. Most are homeless for a short period of time. Many have experienced a traumatic life altering event or hardship like loss of employment, loss of a spouse, or mental or substance abuse issues. Addressing the issue involves case management, substance abuse treatment, mental health care, compassionate services to assist individuals with employment and/or disability payments to get their lives back on track. Often these individuals will need deposits and willing landlords to accept housing vouchers in order to provide permanent housing assistance.

Polk County is exploring two programs that are modeled after a Housing Now Initiative that dates back to the Obama Administration. On average, a chronically homeless individual costs taxpayers approximately \$40,000 annually in taxpayer subsidies care which includes emergency room visits, time spent in jail, and shelter services, to name a few. Most of these costs are avoidable through housing them immediately. Two programs operating independently have stepped forward with solutions and are seeking investment at the county level.



The first is JOPPA which is a mission-based initiative to end homelessness. One program that would offer immediate housing would be their tiny housing initiative which is being proposed on the southwest edge of the county off Fleur Drive near County Line Road. This proposal includes a twenty-six tiny home community that's all inclusive to provide housing, case management, and job counseling. These cottages are hooked up to water and electricity and use solar resources to power them. The layout includes a pavilion and extensive landscaping with a community garden to make the community like a neighborhood. This project will be well managed and work to assure community integration and long-term sustainability. The capital campaign for this project will be more than three million dollars, and I would like to see Polk County invest up to one million dollars in building this village. The investment funds would be coming from Polk County's allocation of dollars received under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The next initiative that is moving forward with the city of Des Moines and Anawim Housing involves conversion of the Days Inn on Merle Hay Road into studio apartments for individuals experiencing homeless. This would be another Housing Now Initiative that could be short or long-term housing with case management and job counseling. Like JOPPA, Anawim is a true and tested organization with a solid mission and a history of delivering quality services to vulnerable residents. While this project is estimated to cost up to \$4.5 million for this conversion, it is already receiving positive support from the city and county. I propose Polk County invests one million dollars from the ARPA funds.

While there are no silver bullets to end homelessness, we know that Housing Now programs work and assist with individuals that are oftentimes going through the worst time of their life. Polk County government has the resources and should be a leader in doing all that we can to end homelessness now. If you're interested in helping, either through volunteering or donating, please reach out to JOPPA or Anawim and offer your assistance.



A League of Their Own

A Retro Movie Review by Mark Turnage

With summer in full swing, I wanted to visit a film with a fun twist on America's favorite pastime: Penny Marshall's 1992 film *A League of Their Own*. Its spotlight on nontraditional gender roles during wartime flipped the script on traditional sports movies, combining a sentimental and campy approach to drama on and off the field. But what's most telling about a sports film directed by a woman, starring women, and about women are its narrative choices that decentralize men and the male gaze as focal points.

The first and most obvious choice is its setting: with male baseball players being drafted into World War II, Major League Baseball bankrolls a women's league and begins scouting for players. Their scout is Ernie, a fast-talking Jon Lovitz who spits some savagely chauvinistic barbs—but also memorably introduces the period's attitudes towards women's shifting gender roles. We meet Dottie Hinson (a bombshell Geena Davis) and her sister Kit (Lori Petty); Kit's got the ambition, but Dottie has the talent and wants to stay home. "There's nothing here for me," Kit says to her in frustration referring to her rural dairy farm home, and it's not the first time we hear that theme in Act 1. Marla Hooch, a homely but powerful switch hitter, is told this by her father after Dottie and Kit barely convince Ernie to add her to the team (her looks being Ernie's argument against). Washed up baseball player Jimmie Dugan (Tom Hanks in arguably his most cringy role) is told this by his boss in so many words after botching a business deal, and as punishment, must coach the newly-formed Rockford Peaches. Yes, the "something" they all find elsewhere is baseball, but Marshall captures the budding camaraderie and love of the sport that ultimately serve as their characters' catalysts. It might be sentimental, but it's also fun to watch.

When the teams' rosters are divided up, Mae (Madonna, playing herself but entertaining as ever) and Doris (Rosie O'Donnell, whose physical comedy is on point), mock the uniforms—they're a revealing dress, and they can't slide in them. Aside from Ernie's heckling of Marla, the overall film is very body positive towards women, and the one sexualized role (Mae, of course) makes her male paramours utterly forgettable or comedy props. You could argue that the wartime background forces male characters back into the spotlight in the film's third act, but they really symbolize a choice between familiarity and conformity or a new way to express themselves through sport.

League could be accused of being too montage-y for a sports film—one scene that's blink-and-you-miss it is a foul ball landing by a group of well-dressed (but very segregated) Black women, one of whom picks up the ball and powerfully throws it back at Geena Davis. It's a nod towards overcoming institutionalized racism; it's visible and the problem is being addressed, but it isn't explored further. To be fair, in a historical film, there's lots of outfield to cover, and Marshall does address issues of illiteracy, body image, women's bodily autonomy and poverty in these seventh-inning stretches.

Thankfully, what the film doesn't do is force a romance between its leads. These women aren't proving anything other than they belong as athletes, as encapsulated by Doris's line during a late-night bus ride that may resonate with queer folks of today: "All the other boys made me feel some way of wrong, like I was some sorta weird girl or strange girl or not even a girl just 'cause I could play. I believed them too, but not anymore, you know? I think we're all all right."

A League of Their Own also had extremely tough blockbuster competition the week of its release: Tim Burton's *Batman Returns* and Clint Eastwood's western smash *Unforgiven* that same year. *Unforgiven* would go on to sweep the Best Picture, Best Director (Clint Eastwood), Best Supporting Actor (Gene Hackman), and Best Film Editing categories. In my research for this review, many other critics panned *League* to gush over *Unforgiven*. *A League of Their Own* didn't have an easy storytelling job, but like Jimmy Dugan says, "The hard is what makes it great."



Board of Directors

David Cotton	Gary Moore
Ryan Crane	Wade Petersen
Ken Hanson	Joe Raetz
Brad Holland	Randy Swarts
Byron Huff	David Wilfahrt
Scott Kuknyo	Phil Williams

Jonathan Wilson (Emeritus)

Contact Us At: info@ffbcwiowa.org

Officers

Byron Huff

President

Ryan Crane

Vice President

Joe Raetz

Secretary

David Wilfahrt

Treasurer



Newsletter Editor



Wade
Petersen

Webmaster

David
Cotton



Publication



©2021

**FFBC Board
of Directors**

First Friday Breakfast Club
P.O. Box 41611
Des Moines, IA 50311

Silenced Girls and The Winter Girls

by Roger Stelljes

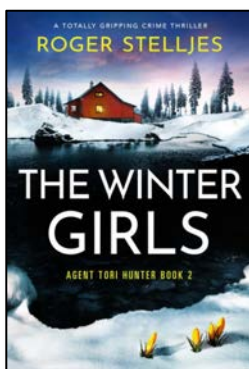
**A Book
Review by
Steve Person**



In *Silenced Girls*, FBI Agent Tori Hunter returns to her hometown twenty years after leaving. Manchester Bay, Minnesota, is the fictional town where Tori and her twin sister, Jessie, grew up. Jessie celebrated July 4 with Tori and friends, but after the fireworks display ended, the sisters took different cars to drive friends to their various homes. Jessie's abandoned car was found, but Jessie was nowhere to be seen. Abducted. What prompted Tori to return was a similar scenario that brought back painful memories of the sister who never came home: an abandoned car, young female driver, dark and lonely highway in the countryside. But why would a kidnapper wait twenty years to reenact a similar crime on Independence Day? Or was it the same abductor? The questions mount up.

While working to solve the new case and perhaps discover what happened to her sister, Tori, a special agent who deals with missing children, gets reassigned to Des Moines to try to locate a missing child. Stelljes certainly did his homework in his descriptions of locations in the Greater Des Moines area. Likewise, his knowledge of the actual towns and lakes in and around Manchester Bay makes this book extremely readable for anyone familiar with these settings.

Needless to say, complications arise, a romance develops for Tori, and possible suspects lead to evermore suspicions as to who the abductor is. When he is eventually identified, the exciting and bloody climax keep the reader transfixed. This is a well-written thriller.



The Winter Girls is also set mainly in Minnesota and is an equally page-turning mystery. By this time, Tori has resigned her job with the FBI and returned to Manchester Bay to live and teach criminology part time at the local community college. Her budding romance from the previous book now turns into the real thing, and the disappearance of the daughter of a very wealthy resident brings both Tori and her Manchester Bay policeman/boyfriend to investigate the abduction and the murder of the girl's mother.

Eventually, after tracking down numerous leads, the plot reveals the existence of a sex trafficking ring in rural Duluth. The title of the book sets the scene of the harsh winter conditions that Tori and the state police, as well as the Manchester Bay police, must deal with in trying to solve this case. The story ranges from the illegal adoption of Russian babies in St. Petersburg to the kidnapping of young women in Seoul, South Korea, and other far off ports of call.

One brave young woman becomes the catalyst the authorities need in capturing those involved in these heinous crimes. The fear and dread these young women are forced to endure by their captors are perfectly related by this talented author. You won't be disappointed by either of these thrilling books.