



First Friday News & Views

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



November 2021

Volume 26

Issue 11

Next Meeting

November 5

7:00 a.m.



Meeting Location

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



November Speaker

**Steve
Karlin**



FFBC Website

ffbciaowa.org



Growing Up & Coming Out

by Byron Huff, Board President

My journey to coming out did not happen until I was 30 years old. I was born with severe allergies and asthma which was fortunately diagnosed when I was only a couple years old. Living on a farm was not an ideal environment for someone who is allergic to dust, mold, ragweed, and most everything else in nature. I was born in December of 1960 so there were not many medications that could help me cope with asthma attacks, red itchy eyes, and constant nasal congestion. I went through painful allergy testing at about age two where they injected allergens onto my back with labels to measure if the areas swelled up and by how much. This led to years of allergy shots every week which started with my mother driving me the 100-mile roundtrip to a downtown Des Moines high rise where a doctor would poke me with very large syringes. Allergy desensitization was a very new medical development and there were no small needles we see today.

In school I was not allowed to go outside for recess like everyone else until later years when new drugs were developed that helped treat my allergies that could trigger an asthma attack. As all of us know all too well, anyone who is different for any reason draws harassment (bullying) from other students. In later years as I was allowed to go outside, I could still not participate in many activities, and the lack of exercise meant I was a skinny kid with little muscle development. Prior to being old enough to drive myself to school, I would ride a school bus on the very long ride from Winterset to my home over 10 miles away. The harassment in school carried over to the school bus. I would always try to sit near the driver in hopes this would prevent some of the abuse.

In school I remember hating to go to the bathroom because it was a prime place to be verbally and physically harassed if I encountered one of several perpetrators. While I don't recall being called "gay," I do remember being called lots of names, including "sissy." There was physical abuse, like being pushed and having books knocked out of my hands, but the verbal abuse leaves you scarred mentally. One day in high school, I drove my sister to school and dropped her off. I then proceeded to drive to Des Moines where I took a large dose of sleeping pills; I drove to a hospital and passed out in the bathroom. I know that I really did not want to die, but I was dealing with the mental strain of being a gay teen who did not know that he was gay (I did not know "gay" even existed) and being bullied for being different.



[continued on page 2]

Going to college meant a new freedom: getting me out of the small town and the people that made my life miserable. While college life was not free from bullying, it was significantly less, particularly when I got an apartment off campus. This allowed me to make friends of whom nearly all turned out to be gay. I had a girlfriend early on in college, and I kept a relationship with her for about four years during which I proposed. We broke up because she was pressing me to get married, and I did not want a commitment while I was still in college; at least that was the reason I remember, although I think I was learning about sexuality and the possibility I was bisexual.

I graduated from Simpson College in 1983. I recall not being particularly active in dating anyone until closer to 1990 when I came to the conclusion that I was gay. I had also just relocated from Cedar Falls to Cedar Rapids, but I drove to Des Moines almost every weekend where my group of friends lived. I quickly told all of my friends who, as I mentioned earlier, were mostly gay. It took longer for me to get the courage to tell my only sibling or my parents; I only told my sister because she was coming to visit me in Cedar Rapids, and I had a boyfriend who was living with me at the time. She took it matter of factly as if it was no big deal; it would take her a few years to tell me she was also gay.

I did not have much luck finding a partner while living in Cedar Rapids; there was a small gay bar I started going to. I had two relationships, each of which lasted less than six months. I was very happy that my company decided to move me to Des Moines in 1995 as part of the backroom consolidation, and I would be handling asset liability management for all of their banks with the goal of merging them.

I met Jim at the Blazing Saddle in May 1995, and our first date was Memorial Day weekend. I had a new home in West Des Moines, and Jim had a condo in Ankeny. We hit it off right away, and Jim basically lived with me, only going home to take care of things at his condo. My parents had access to my home via the garage keypad; they had helped me set up things in my new home. One day Mom and Dad stopped by unexpectedly when I was not home, but there were flowers on the counter with a note to Jim; this was my coming out to my parents.

I hope my stories will bring back memories of coming out for you; I hope that these memories are happy ones.



Thanks to **Scott Klinefelter** for introducing **Jeff Rufus Byrd**, our October 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 **deadline** for the **December newsletter** will be **November 22**. If you have something on your mind to share, type it up and email it to Wade (wadecpetersen@gmail.com) by the copy deadline.

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 questions.





Our Predictable Predicament

by Jonathan Wilson

There has been an undeniable increase in the number of those who subscribe to the principle of supposed “white supremacy.” It’s understandable and predictable for two reasons. Human nature and fear.

First, as a matter of human nature, the cheap way to feel better about yourself is to find others who you can consider yourself to be “better than” right out of the chute. You can feel better without lifting a finger or actually doing anything to improve yourself or to make you better than you were. Easy peasy. You don’t have to pursue more education, or study to improve your grades, or get more exercise, or improve your diet, or stop smoking, or stop drinking, or improve your interpersonal skills. As a person who is white (Caucasian), you have that in common with some others by accident of birth, making the obvious target, for your need to feel better about yourself, people of color who are thus, also, by accident of birth. The history of slavery and other racial oppression toward people of color exacerbates the inclination to target them as “lesser.”

Second, fear. America is browning. According to the 2020 Census, the *only* reason that the U.S. population increased since the 2010 Census was thanks to people of color.

Interracial marriage was legalized nationwide in 1967 by the U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark case of *Loving v. Virginia*. Thanks to 33 states that had already legalized such marriages, 3% of marriages in the U.S. were mixed race. By 2021, 10% of all U.S. marriages were mixed race. That translates into more than 11,000,000 interracial marriages. If we assume, reasonably, 2.5 children per marriage, we’re talking about more than 27,500,000 people, all of whom will be mixed race and, no matter who they marry, it will again be a mixed-race marriage, as will also their offspring, mixed race. And, whomever they marry, mixed-race. You get the point -- it’s simple arithmetic.



It doesn’t take a mathematician, a genius, or a statistician to understand what’s happening. It’s almost intuitive and visceral. America is obviously browning. And that’s where the fear comes in. No matter how “great” we make America again, we will never go back to a majority “white” population. That ship has sailed.

Interestingly, 28% of Republicans are ok with interracial marriage, and 72% are uncomfortable with it. By contrast, 49% of Democrats are perfectly ok with it. That 21% difference, coincidentally, may provide insight into the toxic political divide that afflicts our nation and our unfolding politics.

Those who want to feel superior to people of color -- without actually articulating it -- fear that future. They are -- without any need to articulate it -- wondering whether that brown majority will treat them and their progeny, the way that they and their ancestors treated people of color. Human nature being what it is, it’s actually not an unreasonable fear. It is what it is. In the longer term, no amount of voter suppression or gerrymandering can stop the rising “brown” tide. I may not live quite long enough to see it, but it is going to happen, and I will die comforted by the knowledge that it will come to pass.

There’s no changing it; we’re on an irreversible trajectory to a majority in this nation of people of color. Perhaps it’s a clarion call to those aspiring “white supremacists” among us of today to abandon that self-serving fantasy, learn about people who are simply different from them -- not inferior -- and embrace the change. It’s called reality.

“Thanksgiving isn’t just a day. It’s a way we can live our lives every day.”

(Katrina Mayer)





November Speaker Steve Karlin



November's speaker is a guy who's worked as a news anchor and reporter at KCCI-TV for 32 years. If you watch, you see him every weekday at 5, 6, and 10 o'clock. He says he's very fortunate to have had a long and successful career and to have worked with such great people at a fine organization. In short, he knows how lucky he is.

What Steve is really proud of is his family. Somehow his wonderful wife Lynn has allowed him to hang around for 27 years. Together they have raised two smart and beautiful daughters, who care deeply about other people, and who are dedicated to make the world a better place.

In an effort to make the world a better place himself, Steve publicly revealed his lifelong struggle with depression about three years ago. Ever since he's been doing speaking events to raise awareness and to help others with mental health challenges.

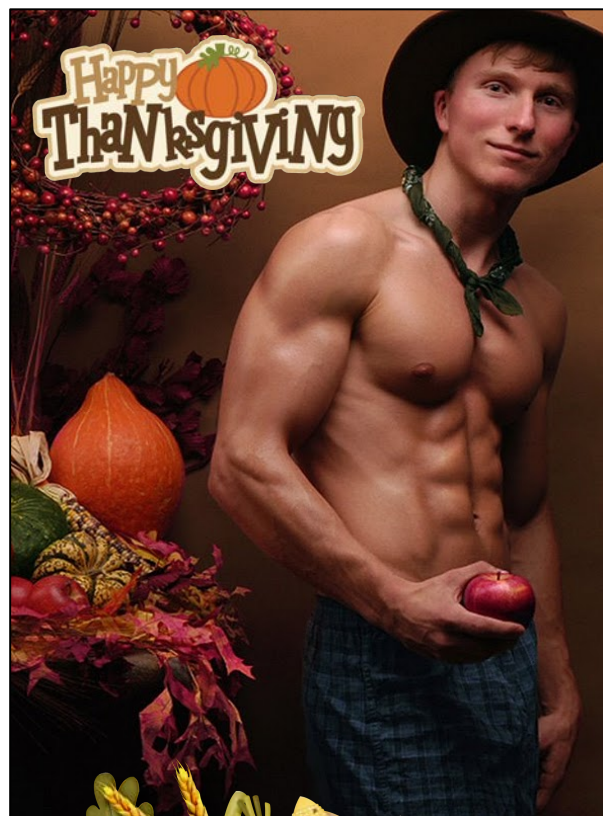


November In-Person Meeting Guidelines

We strongly recommend that members or guests who decide to attend in person should be vaccinated for the safety of all. Board member Gary Moore stated it best, "Individual choices have community consequences. In regard to our community, state, and country's Delta variant pandemic spread, we encourage all who attend to have had their Covid vaccinations and wear their masks as appropriate during our meetings."

We also will require that all participants wear a mask when not eating. We will reduce the number of chairs at various tables to provide for some social distancing. Wearing a mask will also be required as you move through the food line (we will work to distance members while in line). If any member goes through the food line a second time, we ask that a clean plate is used.

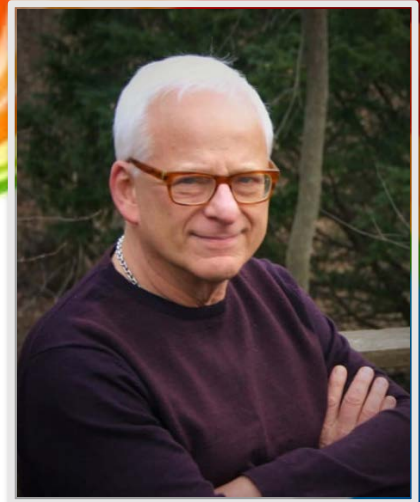
This procedure is not just for the safety of our members, but out of respect for the safety of our speaker and food providers.



Feature Article

Wake Up and Smell the Coffee

by John Schmacker



I have a history of bronchial infections that goes back about ten years now. They always start out the same: a sore throat that develops into all the classic symptoms of a cold. These symptoms include deep dry coughs, sinus congestion, and torrents of sinus drainage. Symptoms usually last about two weeks, during which not much gets done in my life. None of this is pretty, so I will not press on.

When the sore throat started a few weeks ago, I assumed I was in for another bout of the same crap. Get more sleep, drink more water, take your vitamin supplements: it's all going to be okay.

But then something new happened. All those symptoms subsided, but I still felt like hell. Three days into this, I went to the doctor to be checked. The nasal swab confirmed that I had become infected with Covid-19; it was a breakthrough infection, one week before I was due to get my Pfizer booster shot.

My morning ritual includes grinding the beans to brew the half liter of coffee that I drink every morning. A step in that ritual is to lean in to the grinder bin and smell the freshly-ground coffee before placing it in my coffee contraption. This is a life-affirming fragrance to caffeine addicts such as myself. It is assurance that it's going to be a good day. Then came the morning when the coffee had no fragrance. That's when I realized I had a problem. That's when I got tested.

It wasn't just that I couldn't smell the coffee: everything smelled the same. I tested this: the coffee, the garden out my back door, apple cider vinegar, chicken soup, the litter box. Everything smelled the same. It was a subtle, barely discernable background sort of smell. A stale and dusty, musty smell that was always there. A default, resting state of the olfactory nerve.

I had followed all the rules. Early in the pandemic, I had stayed isolated at home. I masked up going to the grocery store. I learned how to use Zoom. Tellingly, that fifteen months of social isolation were the healthiest of my recent history. Not a single bout of colds or any other malady.

Once I got both the Pfizer shots, I felt as invincible as a teenager at a drag race. I started going out in public without a mask. Within two weeks, I was down with a cold that lasted for a week. This was a reminder that Covid is just one of many viruses circulating out there, all of them seeking to take up residence in our bodies.

A few days after the diagnosis, I received the monoclonal antibody infusion. This was to spare me the worst of the symptoms and to speed up the recovery, and I believe it has helped. But still, I endured another week of awful stuff: no energy, no appetite, headache, the fatigue of someone who hadn't slept for a few days, even though sleeping was pretty much all I was doing. All of this while

blowing through a large quantity of Kleenex. One week after the infusion, I had started to feel something like a return to normal, but I still could not smell the coffee. Why was I grinding up these expensive, premium beans, when the cheapest swill would taste the same?

This was worse than any cold or flu I had endured, worse than two bouts with pneumonia. To paraphrase Dorothy Parker, this was not just bad, this was bad with raisins in it.

If you are not taking this virus seriously, if you think you can get by without the vaccinations, if you think you don't need to mask up in public, if you think you are somehow exempt from biology, wake up and smell the coffee. While you still can.



Between Reality and Fiction

by Gary Moore

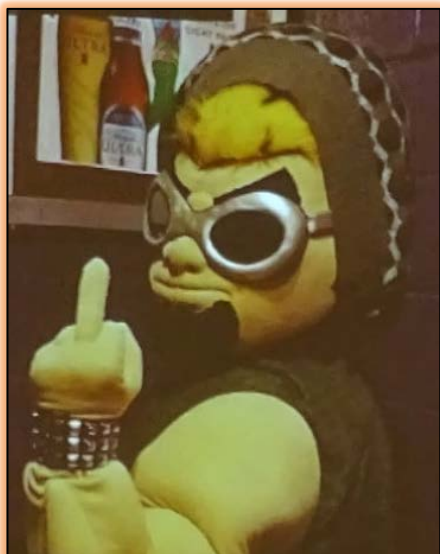
You had to be there. You should have been there.

On Friday, October 1, **Jeff Rufus Byrd**, a performance and video artist, shared his journey and insights with the First Friday Breakfast Club. After listening to Jeff for 40 minutes, one quickly realizes why he has been exhibited in major cities across the U.S. and in Canada, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Columbia, Mexico, Italy, China, Cuba, and the U.K.

His humor and insights explored the relationship between reality and fiction. He started out noting that he uses words such as "sissy," "queer," and other names that he is sure everyone in the room had experienced. He does so to take the sting out of them, a tool I am sure many minority group members use. It is a totally different experience from when they are thrown as a weapon.

Born in the Deep South in what sounded like the backwoods, Byrd was a first-generation college student at the University of Alabama. He noted the little town of Russellville was listed as the seventh worst place to live in Alabama, and he was a strange little boy. The only books in the house were the Bible and a set of ten-year-old, out-of-date *World Almanacs*. He spent his early years bored so he learned to entertain himself with art and a vivid imagination, pretending to be things other than himself. He noted, as he entered school, that he felt he was beaten with the fists of conformity. With the help of PBS (it made me gay) and Mary Tyler Moore, (if she could make it there) so could he.

Although his mother cried when she learned he planned to major in art, going to college introduced him to the broader world of artists and writers who helped him see the beauty in bodies that had been criminalized. Byrd was heavily influenced at the time by Duane Michals who manipulated the medium of photography to communicate narratives. Byrd went on to receive a graduate degree at the University of Florida.



Dex "Bro Drag"



October Speaker



October Speaker:
Jeff Rufus Byrd



Byrd became more fascinated with how we interpret gender on a daily basis. We may think of ourselves or have been conditioned to think of ourselves as sissies but yet, can present a successful masculine image. He studied how gender images have changed through the centuries, noting how malleable humans are, leading him to explore even more the concept of masculinity through influences of Dada and Neo-Dada expression. We all can be what we need to be in different situations. What is the reality? The idea that we can be butch when we need to be led him to exploring his masculinity through Dex his "Bro Drag," a foam-padded, muscular, suit that allowed Byrd to explore his masculinity in a new way. He was able to accomplish Bro tasks he never imagined. How we present, how we are seen, is that reality?

Byrd has taught at the University of Northern Iowa for the past 32 years. He was Head of the Department of Art for the past 15 years before returning to the classroom and studio in August.

About 30 FFBC members enjoyed Byrd's humor and expertise. A former student spoke up as the meeting came to a close to thank Professor Byrd for lessons learned that helped him live a happier and meaningful life. In the meantime, FFBC members experienced the brilliance of a studied, serious man, exploring his and our gender fluidness or lack thereof.



Future Speakers Announced

December 3

**Bishop
William Joensen**

January 7

Loren Olsen

February 4

Edward Kelly

March 4

Mark Babcock

April 1

David Miglin

June 3

Becky Smith

Project Passion

by Olivia Hucks, Outreach Coordinator



Project PASSION is a research project led by Dr. Dominic Parrott at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia. The project is funded by the National Institutes of Health. **Given the aims of First Friday Breakfast Club, I think you would be interested in learning about this project.**

We know that when people have healthy intimate relationships, their overall mental and physical health is good as well. Our primary goal is to conduct research that gives back to the LGBTQ+ community. Indeed, we hope that this information can be used to develop culturally-sensitive recommendations and programs to promote healthy intimate relationships for LGBTQ+ people.

Thus, in our project, we want to learn more about what can lead to healthy, and unhealthy, intimate relationships for LGBTQ+ people. Our project focuses on factors that lead to negative health outcomes as well as factors that promote resilience. **We are seeking participants for a study that is completed entirely online.**

The study may be a good fit for someone if:

- They and their partner are both 21 years or older
- They identify as LGBTQ+ and are in a relationship
- They currently drink alcohol (i.e., they are not in recovery)
- People of all genders and sexual orientations are welcome

What would happen if someone enrolls in the study? We invite all interested people to call or visit our webpage to learn more (see contact information below). Each partner will earn a minimum of \$40 for completing questionnaires and meeting with our research staff for a video call (2 hours). Each partner can also earn up to an additional \$145 for completing all online surveys (Study 2).

Our team is very excited about this project. We believe that it can provide much needed data that will ultimately help to promote healthier intimate relationships for LGBTQ+ people, which again is one of the most important predictors of a person's general physical and mental health.

We believe that First Friday Breakfast Club is likely connected with LGBTQ+ people who might be interested in this project. If so, we hope that you would be willing to promote our project by including information about our study in your organization's newsletter.

Contact Information:

To take part in either research study or for more information, please contact us at: (404) 413-6199.

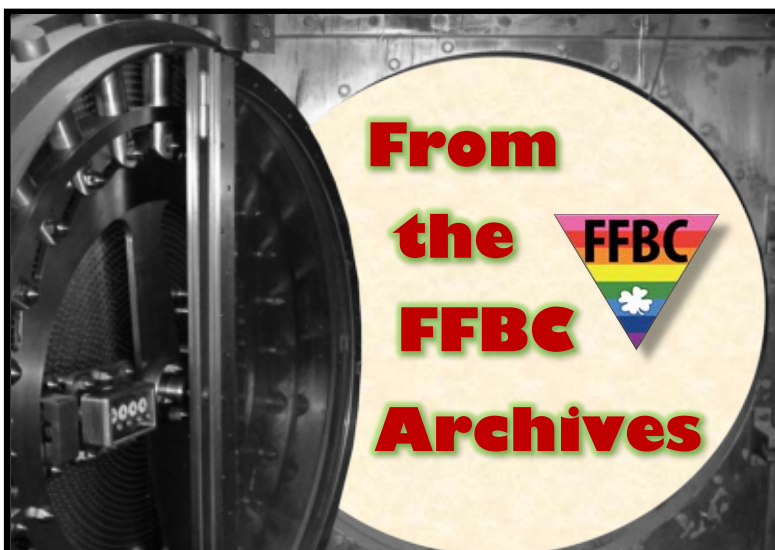
www.tinyurl.com/passionstudy1

Twitter: **@GsuPassion**

Facebook: **Passion.GSU**

Instagram: **PassionGSU**





5 Years Ago: November 2016

* In his article "A Word or Two on Undocumented Immigration," Jonathan examines the cause of tension between the U.S. and Mexican border. The perfect (but not likely) solution would be to remove the economic disparities. Jonathan then examines the use of statutes of limitation.

* Bruce Carr summarizes the October speaker, Jim Mowrer, who lost in a hard-fought battle to defeat Steve King in Iowa's Fourth District.

* A tribute to Larry Hoch (who passed away in late October) is written about this loving man who was one of the co-plaintiffs in the Varnum case on marriage equality.

* Bruce Sanders Lehnertz shares a personal history about Donald Trump ("Unfit is his best fit.").

10 Years Ago: November 2011

* Jonathan tackles the issue of Christians who believe the Bible is literally true. In his analysis, Jonathan poses seven questions, including, "If oral and anal sexual intimacy are verboten because, in our creation, God intended for form to follow function and function to follow form, then why do men have nipples?"

* Rebecca Gruber was the speaker in October of 2011, and Bruce Carr details her list of "What I Didn't Know About the Gays." The meeting ended with Rebecca directing a contingent from the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus in "How Could Anyone," prompting emotional responses from many members of the Breakfast Club.

* Steve Person reacts to his reading of the printed version of the tapes that Jacqueline Kennedy made with historian Arthur Schlesinger in 1964. These were released by Caroline Kennedy on the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Kennedy administration.

15 Years Ago: November 2006

* Jonathan reflects on his trip to Botswana for a photographic safari where he recounts so many new and unfamiliar experiences that affected all of his senses (sights, sounds, tastes, smells, touch).

* Bruce Carr summarizes the October speaker Martha Willits (teacher, Polk County Supervisor, and head of United Way in Central Iowa from 1996 to 2004). Her presentation was on urging support for the "People for Project Destiny" campaign, with its aim of passing a one-cent increase in the sales tax in Polk, Warren, and Dallas counties.

* FFBC members are invited to support *The Laramie Project*, a play presented by Valley High School in West Des Moines. For the \$15 ticket, \$8 goes to Valley and \$7 goes to FFBC's scholarship fund.



LGBTQ Workplace

Culture Summit

by Maddie Rocha Smith



We are excited to host the 5th Annual LGBTQ Workplace Culture Summit this year! The virtual format of this annual event consists of four incredible sessions. Experts will join us to provide insight and resources for employers looking to cultivate safe and inclusive workplaces. In each session, you'll learn more about the LGBTQ community, how to make more inclusive policies, attract and retain LGBTQ talent, and going beyond the pride flag to create meaningful change at your workplace.

The Summit kicks off November 3 at 2:00 p.m. You can register for the conference with a total of four sessions on One Iowa's website at oneiowa.org/wpcs2021.

Session 1 – Trans and Non-binary in the Workplace
Wednesday, November 3rd, 2-4 p.m.

Session 2 – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Group Best Practices
Wednesday, November 10th, 2-4 p.m.

Session 3 – Beyond the Pride Flag: Allyship in the Workplace
Wednesday, December 1st, 2-4 p.m.

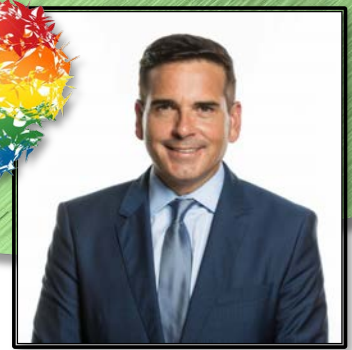
Session 4 – Pride in the Community: Allyship Outside the Workplace
Wednesday, December 8th, 2-4 p.m.

**one
iowa**



Grant Transparency

by Supervisor Matt McCoy
Polk County, 5th District



On the campaign trail for Polk County Supervisor, I promised more transparency in grant allocation. I also made it a priority to support non-profits in the community that have been passed over in previous years. Please note that grant funds are not derived from levied taxes, but rather lease proceeds from Prairie Meadows Racetrack & Casino. Polk County Supervisors distribute two types of grants—**Community Betterment Grants** (usually \$500-\$10,000) and **Community Development Grants** (more limited for large-scale projects and are usually \$10,000-\$100,000).

I'm proud of the grants I have supported these past three years, from supporting causes like Iowa Safe Schools, JOPPA, and even the First Friday Breakfast Club. Some non-profits have been hit especially hard during this pandemic, and I'm proud to support organizations like Orchard Place with a \$100,000 grant so they may purchase a new HVAC system and a \$100,000 grant to JOPPA to help build a resource center for those experiencing homelessness. Below is a list of all 2021 Community Development Grants and Community Betterment Grants that I have supported. Grant funding has been more limited due to decreased funds because of COVID-19, and no more grants will be distributed until 2022. There were a handful of grants in late 2020 that was not part of last year's annual report, so they are included in this one. If you want more information on any particular grant or how funds may be used, do not hesitate to reach out. You may email me directly at matt.mccoy@polkcountyiowa.gov or my Executive Assistant Taylor Van De Krol at taylor.vandekrol@polkcountyiowa.gov. I intend to continue providing grant transparency and issue an annual report on grants I support.

2021 Community Development Grants

Drake University - The Harkin Institute **\$200,000.00**
Des Moines Park & Recreation Foundation/Friends of Des Moines Parks (Fleur Drive Streetscape Project) **\$100,000.00**
Southeast Polk Education Foundation, Inc. **\$50,000.00**
Golf Charitable Foundation of Greater Des Moines **\$100,000.00**
Des Moines Arts Festival **\$35,000.00**
Des Moines Historical Society **\$25,000.00**
JOPPA Outreach Services, Inc. (JOPPA) **\$100,000.00**
Hoyt Sherman Place Foundation **\$75,000.00**
Orchard Place **\$100,000.00**
6th Avenue Corridor **\$100,000.00**
Des Moines Park & Recreation Foundation/Friends of Des Moines Parks (MacRae Park) **\$100,000.00**
Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines **\$100,000.00**
Easter Seals Society of Iowa **\$100,000.00**
Wesley Community Services, Inc. **\$50,000.00**

2021 Community Betterment Grants

Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines Capital Crossroads **\$15,000.00**
Des Moines Public School Library Foundation **\$2,500.00**
Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity **\$10,000.00**
Mid-Iowa Council, Boy Scouts of America **\$2,500.00**
Mid-Iowa Council, Boy Scouts of America **\$2,500.00**
Build Lincoln Higher Booster Club Lincoln HS After Prom Celebration **\$5,000.00**

2021 Community Betterment Grants

Roosevelt High School PTA **\$6,000.00**
Build Lincoln Higher Booster Club **\$7,000.00**
Build Lincoln Higher Booster Club Lincoln High School After Prom/Senior Celebration **\$1,000.00**
Central Iowa Shelter & Services **\$8,500.00**
City Sounds: The Des Moines Public Piano Project **\$5,000.00**
Civic Music Association **\$2,500.00**
Des Moines Public Library Foundation **\$5,000.00**
Ingersoll Grand Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District **\$5,000.00**
JOPPA **\$10,000.00**
King Irving Neighborhood Association **\$1,500.00**
Mentor Iowa **\$1,000.00**
Rails Football Club **\$2,500.00**
Rebuilding Together Greater Des Moines **\$15,000.00**
Salisbury House Foundation **\$10,000.00**
Southwestern Hills Neighborhood Association **\$3,000.00**
Stagewest Theater Company / Iowa Stage Theatre Company **\$10,000.00**
Waterbury Neighborhood Association **\$2,500.00**
Watrous Heights Neighborhood Association **\$3,000.00**
Ballet Des Moines **\$6,000.00**
Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus **\$10,000.00**
Drake University (Robert D. and Billie Ray Center) **\$10,000.00**
First Friday Breakfast Club \$4,500.00
Iowa Asian Alliance Foundation **\$3,780.00**

2021 Community Betterment Grants

Iowa Senior Foundation / Iowa Senior Games **\$5,000.00**
Link Associates **\$4,122.07**
St. Vincent de Paul **\$10,000.00**
Animal Rescue League of Iowa **\$3,000.00**
Boys & Girls Club of Central Iowa **\$6,000.00**
Des Moines Performing Arts **\$10,000.00**
Edmundson Art Foundation, Inc. **\$10,000.00**
Iowa Radio Reading Information Service for the Blind **\$7,800.00**
Food Bank of Iowa **\$10,000.00**
Planned Parenthood of the Heartland **\$10,000.00**
Harbor of Hope Mission **\$5,500.00**
Planned Parenthood of the Heartland **\$5,000.00**
Build Lincoln Higher Booster Club **\$3,000.00**
Des Moines Area Community College **\$10,000.00**
Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity **\$5,000.00**
Latina Leadership Initiative of Greater Des Moines **\$5,000.00**
North Polk Community School Foundation **\$3,500.00**
Des Moines Metro Opera, Inc. **\$10,000.00**
Abraham Lincoln High School Alumni **\$5,000.00**
Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center **\$8,000.00**
Iowa CareGivers **\$6,000.00**
Democracy Defenders of America **\$10,000.00**
Hispanic Educational Resources **\$7,000.00**
Build Lincoln Higher Booster Club (Rails Basketball Club) **\$6,000.00**
Meals From The Heartland **\$10,000.00**



What is Thanksgiving?

- a once-a-year feast when we eat until we are stuffed?
- a nice break and holiday from work?
- a chance to watch football on TV in a room filled with family and friends?

Or is Thanksgiving an attitude of our mind and heart which enables us to be grateful for all the good things in our life and for all the people who guide and care for us, who laugh with us, share our hurts, and help us to grow? Is Thanksgiving a part of our outlook on life that keeps our power of appreciation fresh? **Let's look around us—and at ourselves—and SEE some of the many gifts we have.**

In this month's newsletter, your editor [Wade] is pulling out a creative writing exercise from his years as an English and French teacher. This is an easy way to help you write your own "Thanksgiving Collage" poem. Maybe you could share this with your family or friends as you gather together this year. Here's an example:

*I am thankful for the world, with all its tears and its joys—
for the comfort of a mound of mashed potatoes overwhelmed by a pool of rich, thick gravy,
for that last camping adventure in the chill of an October night,
for my grandpa, whose voice of wisdom and gentleness still speaks in my memories,
for the loving and mischievous blue eyes of my beautiful husband,
for the chance to use my talents to make a difference in new ways,
for the gift of unconditional love in the eyes of two grandchildren.
For all of these, and for so much more, I give thanks!*

Your Turn! For each category below, write one thing for which/whom you are grateful. Be sure to describe each thing or person you write about *briefly*, so that it/he/she comes "alive." As in my preceding example, begin your list with an introduction.

- something you enjoy eating
- something beautiful to look at or listen to, especially in nature
- some game or sport that you like to play or watch
- someone who helps you to grow or become better
- something you don't particularly like but is good for you
- some machine or device that makes life easier or more fun
- some relative who has shown real love or concern for you
- some aspect of your own mind or body that you're glad is yours
- some good quality of skill that you have that helps others
- some ability or talent that you enjoy using
- some pet or animal that gives you pleasure
- some special gift that is yours as an American
- some friend who means a lot to you
- something about your job that you appreciate



Now, choose the *best* of what you've written (six or more items) and combine them into a "Thanksgiving Collage." Begin with an introductory line, and if you wish, change the order of your items. **We would love to print some poems in next month's newsletter! Email them to wadecpetersen@gmail.com**

No Time to Die

A Movie Review by Mark Turnage

Coming off the heels of last month's review of *GoldenEye*, the much-anticipated sendoff to Daniel Craig's portrayal of James Bond was finally released this month—but is *No Time to Die* worth the wait? Director Cary Fukunaga takes the character of James Bond to places we've never seen him, and the overall film is gorgeous, but the story's devotion to continuity over ingenuity outside Bond himself steals some luster from an otherwise epic final mission.

In a double opening-credits sequence, we first see a young Madeleine Swann (Bond's love from the end of the previous film, *SPECTRE*) menaced by a badly injured hitman in a Kabuki mask, who reveals himself as Lyutsifer Safin (Rami Malek). Instead of killing her, he rescues her from drowning in a frozen lake. In present-day Matera, Italy, James—now retired from service—and Madeleine (Lea Seydoux) are on honeymoon. James is convinced by Madeleine to visit the tomb of his old flame, Vesper Lynd (Eva Green, from *Casino Royale*) and let go of the past. Then Vesper's tomb explodes—it's a trap, orchestrated by Ernst Stavro Blofeld (Christoph Waltz)/SPECTRE, despite Blofeld's arrest at the end of the last film. Bond immediately confronts Madeleine with his suspicions of betrayal, which she denies, and after narrowly escaping SPECTRE's high-powered henchman in a sequence that shows off all the toys packed in his Aston Martin DB5, he leaves her, convinced she has betrayed him for SPECTRE. Bond goes off the grid for five years until his old CIA ally Felix Leiter (Jeffrey Wright) asks him for help when a viral weapons scientist is kidnapped by a still-in-operation SPECTRE. Bond turns him down at first, until he meets the new Agent 007—Nomi (Lashana Lynch), who quickly demonstrates she's just as capable as James and warns him to stay out of her way. Bond, being a brat by nature, is naturally intrigued, and agrees to help Felix and his hero-worshipping sidekick, Logan Ash (Billy Magnussen) find the missing scientist.

For better and for worse, the Daniel Craig Bond movies share a continued narrative as opposed to an anthology, a feature new to the franchise under Craig's run. When it works, it works extremely well (*Casino Royale*, *Skyfall*); when it doesn't, the next installment has to clean up the previous one's mess (I'm looking at you, *Quantum of Solace* and *SPECTRE*). You can see *No Time to Die* as its own movie, but to appreciate it, it helps to have seen *all* the Craig films. The "cool factor" in *No Time to Die* is there in the locales, the gadgets, the toys. But the "it factor" is in the new operatives, both MI-6's Nomi and her cohort in the CIA, Paloma (an extremely charismatic Ana de Armas). These ladies give Bond a run for his money in both quips and spy skills...and it's neat to see Craig's Bond embrace that (maybe with some rivalry in Nomi's case).

But the film's biggest let-down is how it treats its villains, namely Safin. For what this antagonist accomplishes in this movie's nearly three-hour run time, he's far too forgettable, and falls into too many Bond villain tropes to be his own unique character: deformed, accented, with a fetish for cultural appropriation just because. Perhaps most disappointing: he doesn't have any memorable lines. Safin is the anti-Goldfinger, someone incapable of matching Bond in terms of either charisma or presence. Blofeld's prison monologue with James also feels hollow and throwaway, an especially grievous sin considering the two characters' shared history. It's as if Moriarty and Holmes met for coffee and the former ghosted the latter. Without spoilers, the most compelling Bond villain in *No Time to Die* is a double agent and Proud Boy analogue. They are graced with the most savage fight scenes in the movie, and their "heel turn" is scarily relevant and believable. When James finally shuts him down, it's the action zenith of the film.

The movie's narrative commitment to the concept of betrayal could be stronger, as many of its most powerful scenes revolve around this central theme. The connections to both Timothy Dalton's and even George Lazenby's portrayals of the character are quite strong in terms of where Bond is emotionally (which feels wild to write). It's refreshing to see a typically hyper-masculine character come to grips with his own feelings, and Craig is magnetic at portraying James finding more to fight for than Queen and country. *No Time To Die* offers the deepest look at the heart beneath the spy, but because it must also tie up loose plot threads, these ruminative scenes are more "what-ifs" than the character of James Bond evolving. Is it an appropriate Daniel Craig send-off? Yes—even though it leans more into fan service than casual viewing. See it if you love Bond movies, or Daniel Craig eye candy.



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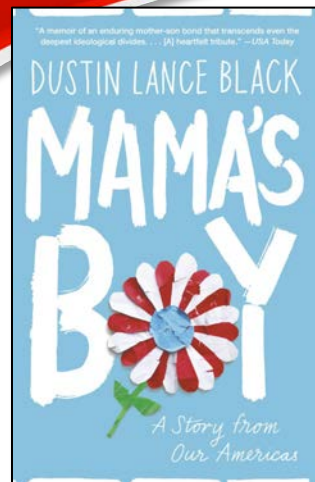
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Mama's Boy A Story from Our Americas

by Dustin
Lance Black



A Book Review by Steve Person



Dustin Lance Black wrote the screenplay for *Milk*, a motion picture biography of Harvey Milk, the San Francisco City Supervisor who was murdered in the 1970s. Black earned an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay that provided Sean Penn the opportunity to deliver an Oscar-winning performance as the title character. Black also worked tirelessly to help overturn California's anti-gay marriage, Proposition 8. Before any of this could happen, the author had a difficult road to travel.

Black's mother, Roseanna, endured horrendous pain and suffering from polio, diagnosed when the girl was just two years old. Roseanna's heroism in dealing with and overcoming the odds of being a polio victim who succeeded, provides the main thrust of this compelling memoir. The young girl suffered the extreme efforts to correct her stiffened legs by enduring braces and surviving painful surgeries to her legs and spine. This dark time in her childhood took place in New Orleans. Little Anna spent much of her childhood in hospitals, but the New Orleans experience was one she didn't like to share.

Roseanna may have had a body twisted by the ravages of polio, but she had a keen mind and a stubborn streak that allowed her to overcome so many of life's travails. Early on, her goal was to become a doctor. She never made that goal, but she did make it to college. She left just short of graduation in order to marry Raul Garrison, a Mormon missionary. Despite the advice of doctors warning her that having children could be fatal, Anna (or Anne) ignored them. She eventually gave birth to three sons with Dustin Lance being the middle child. Whenever provided with "advice" that she considered an intrusion, she expertly shut those people up by replying, "Thank you VERY MUCH." The emphasis in her voice with those last two words gave her more sway than if she had spewed a string of cuss words.

When life in San Antonio with Raul became unbearable for Anne, she packed her three boys into the station wagon and headed for Salinas, California. Working as an assistant at an air base there, she eventually worked her way into other medical professional jobs.

Meanwhile, Dustin was graduated from UCLA's School of Theater, Film, and Television in 1996 with honors. When he was 21, he finally came out to his strictly Mormon mother who initially said he was condemned to hell. Anne, however, was not about to give up on any of her three sons, and when on a visit to Dustin's where a party was taking place, she encountered his friends and heard their stories. That was the night that her Mormon-inspired fear of gays began to transform her. She became an advocate for the LGBTQ movement. She finally succumbed from her various life-long ailments in 2014, leaving a legacy of ferocious fighting for all things right, be it health-related or making her family—and the world—a better place.