



First Friday News & Views



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

Edition

June 2022

Volume 27

Issue 6

Next Meeting

June 3

7:00 a.m.



Meeting Location

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



June Speaker

**Mark
Turnage**



FFBC Website

ffbciaowa.org



A Seat at the Table

by Byron Huff, Board President

Humans need social interaction and seek out a circle of like-minded people who make them feel comfortable and valued.

Making friends in kindergarten is usually easier because most humans have fewer prejudices. These prejudices are learned as we are exposed to external forces that guide our psychological development.

In high school and college, we easily find like-minded friends who create our social circles because we have frequent interactions (such as fixed class schedules and extracurricular activities). Studies have shown that we need to be exposed to a person or group over and over again in a fairly short period of time to build a relationship; that short period allows us to remember what we talked about and bring it up again.



As we grow older, we can retain friends from our school days and/or make new friends through work or social activities that expose us to the same people who have similar interests. An example might be attending the same yoga class where meeting people who like yoga may lead to other conversations that build a potential lasting relationship.

I was reminded how uncomfortable it can be to be in a room of people where I feel like the minority. While recently visiting a very small bar in Chicago that we have frequented before COVID (are we always going to be talking about before/during/after COVID?), the majority of the patrons were black. I have had black friends in the past and pride myself in feeling I hold no prejudice toward them, but the feeling of outwardly being a minority made me uncomfortable. I say "outwardly" because in theory people may not know (stop laughing) I am gay in a straight bar, but it is difficult to hide that I am a white person in a predominately black bar. This made me imagine how a black person feels everyday just going about their life. We can take this experience and understand the anxiety new attendees of FFBC may feel.

[continued on page 2]



**Don't Miss the Annual Scholarship
Awards Breakfast this Month!**

FFBC did a survey in December 2020 during the pandemic to try to understand why many prior members were not attending. That survey brought up something that disturbed me at first, but I realized the comment likely had some merit. The surveyee said, "I found the people to be standoffish and not super welcoming (of course the leadership always is, but you aren't sitting in the cheap seats with the common folk at the end of the day); I just couldn't find a reason to continue to come back, and it wasn't a 'cost effective' deal either...."

Studies have shown that people in their 50s and beyond have a group of friends and are generally less welcoming to anyone joining their closely knit group. FFBC meetings are like that where groups of people always sit at the same table and have conversations that do not necessarily invite someone outside the group to join in. Does that sound like you?

To help make new people feel more welcome, FFBC has had a tradition (thank you Jonathan) of allowing new attendees to introduce themselves. The thought behind this is to make those people feel more welcome and hope they could become part of a table's conversation. It seems we need to do more, but what that is has yet to be determined from a meeting structure/board perspective. Perhaps the better question is, what can you do to make strangers feel more welcome? Perhaps bring them into the conversation by asking questions that could build a lasting connection and make that person want to return?

I hope this article will make you think about how you are perceived at future FFBC meetings and perhaps make you reach out to someone who you don't know or sit at a different table!

Beginning of the End

by Ryan Crane, FFBC Vice President

The Supreme Court has opened the door to legal and moral challenges to marriage equality, affirming health care, and many other aspects of LGBTQ+ life which have been enhanced and improved in recent years.

I am no lawyer or constitutional scholar, but it only takes a lay person who is paying attention to realize that Justice Alito's reasoning applied in the (leaked) draft which will overturn Roe v. Wade could very easily be applied to protections for LGBTQ+ people.

What is coming, my friends, is an unspooling of secular and contemporary progress. We are on the chopping block, and we need to come to terms with what it means for our movement. This means advocacy, voting for pro-equality candidates (and opposing anti-equality candidates), and showing up for our allies who will fight back against restrictions on abortion. It's about protecting freedom, not "saving" fetuses.

The long arc may bend toward justice, but only if folks are working hard to bend it along the way.



Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for introducing **Eric Shepard**, our May 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 **July newsletter** will be **June 20**. 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 **\$475,000** 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.



WE SUPPORT PRIDE



Capital City Pride will host its “30 Days of Pride” celebration, spreading the events over 30 days in June across the entire city! PrideFest also returns with its 3-day Street Festival and Parade!

Wednesday, June 1 Drag Queen Bingo

Thursday, June 2 Scavenger Hunt

Friday, June 3 Pride Pageant

Saturday, June 4 Drag Brunch | Onelowa GALA

Sunday, June 5 Inclusive Worship

Monday, June 6 Mindful Monday

Tuesday, June 7 Queens in the Kitchen

Wednesday, June 8 Family Feud

Thursday, June 9 Story Tellers

Friday, June 10 Pool Party | Speaker Series | Street Festival | Youth Silent Disco | Adult Silent Disco | GLOW Party

Saturday, June 11 Fun Run | Pet Parade | Family & Kids Zone | Drag Queen Story Time | Health & Fitness Zone | Teen Zone | Love is Love | Drag King Show | Pride After Party

Sunday, June 12 Parade

Monday, June 13 Service Day | Mindful Monday



Tuesday, June 14 Queens in the Kitchen

Wednesday, June 15 Broadway Singalong

Thursday, June 16 People Lending Library

Friday, June 17 ICubs Game

Saturday, June 18 Manifestal

Sunday, June 19 Inclusive Worship

Monday, June 20 Mindful Monday

Tuesday, June 21 Queens in the Kitchen

Wednesday, June 22 Generational Panel

Thursday, June 23 The Gag Show - Evening of Comedy

Friday, June 24 Rainbow Safari

Saturday, June 25 Drag Queen Storytime | Kids Pool Party | Movie Under the Stars

Sunday, June 26 Kid Focused Inclusive Worship | Flag Celebration

Monday, June 27 Mindful Monday

Tuesday, June 28 Queens in the Kitchen

Wednesday, June 29 Meet the Board

Thursday, June 30 Pride Walk



Check out
[**www.capitalcitypride.org**](http://www.capitalcitypride.org)
for more details!



Lotions, Potions, Pills, and Slow Motion

by Jonathan Wilson



Ok, so I am now “of a certain age.” It’s not 76. It’s not 78. And, at least physically, it’s not much fun. But, it is what it is. Our bodies change over time whether we like it or not. We typically are pleased when puberty causes changes into adulthood. With aging, however, the inevitable changes are less welcome. Not unlike an old car, with age, more maintenance is required.

For starters, there are the chronic conditions that I can get prescription medications to address. The conditions don’t go away; they are simply diminished or held at bay from pill-to-pill. Those prescriptions don’t renew at the same time, so time-consuming medication management is necessary, with ordering renewals and more visits to the pharmacy. The pills have to be sorted into week-by-week pill boxes unless you want to get all prescription bottles out daily -- not an efficient use of time. I use boxes that cover two weeks at a time. Regardless, it’s a time-consuming hassle every two weeks.

Every morning becomes an adventure into unexpected aches and pains that weren’t there the day before, and that may or may not become chronic. Only time will tell. Until that’s determined, those aches and pains are treated with over-the-counter pain pills and potions.

Beyond that, there is the fact that aging makes fingernails and toenails more brittle and prone to cracking. For that there are a variety of doctor-recommended vitamins. Add those to the pill box.

I am pretty thick-skinned emotionally but, with age, one’s actual skin gets noticeably thinner -- break out the moisturizing lotions and a daily lubrication ritual. Getting “ready” each morning simply takes longer -- lots longer -- than it once did.



men of a
certain age

In addition, there’s the hearing thing. I used to say that I only had selective hearing loss, to the occasional irritation of my partner, family, and friends. Ultimately, augmenting my actual hearing loss with a bit of lip reading proved ineffective in the longer term, and I have had to acknowledge a need for hearing aids. It’s one thing to come to terms with wearing something that screams “old,” but hearing aids themselves require daily cleaning and maintenance. Time spent on other endeavors must be compromised in order to keep the hearing aids working properly.

And eyesight; most people “of a certain age” require corrective lenses and, almost universally, people develop cataracts. I’ve got glasses and cataracts, albeit the cataracts are in the earlier stages. I’m putting off the readily available corrective surgery until my eyesight is more compromised, when the corrective surgery will produce a “wow” factor. In the meantime, I will not be able to read street signs quite as soon as my partner. After age 72, you can’t renew your Iowa driver’s license for more than two years at a time and after an in-person eye check. Probably good public policy, even though I don’t personally like it. Recently, I circumvented the expiration of my license because I was out of state when it was to expire, and the Iowa DOT kindly gave me an extension until I got back to the state.

If you are “of a certain age,” the foregoing litany probably sounds familiar. If you are not yet “of a certain age,” the litany gives you a glimpse of your future, and your future could even be worse. But, with the passage of time, it almost certainly won’t be much better.

On the brighter side, however, it’s worth noting that I’ve found one positive from aging. Both of my beloved parents are deceased, and I long to see them again. When that urge hits me, all I have to do is look in a mirror and I get to see my father looking back at me. After a few seconds, I get to see my mother as well. It generates a warm, nostalgic feeling and motivates me to continue coping and carrying on.



Grief Support

by Jim Flansburg

I remember scrawling together a few words for this newsletter a little more than a year ago after Kevin died. What I wrote I don't recall. Probably something to the effect that losing one's partner sucks.



My brain wasn't functioning then. All I could do was put one foot in front of the other, stay hydrated, and remember to breathe. And that's no exaggeration.

After all, you don't immediately bounce back after being with the same man for 36 years. And the end was crushingly quick: Kevin received a terminal diagnosis the day after Thanksgiving 2020, and nine days later he was gone.

The first month following Kevin's death was dizzyingly busy. Funeral home? Check. Disposition of body? Check. Obituary? Check. Get death certificates out to businesses? Check. Recalibrate finances? Check. Pack clothes for Goodwill? Check.

And then there was the most excruciating silence I have ever heard. Not only were the bitterly cold January winds howling outside, the pandemic was keeping everyone from everyone else. I was sitting. Alone. In my house. And that's when it all set in. Kevin was gone. I was alone. And this was my new, uninvited future.

I cannot begin to describe the depths of sorrow I started plumbing. And if you haven't gone through it, you cannot know, no matter how empathetic you are. But I can tell you how extraordinarily and devastatingly lonely it was.



You might think I could fall back on my friends. The few that we had made since we had moved back to our native Iowa fell away, unable to cope with their own emotions let alone that of my raw, unfiltered sorrow.

Hospice guided me to some online grief groups, all in which I knew I didn't belong the moment my camera focused on participants. I was the youngest (at 61, that's saying a lot), the only man, and most definitely the only one identifying as gay. I didn't fit.

Thankfully, mercifully, the universe intervened and I stumbled upon a worldwide LGBTQ online grief group for those of us who have lost our life partners. It was a godsend. I don't think I am exaggerating to say that I'm here today because of those wonderful, giving people.

I've been fortunate to have the financial means to actually meet some of these people. For instance, we met at something called [Camp Widow](#) last fall in San Diego. Imagine being around 400 of your new BFFs, all of whom know your pain and your journey.

While I love these people, it makes me wonder why there isn't a local group – specifically aimed at the LGBTQ community. Surely, it's needed. For every gay couple you know, one of them is inevitably going to go first. It's called the price of love. But that price is very painfully expensive if you don't have someone, or something, to lean upon.

Creating such a group would not be difficult to organize, per se. It's peer-led, meaning we wouldn't have mental health professionals involved during the group meetings.

I would like to hear from others on this. What would it look like? In person? Online? Both? Days to meet? Times? How to get the word out? And, eventually, would secondary groups spring from it, such as groups aimed at finding love again after being widowed? (There's one nationally on this, but it doesn't work so well when you're in Des Moines and other prospects live half a country or continent away.)

It's not a question as to whether this is needed. It is needed, I assure you. Drop me a line. Let's see what magic we can create to fill this sizeable void. After all, as many as half of the people reading this right now will eventually require this very service. Let's do this.

Jim Flansburg can be reached at
jamesflansburg@rocketmail.com.



“Openness may not completely disarm prejudice, but it's a good place to start.”

-- Jason Collins, a retired professional basketball player. In 2014, he became the first openly gay male athlete to play in U.S. professional sports.



June Speaker Mark Turnage



Mark Turnage (He, Him, His) has been the Registrar and Office Manager for Iowa Safe Schools since 2014. He coordinates transcripts, billing and technical support for participants of Safe Schools Academy online classes, registration for the annual Iowa Governor's Conference on LGBTQ Youth, and secretarial support for the organization. Mark graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with an emphasis on Film Studies and Creative Writing, and has been involved in community events and advocacy-related fundraising since moving to Des Moines in 2011.

The son of two teachers, Mark's experience in both education and empowering youth expression includes three years as Pleasantville High School Fall Play Director, providing audio/technical support to high school and statewide entertainment and athletic programs, and partnering with local LGBTQ organizations, charities, and venues to promote the work of Iowa Safe Schools. You can always find Mark curating his comic book collection, typing up a movie review, or writing the next great Batman story.

From the Temple
for the Performing Arts
**The Des Moines
Gay Men's Chorus**
Presents:



**Thursday, June 9 (7:30)
Friday, June 10 (7:30)
Saturday, June 11 (5:30)**
Tickets at dmgmc.org



**"Every gay and lesbian
person who has been
lucky enough to survive
the turmoil of growing
up is a survivor.
Survivors always have
an obligation to those
who will face the same
challenges."**

-Writer/actor, Bob Paris.



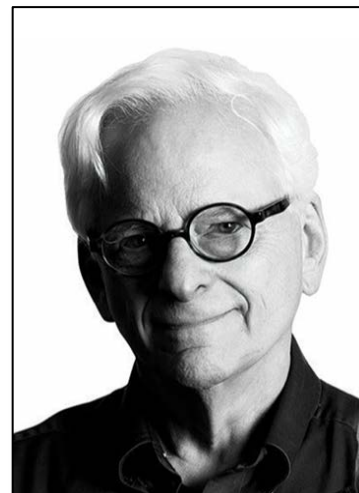
“When you hear of Gay Pride, remember, it was not born out of a need to celebrate being gay. It evolved out of our need as human beings to break free of oppression and to exist without being criminalized, pathologized or persecuted. Depending on a number of factors, particularly religion, freeing ourselves from gay shame and coming to self-love and acceptance, cannot only be an agonizing journey, it can take years. Tragically some don’t make it. Instead of wondering why there isn’t a straight pride, be grateful you have never needed one. Celebrate with us.”

— Anthony Venn-Brown
A Life of Unlearning:
A Journey to Find the Truth

Mother’s Day

by John Schmacker

Mother’s Day is the busiest day of the year for restaurants. Busier than Valentine’s Day, bigger even than New Year’s Eve. We love taking our moms to a Sunday brunch or dinner, especially on the day we set aside to remind ourselves what failures we would be without the women who raised us.



It was on such a Mother’s Day, many years ago, that I invited my mom to an after-church (her church) brunch. This was the usual event for us: Mother’s Day always involved dinner somewhere, just as did her birthdays. We’d miss some years, usually due to travel or illness, but still, we had a pattern. Now that she is gone, I wish we hadn’t missed those years.

But one year brought a great story that I love to retell. I was late getting a reservation anywhere, a tribute to my reliable procrastination. Too late for the really fancy places, the over-the-top buffets with stations for ordering omelets, beef carved to your order, tables laden with desserts. It’s once a year, so your mom deserves all of this. But with a late reservation, I invited Mom to lunch at Friday’s, at the time a trendy happening place that didn’t much cater to people my mom’s age. I had been there a few months earlier, and became way too familiar with their Long Island Iced Tea.

On the day before, Mom called and asked if she could invite a friend of hers to join us. This was a lovely woman of my mom’s age, her Bridge partner and sometimes traveling companion. I was happy to have her join us. I picked them up after church, and we headed to Fridays.

There was a good crowd at Fridays. The place was busy. Clearly, I was not the only son who had resorted to this place for Mother’s Day. Moms and adult children were evident all through the place. A hostess was handing out long-stemmed roses to the obvious mothers in the crowd. Mimosas were flowing.

Soon after we settled into a booth, the rose-dispensing hostess approached. She hesitated for a couple seconds, seeming to wonder which of the two lovely women at my table was the certifiable mother, deserving of a rose. But then I watched her decision spread across her face in a smile, and she did the gracious thing by offering a rose to each of them, much to their delight. I looked at the hostess and said, “Don’t I get anything for having two mothers?” That got a chuckle all around, as my ad-libs sometimes do. The hostess welcomed us again and stepped away. She had a lot more roses to hand out.

A few minutes later, a bartender stepped up to our booth and served me a double shot of bourbon. “Are you the son?” he asked. “Here are two shots for you, on the house.”

2022

Iowa Pride



Celebrations across the state



Capital City Pride
30 Days of Pride in June
capitalcitypride.org

PrideFest:
Friday - Sunday, June 10-12



Iowa City Pride
Saturday, June 18
Noon - 10:00 p.m.
www.iowacitypride.org



Sioux City Pride Festival
Thursday, June 2 (Parade)
Saturday, June 4
Noon - 4:00 p.m.
Facebook: Siouxland Pride Alliance



Cedar Valley Pridefest
Friday, August 26
5:30 p.m. - midnight
Saturday, August 27
Noon - midnight
www.cedarvalleypride.com



Mason City Pride
Saturday, June 4
Noon - 4:00 p.m.
www.facebook.com/MasonCityPride



Quad Cities Pride
Unity Pride Week (June 12-18)
Parade: Saturday, June 18
qcunitypride.org



Orange City Pride
October 14-16
prideorangecity.org

Coralville Pride Festival (September 4, 1:00 - 8:00 p.m.)
Burlington: Pride in the Park (June 25, 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.)
Omaha: Heartland Pride Festival (July 16)
Ottumwa: Pride Festival (June 25) Central Park



ames pride

Ames Pride
www.amespride.org

A New Artistic Director

by Gary Moore

FFBC Board Member Wade Petersen would introduce our May guest speaker after he took the opportunity to explain his dual role as an FFBC Board Member and Editor of the FFBC Newsletter along with being Operations Manager for the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus. He reminded members of the upcoming June concert by the Chorus that traditionally is in a Cabaret format with more show tunes, which works well with the fun atmosphere of Pride Month. For many, this is a highlight of Pride. Having completed his dual responsibilities to both organizations, Wade introduced **Eric Shepard**, the new and third Artistic Director and Conductor of the **Des Moines' Gay Men's Chorus**.

Eric brings a vast amount of educational and professional experiences, especially with an emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training. This background, combined with his choral and music experience from his college years, would eventually lead him to this new open door.

A recurring theme that Eric used during his presentation was when opportunity knocks you need to walk through that door. Going to college in Nebraska opened up a whole new world that Eric had not considered. His involvement in music and chorus during college provided him chances for foreign travel and led him to teaching to help provide those experiences and insights to his students. It also allowed him to explore the world even further by planning and accompanying students on international trips.

Eric found that teachers are vastly underpaid for the time they must put in to give their students the experiences they deserve. He noted that the hours needed to provide those experiences were much more than just the hours in class. Keeping track of all the hours and pay led Eric to the realization that two plus dollars an hour would not open the doors that he needed.

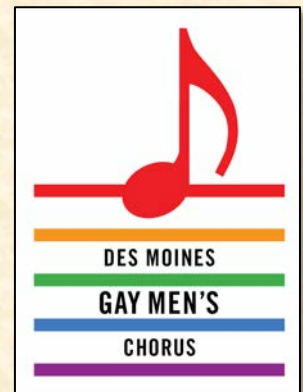
This discontent led him to corporate jobs with Target and Principle and his further training and education in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training. Tackling equity issues requires not only hiring individuals of different races, ethnicities, genders, ages, religions, disabilities, and sexual orientations, but also those with diverse experiences, education, skill sets, beliefs, and personalities. Eric first brought these skills to the Board of Directors of the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus under the then direction of Rebecca Gruber, and now he will apply those same skills as the new Artistic Director and Conductor for the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus.

Eric noted that we must be open to what we don't know. You cannot be what you have not seen. He emphasized that we must show up where we have not been and provide opportunities for people to walk through doors of opportunity to be who they are meant to be with dignity.

He feels music can be a beacon of light, opening doors and promoting harmony by singing. He noted he has a particular interest in exploring and creating a youth festival inclusive choir, a choir that emphasizes LGBTQ+ youth and their allies. He also noted that he hoped to explore additional venues for concerts that provide additional production capabilities. Eric noted that his husband of five years feels light has again bloomed within Eric that he had not seen before since assuming this new role as Artistic Director. Now that he was walked through this new door, the community looks forward to even greater accomplishments than the Chorus has already achieved.



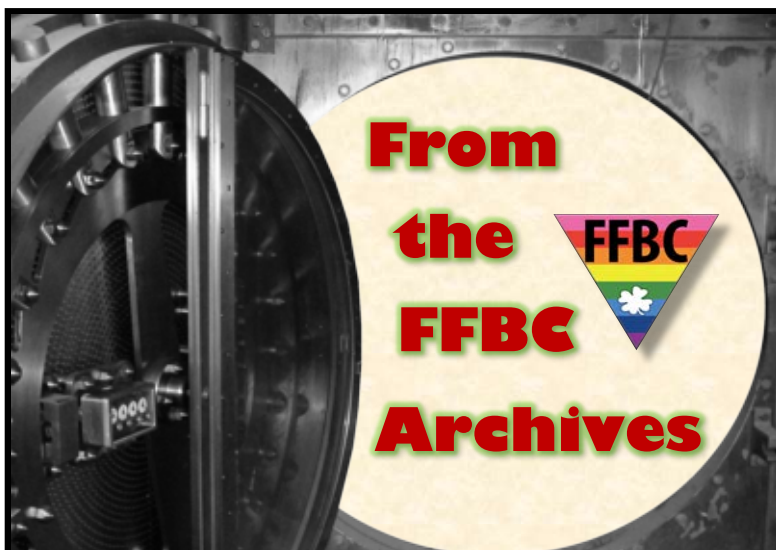
May Speaker **Eric Shepard**



May Meeting Photo Gallery



Photos by Gary Moore
& Wade Petersen



10 Years Ago: June 2012

* In his article "Saggy Baggy the Elephant," Jonathan Wilson relates the story from a children's book of acceptance and coming out. He connects this with FFBC in that it requires folks to shed the shame they have been conditioned to feel growing up in a heterosexist society.

* Bruce Carr features an article on the May meeting speaker, Scott Schoettes, HIV Project Director for Lambda Legal. Scott's presentation outlined the concerns and the work of the Positive Justice Project of the Center for HIV Law and Policy, a national legal and policy resource and strategy center for people with HIV and their advocates.

* In "Father to Son," Tony E. Hansen tells of a poem by Langston Hughes entitled "Mother to Son," where the mother explains to her son about some of life's unpleasant realities through a metaphorical approach of stairs. Hansen used this to compose an open letter to his own son who was turning 16 to have a discussion about what it means to be, or to have, a gay parent with all of the goofy "taboos" surrounding this.

20 Years Ago: June 2002

* Steve Person writes of the May speaker, Lois Fingerman, the Executive Director of Mentor Iowa (who stepped in when State Senator Mike Gronstal had to postpone his appearance). Person describes her as having "a delivery style that would have given Gracie Allen a run for her money." Mentor Iowa matches adult mentors with children who have been identified by the court system as physically, emotionally, or sexually abused.

* The Scholarship Committee received six applications from whom they chose three recipients.

* "Discrimination Can Be a Good Thing" by Jonathan Wilson centers on how not every form of discrimination is illegal or bad. Proclaiming opposition to all forms of discrimination is really a ploy to avoid thinking the matter through and making a reasoned decision about it.

25 Years Ago: June 1997

* "I'm excited! It's going to help a lot for college. It makes me feel really good," are the words of Kathleen (Kit) Murray, the winner of \$3,000 for the initial FFBC Scholarship.

* The May speaker, Tammy Baldwin, is an openly lesbian candidate elected to the Wisconsin state legislature. This FFBC meeting, held at the Marriott Hotel, was the first time members of Lambda Beta Nu, the lesbian breakfast club, joined FFBC members.

* Jonathan Wilson gives his perspective in "A Baja Saga," a tale of "a four-wheel drive Jeep, tent, sleeping bag, some food, plenty of drinking water, and lost for two weeks 'off the map'" adventure.



Future Speakers



July 16

FFBC PARTY

Home of FFBC Member, John Schmacker

August 5

Jerry Hatfield

Climate Change

September 2

Cindy Axne

U.S. House Representative

October 7

Dana Cardin

Retired KCCI
Reporter and Asst. News Director

December 2

Rev. Rushing Kimball

Plymouth UCC

March 3 | 2023

Mark Stringer

ACLU of Iowa

Mental Health Update

by Supervisor Matt McCoy, Polk County, 5th District



In an effort to address challenges around children's mental health issues, the city of Des Moines and Polk County, working alongside Broadlawns Medical Center, have announced plans to hire two **pediatric mobile crisis team responders**. These positions will be funded with local option sales tax dollars and will respond to emergencies that will arise in youth who are experiencing a mental health crisis. This effort has been promoted by AMOS who have advocated for the past several years for this initiative.

Using local options sales tax revenue, the Des Moines Police hope to hire a **mental health clinician** within the 911 dispatch center to help assess incoming calls to determine if a police or mobile crisis unit is most appropriate. One of the objectives this year that Polk County Behavioral Health & Disability Services (BHDS) will be working on is trying to determine if we can then support a crisis stabilization center for a child in crisis where professionals can monitor and stabilize a youth in crisis for up to 23 hours or whether that youth should be put into a stabilization unit for up to five days to receive ongoing support. Currently, Polk County BHDS is offering this service for adults as well. Broadlawns offers urgent care services for families experiencing a mental health crisis that need immediate access to non-hospitalization services, such as medication management, therapeutic services, or referrals to substance abuse treatment facilities.

Currently, there is a massive shortage of workforce in mental health which is greatly affecting the services and care for individuals and families experiencing mental health crises. AMOS has asked the county to invest Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars for up to **30 nurse practitioners** who agree to practice within Polk County for up to five years following graduation. In return, this program would pay for a good part of tuition or student loans. The same program would be offered to mental health professionals as well as masters and doctorate level therapists. Right now the details are still being hashed out, and proposals are being brought to the Board for consideration. I have expressed my support for both of these initiatives as it's one of the best investments we could make with this special federal one-time money.



Scholarship Awards Breakfast Schedule

- 6:30 a.m. - Doors open
- 6:30 a.m. - Hot breakfast service begins
- 7:00 a.m. - Speaker & Awards Program
- 8:30 a.m. - Program concludes - This meeting will run longer than our normal breakfast gathering.

FFBC's Annual Scholarship Awards Breakfast

This year we'll be awarding \$3,000 scholarships to **12** high school seniors, underwritten by you, our members, and allies.

Doors Open Early.

We encourage you to arrive early to Hoyt Sherman Place, with breakfast available beginning at 6:30 a.m. Come acquaint yourself with these 12 accomplished young adults.

Everything Everywhere All At Once

A Movie Review by Mark Turnage

Some films defy easy genre classification because they embody “slice-of-life” portraits of their characters and circumstances—and others, because they push the envelope of experimentalism. Directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert (known collectively as Daniels), *Everything Everywhere All At Once* is the cinematic equivalent of an “everything” bagel: a sometimes overwhelming, kaleidoscopic, absurdist cinematic experience that deftly mixes science fiction, black comedy, martial arts, and a heartfelt examination of the depths of human potential and a mother’s love.

Michelle Yeoh stars as Evelyn Qwan, an overworked yet demanding Chinese-American co-owner of a struggling laundromat with her timid but kindhearted husband Waymond (Ke Huy Quan). Evelyn is swamped in bills, primary caregiver of her traditionalist father Gong Gong (James Hong), and too busy to be emotionally invested in the life of her daughter Joy (Stephanie Hsu) and her girlfriend. When they visit the IRS building to be audited by the unsympathetic Diedre (a nearly unrecognizable Jamie Lee Curtis), Waymond’s personality shifts to his soldier counterpart from an alternate universe, warning Evelyn of a chaotic cosmic entity that threatens to destroy *every* universe and that she is the key to stopping it. Initially skeptical and dismissive, Evelyn is convinced when Waymond’s alternate-universe tech shows her how every decision in her life led to wildly different consequences for her alternate selves, resulting in dramatic variations between the Evelyn being audited by the IRS and other highly-skilled Evelyns existing throughout different universes. Explaining how she can access skills like kung fu mastery by performing a statistically improbable action to access the universe in which those skills appear (such as eating used chewing gum, among other hilarious options), “Alpha” Waymond becomes Evelyn’s mentor as the cosmic entity and their followers enter Evelyn’s universe and pursue her through the IRS building and across different universes.

The film tackles dark themes like depression, self-destruction, homophobia, and nihilism without being preachy or heavy-handed, instead preferring absurdist comedy and relatable family drama to get its points across. As the title would suggest, *EEAAO* does move quickly, but smartly uses its multiversal vignettes to balance its breakneck pace. Sometimes the amount of sci-fi kung fu wonder happening onscreen is simultaneously beautiful, hilarious, and overwhelming, but the performances of its lead cast, notably Michelle Yeoh, Jamie Lee Curtis, and especially Stephanie Hsu, anchor the happenings onscreen with emotional weight. The fight scenes are jawdropping, though—a fanny pack, a small dog, and butt plugs are all used in kung fu battles you have to see to believe. Same with the villain’s many wardrobe changes!

With this much absurdity, you may think that this film is all showmanship and no heart. But *Everything* is at its core an immigrant family drama that urges its characters to embrace love as a force for positive change, both personal and interpersonal, over succumbing to hopelessness and despair. In the poignant and silly vignettes that reveal to Evelyn how differently her life could have turned out, the audience in turn questions their own choices and what might have been.



Sometimes a movie’s message is exactly what you needed to hear at the time you need to hear it. For this reviewer, that was very much the case—but I highly recommend *Everything Everywhere All At Once* for those who need a film that is equal parts goofy, action-packed, trippy as hell, and inspirational.

See it and enjoy universes of possibilities.



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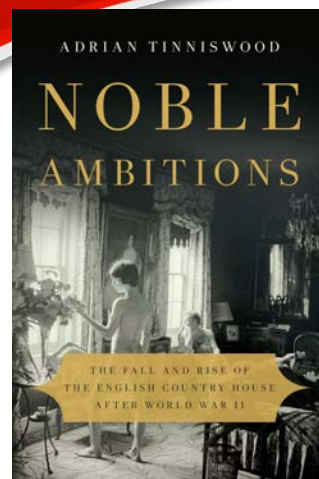
*The Fall and Rise of the English
Country House After World War II*

by Adrian Tinniswood

A Book

Review by

Steve Person



I am an unapologetic Anglophile. From my first trip to the United Kingdom in 1974, I have made dozens of visits to our Mother Country. I believe my first visit to an English country house was to Goodwood House in West Sussex in the early 1980s. It is the ancestral home of The Duke of Richmond. In

later years, I became an American member of England's National Trust (The Royal Oak Foundation in this country). The Trust has taken over many country houses that otherwise might have been torn down as the value of their lands skyrocketed after the War, and their owners couldn't afford to keep the houses going after the huge increase in taxes when the Labour Party gained control of the House of Commons in 1945. The years between World War I and World War II saw the demise in England alone of 420 mansions.

As author Tinniswood states in the book, "...victory over the Axis powers was a bitter pill, bringing with it years of austerity." Yet many of the landed class managed to keep their estates going by employing shrewd business deals, marrying their sons to rich American daughters eager to gain a title (à la *Downton Abbey*), and opening up their unique homes to the public for certain months of the year for an admission fee. The latter proved to be the savior of many an impoverished duke, earl, or viscount in keeping their heritage together.

In addition to the crippling taxes and death duties imposed on the landed gentry after both the First and Second World Wars, a huge social change came to Great Britain. People who had served as the well-oiled human machinery that kept the great houses going found that they no longer wanted to be "servants" and that the rise of the Industrial Age brought much better-paying jobs than living below stairs.

In the late 1940s and into the 1950s, country houses were an anachronism, a reminder to the vast majority that the privileged few were just that—privileged. As great houses began to be sold off or turned into private schools or headquarters for businesses or even hotels, the more resilient of those who owned great houses found ways to keep their properties going. Perhaps the best example was Lord Montagu of Beaulieu in 1952. He ingeniously found that by filling his huge garage with historic automobiles, the public was more than willing to pay to see them. He actually only owned one 1903 vintage auto but persuaded some of his well-heeled friends to lend him their antique cars for the duration of the tourist season. And just as folks thronged to see those cars, they might just as well shell out a bit more to take a look at the inside of a great house, too.

Even as some families found they could not keep their estates going, they sold them to up-and-coming movie stars or rock and roll icons. The *nouveau riche* may not have been welcomed into the country house set, but their money brought the upper-middle class to these newly owned country houses on weekends away from London. The best example is Sir Bernard Docker and his second wife, Norah Collins, a former dance hall hostess. Her first two husbands died shortly after marrying her, and both left her a very rich woman. Sir Bernard just added a lot more to her already famous wealth. She cared not a whit for the traditional country house set. Eventually their profligate ways led to their downfall in 1966, and "...the couple retreated to the Channel Islands, where they propped up bars and reminisced and acted as if there were no such thing as class."

Tinniswood is a gifted writer with a flair for subtle humor. It's a delightful book.