



# First Friday News & Views

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



August 2022

Volume 27

Issue 8

Next Meeting

**August 5**

7:00 a.m.



Meeting Location

**Hoyt Sherman Place  
15<sup>th</sup> & Woodland  
Des Moines**



August Speaker

**Jerry  
Hatfield**



FFBC Website

**[ffbc Iowa.org](http://ffbc Iowa.org)**



## An Uncomfortable But Necessary Debate

by Jonathan Wilson



With the United States Supreme Court decision overturning the half-century-old precedent of *Roe v. Wade*, it will be necessary, state by state, to determine a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy – for whatever reason, whether it's because of the woman's unique circumstances, rape, incest, or the life of the woman. For sure, the answer to that question will not be uniform from one state to another. This will lead to a hodgepodge situation where a woman in a highly restrictive state like Oklahoma (where the right to an abortion after conception is non-existent), to a state like California (where the government stays out of the doctor's office when these timely decisions are being made). Women of means in a restrictive state will continue to have access to the right by going elsewhere, where it's legal, and women of more limited means, more predominantly women of color, will still have access but more dangerously. Eliminating the lawful access to abortion does not eliminate abortion. I know because I was an adult and aware prior to 1973 when *Roe v. Wade* was decided. I know a woman from Bloomfield, Iowa, who underwent a botched "illegal" abortion and had to have a complete hysterectomy in order to save her life. That is the reality, so don't try to tell me that making abortion illegal will eliminate abortion. It won't.

### So let's have the debate.

Let me begin by saying that I don't like abortion; I don't know anyone who does. I served as president of the board of directors of Planned Parenthood of Central Iowa for a number of years – in that time, you'd think (given the stereotypes), that I'd have run across SOMEONE who liked abortion if any such person existed. It didn't happen. Asking whether or not you like abortion is, therefore, not the question to be asked and answered. The real question is solely about whether or not it should be legal and, therefore, safe. If your answer is that it shouldn't be legal, you've really answered that it shouldn't be safe. How heartless is that?

There are those who dislike abortion, as I do, but seek to codify their dislike, clothed with the trappings of religion, typically the Bible. They are the "thou shalt not kill" cohort, shall we say. So, let's go there. Obviously, the Biblical admonition against



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killing is not absolute in the eyes of the Bible or of the law. Killing is okay in self defense, for example. It's okay in defense of someone else whose life is endangered. It's okay in times of war. And, if you believe in the prohibitions in Leviticus, it's okay as punishment for a variety of perceived transgressions.



For any of those exceptions to apply, there first must be a temporal, legal recognition that the deceased was a human being. If that legal recognition were to arise at the moment of conception, we'd all be celebrating our moment of conception, not our birthdays. To be logically consistent, if a fetus is a "baby" human being, we'd be disposing of the remains from abortion **AND MISCARRIAGE** by proper reporting to the local registrar (Iowa Code Section 144.26) and disposition of remains

as required by law. There'd be countless more obituaries for the unnamed, published to line the pockets of newspaper publishers, and funerals to line the pockets of funeral homes. The coroner would have to be involved. Human mortality statistics would skyrocket. Give me a break.

Miscarriage following the moment of conception, also referred to as "spontaneous abortion," is the norm; it's not an anomaly. One self-described "Christian" woman recently posted online a sentiment, shared by many I suspect, that every conception is the intentional work of God. Multiple studies, however, confirm that more than half of conceptions end in spontaneous abortions; the percentage of miscarried pregnancies is somewhat lower – more in the neighborhood of 15-20%. Based on the actual, conservative statistics, therefore, a conception or pregnancy that was supposedly an intentional act of God, leads to the inescapable conclusion that God is annually implicated in more abortions than Planned Parenthood, by multiples. By that way of thinking, God is slaughtering countless "babies" every year.

We can also get guidance from the Bible. Unrecognized by many believers, the Bible actually speaks to this very subject. Take a look at Genesis 2:7 where it is written, with the inspiration of God, that "the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; *and the man became a living being*" [emphasis added]. Bottom line, according to God-inspired Holy Scripture, a fetus becomes a "living being" only when it is capable of drawing breath – that is, when it is viable. A rabbi recently wrote insightfully that life is over with our last breath and begins with our first breath. Paradoxically, *Roe v. Wade* used viability, the Biblical standard, as the point in human development when legal protections are triggered, leaving the

**[continued on page 3]**

## Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **John Schmacker** for hosting the annual **July picnic** at his beautiful house. 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 **September newsletter** will be **August 22**. If you have something on your mind to share, type it up and email it to Wade ([wadecpetersen@gmail.com](mailto: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.



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.



pregnant woman's rights thereafter to terminate the pregnancy dependent upon there being a threat to her own life if the pregnancy is not terminated.

The law is tasked with drawing lines that are, essentially, arbitrary and "negotiable" over time as social mores evolve and the political pendulum swings to and fro. That's true whether we're talking about achieving the status of a "living being" entitled to legal protections, the age of consent for sexual intimacy, the age when a person can purchase alcohol, the age when a person can vote, the age when a person can have a license to drive, the age when a driver's license cannot be renewed for more than two years at a time, the age when a person can purchase a gun, and myriad other lines that need to be drawn for society to function (and, from time-to-time to be revised). To function effectively, the lines that are drawn should be uniform and should reasonably consider a balance of competing interests. That's particularly true in the case of abortion where there obviously are competing interests – those of the mother and those of a fertilized ovum.

Preconceived notions based on religion are not workable or sustainable in a free society characterized by diverse religions and religious beliefs, even within Christianity. Some self-styled "Christians" have formed a conclusion about where the line should be drawn when it comes to abortion, and they are not open to reasoned dialogue on the subject, even when the Bible doesn't support them. I think they should be prayerfully reading the Bible more and thumping it less.

What are animals called that have no say over their biological reproduction? Answer: undomesticated animals or livestock. The latter is where women are relegated, thanks to the decision of the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. In some states that is even true in cases of rape (regardless of the victim's age), incest, use of an IUD for birth control, or use of Plan B "morning after" medications.



# LGBTQ OLDER ADULTS CONFERENCE



## Friday, August 19

### 8:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

## Aging with Dignity for LGBTQ+ Older Adults

Friday, August 19, 2022 @ 8:00 A.M.  
UnityPoint Education & Resource Center  
1200 Pleasant Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

The LGBTQ Older Adults Conference brings experts from the medical, social service, and advocacy fields together to discuss the issues facing LGBTQ older adults and find an inclusive and intergenerational solution to ensure they can age with dignity and grace. We encourage LGBTQ individuals and professionals who deliver services to older adults to attend the conference.

### Topics we will cover include:

- LGBTQ healthcare best practices
- LGBTQ adults in assisted care
- Addressing social isolation
- Alzheimer's & Dementia in LGBTQ adults
- Inclusive end-of-life planning
- Knowing your legal rights
- And more!





## Future Speakers

**September 2: Cindy Axne**

U.S. House Representative

**October 7: Dana Cardin**

Retired KCCI Reporter and Asst. News Director

**November 4: Mike Franken**

Democratic Candidate for U.S. Senate

**December 2:**

**Rev. Rushing Kimball**

Plymouth UCC

"Love is never wrong."

- Melissa Etheridge



**PRIDE**  
INSTITUTE

## LGBT Specific Rehabilitation

By Nicky Simon

**PRIDE Institute** is dedicated to LGBT people having the same freedom from society and pressures as every other client in need of chemical dependency treatment. Because our focus is exclusively dealing with LGBT clients in each of our programs, we can more effectively address the primary need for treatment along with relevant concerns, such as trauma resolution, sexual compulsivity, internalized oppression, and HIV / AIDS related grief or stress.

PRIDE Institute provides quality services in a broad spectrum of behavioral health modalities. Our Eden Prairie facility remains fully focused on persons with addictive disorders, through our residential, extended care, transitional living and outpatient programs. Through our management contracts with psychiatric hospitals in other locations, we can address psychiatric and addictive disorders. With these regionally located, urban facilities, options prevail for full and partial hospitalization, intensive outpatient and continuing care complete with sober living residences.

If you have any questions regarding PRIDE Institute, contact **Nicky Simon** at (952) 934-7554 or call the hotline at (800) 54-PRIDE.

## Stay in Touch, Stay Well!

by Ryan Crane,  
FFBC Vice President

In the last two years, it has often been difficult to keep connected. Feelings of isolation and distance were common for many of us, and it sometimes felt like a chore to connect by phone or Zoom. For many of the men in our FFBC group, aging and losing touch with family and friends is an extra hurdle.

A recent article from **Axios** cites that better performance at work and longevity are among the other benefits of staying in touch. It may seem hard at first, but connecting with others really is one of the best and most rewarding things we can do. So pick up the phone, or send a text, or say hello at breakfast, or invite someone to go on a walk with you. Take it as a friendly challenge from me, as I will be working to reconnect with friends in August myself.

One of FFBC's favorite guys, **Gary Moore**, says it best in his email signature: "Be Well, Do Good Deeds, Keep in Touch."





## August Speaker

# Jerry Hatfield



**Jerry Hatfield** received his PhD from Iowa State University in 1975 in the area of agricultural climatology, MS in agronomy from the University of Kentucky in 1972, and a BS in agronomy from Kansas State University in 1971 and is the retired Director of the USDA-ARS National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment in Ames, Iowa, where he developed the research program of the National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment. His research focused on the interactions among the components of the soil-plant-atmosphere continuum and their linkage to air, water, and soil quality. His focus has been on the evaluation of farming systems and their response to water and nitrogen interactions across soils and remote sensing methods to quantify field variation. A platform for his research utilizes the genetics x environment x management concept as a framework to work with producers to demonstrate how they can increase their production efficiency, increase soil health, and develop resilience to weather and climate variation as the foundation for food security.

## PROTECTING LGBTQ FAMILIES IN A POST-ROE WORLD

Thursday, August 4th • 6-7:30 PM

West Des Moines Public Library  
4000 Mills Civic Pkwy  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

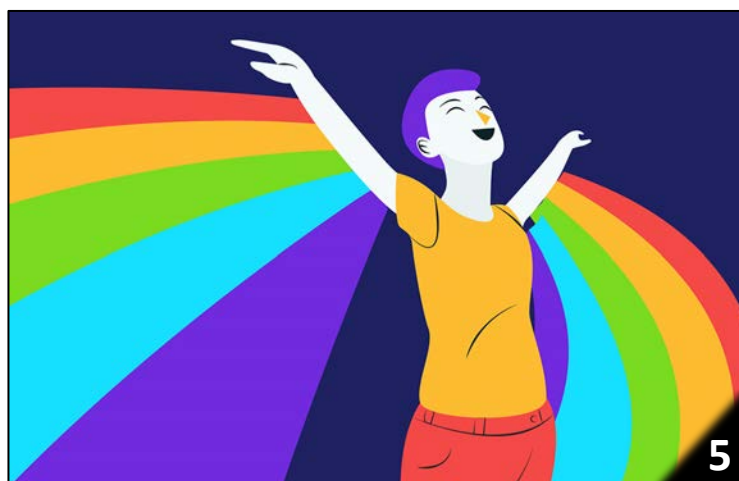


The recent Supreme Court opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* dismantles 50 years of precedent concerning reproductive rights. Legal scholars also worry the sweeping decision leaves other critical civil rights—particularly the hard-fought gains of America's LGBTQ community—vulnerable.

Join One Iowa's Director of Policy and Advocacy **Keenan Crow**, One Iowa co-founder and Board Emeritus **Sharon Malheiro**, and Dentons Davis Brown PC attorneys **Breanna Young** and **Tyler Coe** for "Protecting LGBTQ Families in a Post-Roe World." Attendees will learn about potential changes in Iowa and federal law, and receive practical next steps to protect their family with powers of attorney, wills, confirmatory adoptions, and more.

**"The things that make us different, those are our superpowers — every day when you walk out the door and put on your imaginary cape and go out there and conquer the world because the world would not be as beautiful as it is if we weren't in it."**

— Lena Waithe





## FFBC Celebrates In July

For quite some time now, members of the **First Friday Breakfast Club** have gathered in July for a celebration outside of our usual morning breakfast venue at Hoyt Sherman Place. We celebrate another year of providing scholarships to some of Iowa's brightest young people and to celebrate the generosity of allies who have helped us raise the funds to do so. We celebrate the camaraderie we have developed with other gay, bi and questioning men, and our allies.

For years our July party was hosted by Allen Vander Linden and Michael Thompson. Most recently, **John Schmacker** has graciously opened his home and gardens for our celebration. John has long been recognized as a major contributor to the gay community in Des Moines as a learned spokesperson and contributing his many skills to various organization making their mark in our community's leadership.

Many of us have been fortunate enough to enjoy John's hospitality and beautiful gardens. He again this year hosted First Friday Breakfast Club members, our honored contributors, as well as members of the Prime Timers of Central Iowa.

-- Gary Moore

# July Picnic Photo Gallery



Photos by Wade Petersen



# July Picnic Photo Gallery



# LGBTQ Youth Mental Health

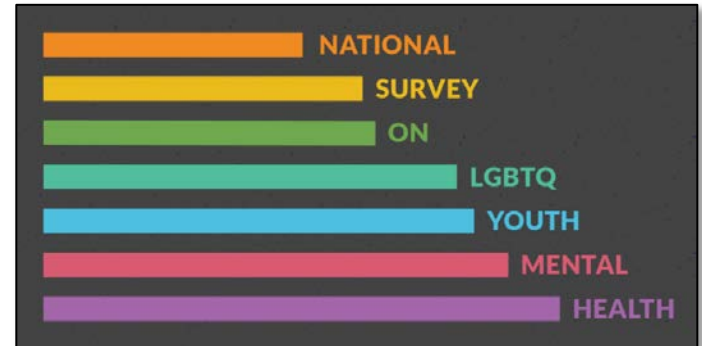
by Supervisor Matt McCoy, Polk County, 5<sup>th</sup> District



A new **2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health** was recently released by **The Trevor Project**. I felt it was important to share an article I received in the June 2022 *Mindspring* newsletter that outlines the results and provides grim numbers on what the LGBTQ Youth are expressing regarding their mental health. After reviewing this data, it's clear that actions & statements from the community and laws by governments directly correlate to the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ Youth. We must continue to build a community that is inclusive and supportive—lives are literally at stake.

According to the **2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health**, the nearly 34,000 LGBTQ youth survey respondents from across the country demonstrate that suicidal thoughts have trended upward among LGBTQ young people over the last three years. Capturing the experiences of LGBTQ youth ages 13 to 24 across the United States, with 45% of respondents being LGBTQ youth of color and 48% being transgender or nonbinary, the fourth annual national survey is one of the most diverse surveys of LGBTQ youth ever conducted.

- **45%** of respondents seriously **considered attempting suicide in the past year**, including **more than half** of transgender and nonbinary youth (53%) and **1 in 3** cisgender youth (33%).
- 14% of LGBTQ youth **attempted suicide** in the past year including nearly 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth and 1 in 10 cisgender youth.
- LGBTQ youth with **high support** from their family reported attempting suicide at **less than half** the rate of those with lower support.
- LGBTQ youth reported lower rates of attempting suicide when they felt more supported by their friends and family.
- **60%** of youth **who wanted mental health care** in the past year **were not able to get it**.
- Among all LGBTQ youth, 82% wanted mental health care and 18% did not.
- **32%** of transgender and nonbinary youth found their **home to be gender-affirming** and a little more than half (51%) found their **school to be affirming**.



- LGBTQ youth who found their **school to be LGBTQ-affirming** reported lower rates of attempting suicide.
- LGBTQ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people reported **significantly lower rates of attempting suicide** than those who do not.
- Nearly 2 in 5 LGBTQ youth reported living in a community that is somewhat or very unaccepting of LGBTQ people.
- **73% of LGBTQ youth reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety** including more than three-quarters of transgender and nonbinary youth and nearly two-thirds of cisgender youth.
- **58% of LGBTQ youth reported experiencing symptoms of depression** including nearly two-thirds of transgender and nonbinary youth and nearly half of cisgender youth.
- **93%** of transgender and nonbinary youth said they have worried about transgender people being denied access to **gender-affirming medical care** due to state and local laws.





FFBC member, John Clayton, provides prairie walks on his family farm near Grinnell that are free to visitors.

# Broad View Garden

This is a development and research garden. Native plants, insects, birds, and other prairie life are provided a home. The goal is to maintain and expand a diversity of prairie wildlife.

Motto: "Making Moments Prettier"

## Contact Info:

John Clayton  
(641) 260-7626  
chicoski7@yahoo.com

Directions: Take I-80 to Malcom. Go north on Highway 63 for 2.7 miles. Turn right onto new Highway 6 and go 3 miles. Turn left onto 150<sup>th</sup> Street (V-16) and go 2.5 miles. Turn left into gravel lane.



Photos by  
Wade Petersen & Ken Hanson



## Scheduled Events for Gay Men

There are three scheduled events during the summer of 2022 (the first occurred on July 9).

### August 20: 2:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Yellows are now a dominant wildflower color, as well as pink and blue at the pond area. Down at the creek area are a variety of native bushes. Also, Buffalo Grass is present.

Note the pheasants running and taking flight. *The amount of clothing (on or off) out of sight of the road is up to each individual.*

### September 24: 2:00 – 6:00 p.m.

There are yellow blooms galore, plus some red cardinal flowers along the pond's edge. Try a hike to the far west fields of the farm or cross the creek and hike north through rough, and varied heights of prairie vegetation. Shish kebab skewers of lean beef will be served at the pond's patio area around 4:00. Bottled water and snacks available.



# The Gray Man

A Netflix Movie Review by Mark Turnage



As a film reviewer who's trying his hand at novel-writing using the mediums of storyboarding and screenwriting as a framework, I occasionally have nightmares about which "perfect storm" results in my years-long passion project (a Batman novel) becoming a joke. Lately, the most common recurring dream is when everything seems "right on paper": the story has a seemingly cohesive outline, a consistently advancing plot, dramatic action setpieces, and stunning cinematography—but no spirit. This is the problem with Anthony and Joe Russo's 2022 espionage action thriller *The Gray Man*: it has the veneer of a slick spy thriller with complex action sequences, exotic locales and an A-list cast, but all of it can't polish the movie's cliché-riddled script and complete lack of character development.

Based on the 2009 novel by Mark Greaney, *The Gray Man* follows the exploits of Six (Ryan Gosling), a death-row convict recruited by CIA handler Fitzroy (Billy Bob Thornton) as part of the "Sierra Program"—essentially an American "double-O" section of superspies. We don't get to know much about Six, other than his questionable definition of collateral damage (refuses to risk hurting a child near a target, but instigates a crowded ballroom shootout instead) his annoyance with mission director Carmichael (Regé-Jean Page) who tells him repeatedly his mission is to "take out bad guys," and Six's taste in clothes (42 regular, vintage 80s bomber jackets, as Gosling's contract no doubt specifies).

When his most recent target gives Six a hard drive incriminating Carmichael in "shadow government stuff" (actual dialogue), Carmichael tries to 86 Six by hiring Lloyd Hansen (Chris Evans), a sunny, mustachioed sociopath with a penchant for torture and designer polo shirts. Evans makes the most of playing against type, but the script doesn't give him the beats to make a colorful character like Lloyd fully charismatic. It's a real shame, because getting to see heroic character actors throw off expectation by playing villains and scoundrels can result in iconic performances. Evans certainly has an easier job of making his character three-dimensional than Gosling does. When we finally get a peek into a character-defining memory that explains why Six is so detached, it's over halfway through the film, is another cliché, and worse, doesn't have any thematic connection to the plot.

Part of the blame has to be placed on the movie's editing. Clocking in at just over two hours, Six is in a new country roughly every 10-20 minutes of screentime. Yet there isn't time to set up a unique sense of place: cuts occur faster or open with a panoramic drone sweep that's more disorienting than establishing. Aside from some thankfully brief moments of camerawork that rival the nausea-factor of the early Bourne movies' shaky-cam, *The Gray Man* does have impressive blockbuster action centerpieces—twelve of them in all—that on paper, should provide the basis for an twisty plot. But it's difficult to care about a film's characters or what happens to them when the script doesn't make any effort to further or evolve their relationships—even in a half-hearted way. No twists in a spy thriller? How disappointing, Mr. Bond.

What could have been a compelling and insightful tale comparable to the likes of 007, Jason Bourne, and Ethan Hunt is simplified to a screenplay overstuffed with action setpieces and skimpy on character development, narrative twists, and interpersonal chemistry. It's wild to say a movie whose finale features Ryan Gosling and Chris Evans in wet t-shirts choking each other would be unengaging, but here we are. *The Gray Man* is all action, no heart. Best to let this mission briefing self-destruct in five seconds.

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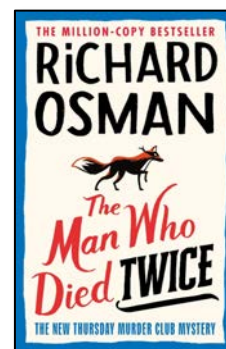
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## Two English Mysteries and Diamonds

A Pair  
of Book  
Reviews by  
Steve Person



It would be difficult to find two more disparate English writers than Anne Glenconner and Richard Osman. Glenconner, born in 1932, is the eldest daughter of the Fifth Earl of Leicester. Osman, born in 1970, grew up in straitened circumstances in West Sussex. His father walked out on the family when Richard was only nine years old, leaving his mother to raise her two sons in financially challenging circumstances. Glenconner grew up in Holkham Hall and counted among her childhood playmates none other than Princess Margaret. However, both authors have achieved great success with their novels.

*A Haunting at Holkham* chronicles the mysterious death of the Fifth Earl of Leicester and the disappearance of the family's most precious item, a diamond necklace. Lady Anne Coke (pronounced Cook) is called to return to Holkham upon the death of her beloved father in 1950. Because of the extremely harsh death duties placed upon the members of the aristocracy, Lady Anne and her mother begin a successful pottery business in the 1950s to help defray the costs of keeping Holkham Hall a family country house. The novel is set in 1943 and 1950. Eleven-year-old Lady Anne in 1943 falls under the "tutelage" of a governess-from-hell who belittles her in private but is sweet as treacle in public. Anne's parents are stationed in Egypt during the war and are unaware of the horrid treatment of their daughter. The ghost of a former earl's wife, Lady Mary, supposedly haunts Holkham Hall. In addition to the mystery of the missing necklace, the Holkham grounds also serve as a prison camp for Italian soldiers during the war. Suspects abound as to what happened to cause the earl's death and also the whereabouts of the necklace.

*The Man Who Died Twice* is Osman's follow up to his highly successful *The Thursday Murder Club*. The Thursday Murder Club is a small group of senior citizens who live in Coopers Chase, a posh retirement village in Kent. They gather on Thursdays and attempt to solve cold case crimes. The club includes Elizabeth, a retired MI5 agent; Joyce, a former nurse; Ibrahim, a retired psychiatrist; and Ron, a former trade unionist. Elizabeth's former husband, Michael, whom she hasn't seen in years, arrives. He, too, was an agent and stole a bag of diamonds worth 20,000,000 pounds while on a reconnaissance mission in the home of a shady character who is a middleman for the likes of Arab sheiks, Mexican drug lords, and the Mafia. Michael gets placed in a "safe house" near the retirement village and is accompanied by a female agent named Poppy. Murders begin to pile up and despicable characters abound. Through a convoluted plot, every character gets exactly what he or she deserves, whether guilty or not guilty.

Both books are highly readable and both authors are familiar with their settings and the characters presented. Glenconner said the characters in her book are based on actual people, and Osman is a co-presenter on the English game show, *Pointless*.

To make a bad pun, both books are **gems**.