



First Friday

News & Views



Monthly Newsletter of the First Friday Breakfast Club, Inc.

March 2023 / Volume 28 / Issue 3

Next Meeting

March 3
7:00 a.m.



Location

Hoyt Sherman Place
15th & Woodland
Des Moines



Speaker

Mark
Stringer



Website

ffbc Iowa.org



Meet the Board Members

by Byron Huff, Board President

This newsletter includes the third in a series of articles focusing on the FFBC board members who have shared some details about themselves. Last month the newsletter featured David Wilfahrt, Jim Flansburg, and Brad Holland. I hope you enjoy learning more about the people who work to make FFBC successful!



Wade Petersen

It is hard to believe Wade Petersen has only been on the board for three years; I say that because he is the mastermind behind our beautiful newsletter and was instrumental in moving us to a digital format which has allowed much more creativity and **color**! He has also worked to update our FFBC banners, tablecloth, and the feather banner you see at most FFBC breakfasts and events.

Wade Petersen taught French and Language Arts classes for 33 years in Iowa (Albia High School, Hampton-Dumont High School, and Valley Southwoods Freshman High School in West Des Moines) before retiring in 2020. Wade grew up in Hartley, Iowa, and he earned his B.A. from Northwestern College in Orange City (which included studying abroad in Paris, France). Wade earned his Master's degree from Drake University. Wade was named Iowa's High School World Language Educator of the Year in 2004. In 2012, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Iowa World Language Association. In 2016, he was a finalist for the Teacher of the Year award from the Iowa Department of Education.



Wade has published over 40 educational books for French, Spanish, and German teachers; his products are marketed throughout the United States and Canada. In addition to being a Board member, Wade has been the newsletter editor for the First Friday Breakfast Club for the past five and a half years. Wade is married to Ken Hanson, another FFBC Board member; they have three children and two grandchildren. Wade loves reading historical fiction, and he has a collection of over 10,000 DC comic books. Wade and Ken enjoy camping, gardening, and traveling.

[continued on page 2]

Ken Hanson

Ken Hansen has been on the Board for 10 years and has always stepped up to help with FFBC events and handling the check-in desk at FFBC meetings. This year Ken has volunteered to chair the Scholarship Committee which is a very important group that vets applications and makes recommendations to the Board regarding who should receive FFBC scholarships.



Ken grew up in the small western Iowa town of Castana; he is the middle child of five and has an identical twin brother. He has three children and two grandchildren. Ken also enjoys gardening, singing, playing the piano, and camping in his free time. Ken has been married to Wade Petersen officially and legally since 2009, but had a long seven-year engagement prior to that.

Ken is the Jail Services Supervisor with the Polk County Sheriff's Office in Des Moines. Ken has a B.S. in Hotel Restaurant Management from Iowa State University. He has over 37 years of food service experience in fast food and full-service restaurants, cafeterias, long-term care, and corrections. Ken currently oversees the food service and warehouse operation of a 1,100-bed county jail facility. Ken was also an adjunct instructor teaching Foodservice Management for the Dietary Manager Program at Des Moines Area Community College for 14 years. In addition to being a Certified Dietary Manager, Certified Food Protection Professional (CDM, CFPP), he is also a Certified Public Manager (CPM) through Drake University. He is a past Chair of the Board of the Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ANFP). Ken currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Nutrition & Foodservice Education Foundation (NFEF). He is the current Board Chair of the Certifying Board for Dietary Managers (CBDM). Ken also has a Certificate in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace from the University of South Florida.

[continued on page 3]

Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to Phil Williams for introducing **Rick Wagaman**, our February 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 FFBC newsletter!*

The **deadline** for the **April 2023 newsletter** will be **March 27**. If you have something on your mind to share, type it up and email it to Wade (wadecpetersen@gmail.com) by the copy deadline.

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.



FFBC
First Friday Breakfast Club

Scholarship
Program



"Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing we'll ever do."

[Brené Brown]



Gene Larson

Gene Larsen joined the board early last year and has been eager to get involved by taking on rotation at the check-in desk for FFBC meetings and helping with the Capital City Pride booth.

Gene is retired and living on an acreage in Altoona with his husband, David Phelps; they spend their time enjoying the space, the scenery, and gardening.



Before retirement Gene was an underwriter for a Multi-Peril Crop Insurance Company, holding positions for several of the MPCIC companies in Des Moines. The job involved working with agencies that sold insurance to crop farmers; he trained agents and updated agencies to current guidelines and plans.

Gene is involved in two farming operations; one is a portion of land he originally farmed for 25 years which he rents out, and the other is the five acres where he and David live.

In addition to FFBC, Gene also keeps busy with Prime Timers, working on their acreage, and spending time with his children and grandchildren.

MARCH



PEACE TREE
Est. Brewing Co. 2009

Fundraiser Friday

Friday, March 3rd • 4-7pm • \$1 Per Pint Donated to:



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The Insult

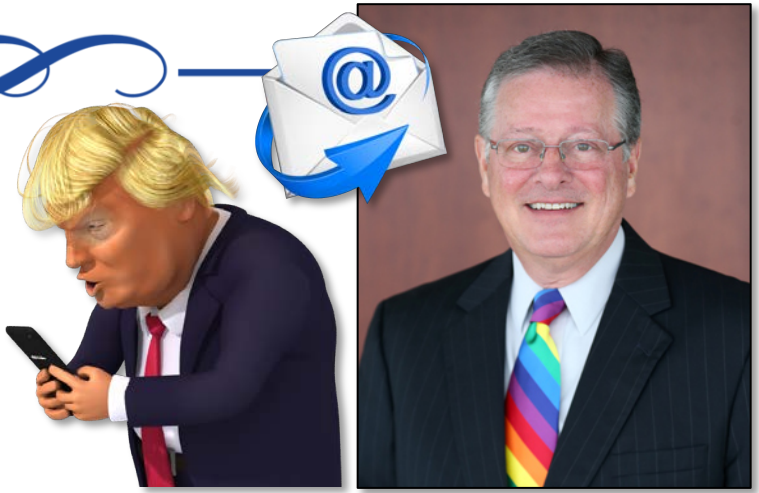
by Jonathan Wilson

I'm not sure how it happened, but, somehow, I got on an emailing list used by Donald Trump. My best guess is that, because I briefly registered in 1994 as a Republican in order to vote for Fred Grandy in his unsuccessful primary bid against Terry Branstad for governor of Iowa, I got on a list that has been sold and resold to God-only-knows who. Almost thirty years ago. Whatever the explanation, I got on a list.

During Trump's reelection effort, but especially since his reelection defeat, I have been inundated DAILY with emails from Donald J. Trump, Donald Trump, Jr., Eric Trump, Kimberly Guilfoyle, Jared Kushner, and the "Trump Team." On many days, more than once. As I write this today, I have received three communications so far from one or another of those senders. Every communication is a solicitation for financial contributions (it's never clear where my contribution would go or how it would actually be used to support his "fight to save America") or the purchase of pro-Trump merchandise, presumably for profits to go to the same nebulous purpose.

Okay, it has been suggested (perhaps wisely) that I try unsubscribing, but I have not done so out of curiosity about the solicitations, where they might go, and how they might evolve over time.

I'll be honest, I am a "Never Trumper," and I have been ever since before he was installed as POTUS by the Electoral College and a minority of voters after the 2016 general election. He is a repeatedly failed businessman. He put multiple businesses into bankruptcy, trying to sell steaks, vodka, an airline, and even a casino (who fails running a casino, for God's sake?). He has been twice divorced, each time cheating on his spouse with the person who would become his next spouse (among others). And he's cheated on his current spouse (thanks to Stormy Daniels and others). He launched a "university" that was proven to be a total scam, was shut down, and he was required to pay \$25,000,000 in a settlement. He had, at one point, what purported to be a charitable foundation that he admittedly abused; the foundation was shut down, and he was fined \$2,000,000 for the abuse. He, Eric, Donald Jr, and Ivanka were all required to receive "remedial" education about the proper, lawful operation of a charitable entity before they would ever be allowed to oversee a charitable entity in the future. More recently, the Trump Organization was found criminally guilty of fraud by a jury, and its chief financial officer is currently serving time in



prison for tax evasion (while remaining on the Trump Organization payroll). During his presidency, Trump said he was going to build a wall along the U.S. southern border *and Mexico was going to pay for it*. That didn't happen. Trump said that the Obama administration had made the U.S. the laughing stock of the international community, but during his speech to the United Nations General Assembly, delegates couldn't contain their laughter. Other world leaders were caught on camera laughing about Trump. If you want to know what Donald Trump has done, is doing, and/or is going to do, simply check out what he's accusing others of doing. You will be spot on.

Trump has a "tell." Almost every time he's lying or out of his depth on whatever topic, he does his "straight jacket" pose. Pictures of him in that posture have become iconic, especially while president when he was so often lying or out of his depth – or both.

For me, "Never Trumper" means that I'd never want any of my children, grandchildren, or loved ones to be anything like Donald J. Trump or his high-profile progeny.

Now to the contribution and sales solicitations. There have been myriad requests for money in my email. Several have been purported "surveys" seeking input from me, allegedly one of his most ardent supporters "from the beginning." Get this, several have been asking whether or not I would vote for Trump "for the third time;" I tried answering "NO" and got a screen that told me that I'd need to make a contribution in order for my reply to be registered, received, and counted!

[continued on page 5]



March Speaker

Mark Stringer



Mark Stringer began as the Executive Director of the ACLU of Iowa in May 2017, following a 16-year tenure as the Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines. Mark has been a leader in Central Iowa including serving as the founding board chair of Project IOWA, an AMOS-instigated 21st-century workforce development initiative, and as a board member of the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa, including two years as chair. In 2007, Mark had the honor of officiating at Iowa's first legally recognized same-sex wedding. In 2012, The Interfaith Alliance honored Mark with a "Faith and Freedom" award.

Since its founding in 1935, the ACLU of Iowa has protected basic freedoms and liberties of everyone in Iowa. It is a private, non-partisan organization that fights to advance civil liberties and uphold the Iowa and U.S. Constitutions. It is the state affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU prides itself in upholding everyone's civil liberties, no matter who they are or what they believe. ACLU works in the courts, in the Iowa legislature, and through public education and advocacy to assure the rights of everyone in Iowa—from atheists to devout Christians, from labor unions to businesspeople and more—to make sure that the constitutional rights of all are preserved.

["The Insult" continued from page 4]

In exchange for a donation, I've been asked to identify his 2024 V.P. running mate, where he should have his first rally after announcing his 2024 candidacy, and what he should say at the rally. I've been offered a 2X "impact," 900%, 1000%, 1100%, 1200%, and 1500% "impact." What does that even mean? It does NOT mean that Trump or anyone else will match my contribution or donate those phenomenal percentages, but only if I make a contribution. Such things are not policed or regulated. Several solicitations received from various members of the "Trump Team" have asked for contributions of \$47 (a reference to the 47th president of the United States – an unwitting concession that there is a 46th POTUS).

In exchange for a contribution, I've been offered the opportunity to have my name on Trump's Donor Wall (whatever that is), and I've even been offered the opportunity to be named a member of Trump's "Official Campaign Cabinet" (whatever that is). For a contribution, I've been offered a "free" gift from Trump, a signed copy of Trump's speech announcing his 2024 candidacy, the chance of winning a trip to – wherever -- to meet Trump and get a tour of the Trump Force One airplane, the opportunity of being named Trump's "Patriot of the Month," a trip to Mar-A-Lago, a "Cyber Monday gift," a listing in Trump's "Day One Club" (whatever that is), a

signed copy of Trump's picture, Trump Christmas ornaments and Trump Christmas stockings, Trump hats, Trump 2023 calendars, and Trump 2024 "flags." For money, I've been invited to "co-sign" an "Executive Order" declaring Christmas Eve a national holiday! For money, I've been offered a Trump "Gold Card" (the picture looked like a gold-colored credit card that would have my name printed on it), and a copy of Trump's book, *Our Journey Together* (which I doubt that he has even read).

Most recently, everyone in the world was offered the opportunity to purchase "trading cards" with Trump's face photoshopped onto a variety of cartoon images of heroic figures in better shape than Trump has ever been.

At some point, when someone lies to you or makes a request – especially for money – that obviously relies upon you being utterly naïve, utterly gullible, and truly a rube, they have unintentionally disclosed what they think of you. You have been insulted.

I think I've been insulted enough. Not only do I remain a "Never Trumper," I'm also going to unsubscribe from communications from Donald J. Trump, Donald Trump, Jr., Eric Trump, Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner, Kimberly Guilfoyle, and the "Trump Team." In the immortal words of Senator Lesley Graham following the January 6 insurrection, "Enough is enough." I'll not be insulted any more.

The ABCs of CBD

by Gary Moore

On a cold, frigid morning, 30 persons attended the First Friday Breakfast Club gathering at Hoyt Sherman Place to listen to **Rick Wagaman**, owner of HW CBD. In a relaxed and conversational manner, Rick discussed and informed listeners about the chemistry, benefits, limits, and the legal state of CBD vs. THC. He noted his desire to change the perceptions people have from years ago and their experiences with marijuana.

CBD is a chemical compound and is short for cannabidiol. It is non-intoxicating and naturally occurs in hemp which may help with numerous body and mind ailments such as anxiety, sleep, pain management, immune support, skin health, depression, and general wellness. CBD is divided into profiles: Isolate, broad spectrum and full spectrum, whole spectrum. It is important in understanding the product profile on labels to recognize the cannabinoid and terpene content inside your choice of CBD product. Terpenes are the compounds responsible for the way most plants smell, flavors, and even colors associated with hemp products.

Rick also introduced members to the Endocannabinoid System (ECS). A new concept for many of the listeners. This is the system within the body that, through CB1 and CB2 receptors, maintains the balance of multiple brain and body functions. CBD may support everything your ECS does. Rick noted that CBD affects at a system level and not at the symptom level.

There are many different ways you can take CBD. Each has its own benefit and is available with or without THC: oils, edibles, topicals, and drinks, and each of those has its own onset time and duration. Each can affect brain functions, gut health, hormones, blood sugar, and/or immune function including inflammation and energy.

Rick feels individual consultation will result in the best use or nonuse of alternatives. To that purpose, it is HW CBD's mission to help customers choose a cannabis product with a concentration and delivery system that best meets a customer's needs.

To that end, Rick is enrolled in a master's degree program from the University of Maryland-Baltimore School of Pharmacy, and is Iowa's first student to be enrolled in this program. He'll graduate in 2024 with an M.S. degree in Medical Cannabis Science & Therapeutics and has completed the Institute of Certified CBD Consultants education program.



**Board Member Phil Williams
Introduces the February Speaker**



**February Speaker
Rick Wagaman**

February Meeting Photo Gallery



Photos by
Wade
Petersen



**David Naert of the Pride Sports League
of Central Iowa Updates FFBC Members
on Activities & Opportunities**



Iowa LGBTQ+ Resource Organizations



First Friday Breakfast Club

Website: www.ffbc-iowa.org
Email: info@ffbc-iowa.org

First Friday Breakfast Club is an educational group for gay, bisexual, trans men, and their allies who gather monthly on the first Friday in Des Moines for breakfast, fellowship, and a speaker. FFBC has the largest scholarship program in Iowa that awards \$3000 scholarships to high school seniors.



One Iowa

Website: www.oneiowa.org
Email: info@oneiowa.org

One Iowa advances, empowers, and improves the lives of LGBTQ+ Iowans statewide. One Iowa seeks to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ Iowans by protecting and advancing equality and inclusiveness through education, improving workplace culture, and increasing access to quality healthcare across our state.



Capital City Pride

Website: www.capitalcitypride.org
Email: communications@capitalcitypride.org

Best known for the annual Pride Fest weekend celebration, Capital City Pride has expanded its programs and events throughout the year. Capital City Pride does philanthropic work by producing events that inspire, educate, commemorate, and celebrate our diverse community and culture with and for the greater Des Moines Metro.



Iowa Safe Schools

Website: www.iowasafeschools.org
Email: info@oneiowa.org

The mission of Iowa Safe Schools is to provide safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environments and communities for LGBTQ and allied youth through education, outreach, advocacy, and direct services. Iowa Safe Schools also organizes the annual Governor's Conference on LGBTQ Youth.



Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus

Website: www.dmgmc.org
Email: info@dmgmc.org

The Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus is a community champion singing to promote harmony, ignite hearts, and move minds. The DMGMC is open to anyone who sings in the tenor and bass ranges, regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. DMGMC has a standard three-concert season.



Des Moines Pride Center

Website: www.desmoinespridecenter.org
Email: available through website

Des Moines Pride Center is a nonprofit all-volunteer community organization that serves, supports, and celebrates LGBTQIA+ individuals and their allies in Central Iowa. The DSMPC provides a safe space for people to be connected, protected, and respected. Resources include a library of over 3000 books for check-out.



Pride Sports League

Website: www.pridesportsleague.org
Email: pridesportsleaguedm@gmail.com

The Pride Sports League of Central Iowa provides recreational and networking opportunities through sports to the LGBTQ+ community in Central Iowa. Various sports leagues and one-time events are offered throughout the year including indoor volleyball, softball, and dodgeball. At times, they also have groups for cycling and running.



Prime Timers of Central Iowa

Private Facebook Group:
Prime Timers of Central Iowa

Prime Timers of Central Iowa brings together mature gay and bisexual men for friendship, activities, support, and personal growth. Activities include group breakfasts and dinners at local restaurants, a monthly potluck social, movie nights, and cocktails.



The Project

Website: phctheproject.org
Location: 1200 University Avenue, #120

The Project provides confidential, free or low cost services to help people living with HIV move through the stages of HIV medical care. Staff help patients connect to care, access resources that will help them achieve the best possible health outcomes, and overcome obstacles that may stand in their way to a long and happy life.



Transformations Iowa

Facebook Group: Transformations Iowa

Transformations Iowa is a support group whose mission is to create an open and safe space where members of the transgender and non-binary community and their allies and loved ones can connect, find support, and empowerment. At meetings, members discuss everything from challenges and issues, to movies and TV shows. Transformations Iowa also does educational outreach to the general public.



Imperial Court of Iowa

Website: www.imperialcourtofiowa.org
Email: webmaster@imperialcourtofiowa.org

The mission of the Imperial Court of Iowa is to make a difference to the people of Iowa through fundraising, social consciousness and education, one dollar at a time. Most of their fundraising is done "one dollar at a time," with the public tipping performers at shows of various types in venues throughout the state.



Capital Bears

Website: www.capitalbears.org
Email: bearsdsm@gmail.com

Capital Bears is an inclusive group which focuses on providing the LGBTQIA+ community a safe and accepting social network. They strive to offer a good space to share ideas and meet individuals. Their purpose is to create an atmosphere of social acceptance among individuals who identify as bear, otter, cub, admirer, or supporter.

McCoy Votes “No” for Pay Increase

by Supervisor Matt McCoy
Polk County, 1st District

Earlier this month, my colleagues voted to approve a 6% pay increase for ourselves which will increase our base annual salary to \$143,548. Supervisor Robert Brownell and I voted no. I was recently interviewed by the *Des Moines Register* where I provided some of my thoughts. I believe the increase for my colleagues proposed by the county’s compensation board was excessive. I thought it was too big of an increase. I think it’s a bad look when people’s property taxes are going up. I mean, c’mon, guys, it’s time to tighten your belt and let it ride. You shouldn’t need to address it every year.

This comes on the heels of Polk County residents receiving notices in roughly a month where property owners will see an average increase of 22% in valuations.

While most property owners will see a roughly 3% increase in their tax bill, valuations will still be a major sticker shock.



Time and time again, I have seen the Board pass pay hikes for themselves that are above and beyond increases for their own workers. Shortly after the pay hike vote, we went back and increased the AFSCME union contract raise on July 1 from 4% to 5%. While this is a good step for our workers who are seeing inflation easily top 8%, it is a slap in the face when the bosses get a larger wage increase on top of our already staggering base pay, which is now well above the salary of our governor. In comparison, Johnson County approved a 1.5% pay increase for themselves.

I’ve continued to be a check on the Board’s lack of fiscal discipline and accountability. I will continue to advocate for transparency and accountability in county government.



Financial Transparency



oneiowa

Trans Day Of Visibility 2023

March 31st | 12-1 PM

Free virtual educational

Join One Iowa for a free virtual educational on **Transgender Day of Visibility**; an annual awareness day celebrated worldwide. The day is dedicated to celebrating the accomplishments of transgender and gender-nonconforming people while raising awareness of the work that still needs to be done to achieve trans justice.

Register here:

oneiowa.org/event/tdov23/

Ensure FFBC Emails Reach You



To ensure that FFBC emails are being allowed through by your email provider, simply add info@signupgenius.com and info@ffbc Iowa.org to your contact list.

FFBC sends two emails monthly. We send our monthly meeting announcement with speaker bio the last Friday of each month from info@signupgenius.com. We send our monthly newsletter the Monday prior to each breakfast meeting from info@ffbc Iowa.org.



An Irish Blessing

(A Blessing from St. Patrick)

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
May the rains fall soft upon your fields,
And, until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.



FFBC Membership

FFBC membership is open to men who self-identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender, and their allies. We welcome all guests, regardless of sexual orientation or gender. Meetings are held the first Friday of every month from 7:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines. The following membership and guest rates help us cover our food and facility costs.

In-Person Meeting Rates (Members & Guests)

Annual Rate: \$180
(12 consecutive meetings)

Quarterly Rate: \$48
(3 consecutive meetings)

Month-by-Month: \$18

First Time or
One-Time Attendee: \$15

Full-time Student: \$8

There is no charge to attend via Zoom.

Payment Options

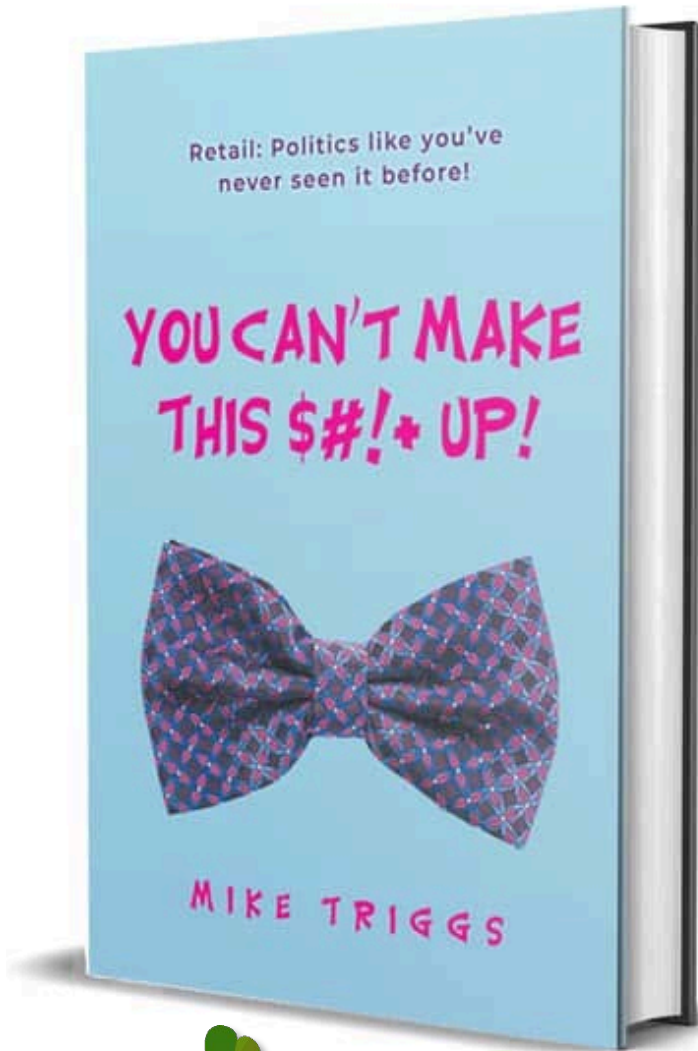
Cash or check at the meeting

Credit card prior to the meeting at www.ffbc Iowa.org; visit the Membership tab

Meeting Schedule

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

Check out the new book by **Mike Triggs**! Available through Amazon and major online retailers!



Future Speakers

April 7:
Kevin Schneider
Polk County Sheriff

May 5:
Kathy Obradovich
Iowa Capital Dispatch

June 2:
Zach Wahls
Iowa Senate Democratic Leader

July:
**FFBC Donor Recognition
& Member Party**
John Schmacker's House & Gardens

August 4:
Kendra Weston
Exec. Director Lavender Legal Center

September 1:
Darwin Goodspeed
Director of VA
Central Iowa Health Care



Bros

A Movie Review by Mark Turnage

So why aren't romantic comedies more of a draw for this reviewer? Dark tastes and cynicism aside, to me, romantic protagonists are a bit predictable on top of being unrelatable. I mean, how many times do we see ourselves as a Maid in Manhattan, a Runaway Bride, or Sleepless in Seattle--let alone a Pretty Woman. *Of course* the successful city-dwelling executive of her independent business goes to her hometown and finds the man of her dreams--she already has a lot going for her. Nicholas Stoller's *Bros*, written by and starring gay comedian Billy Eichner, has laughs, heart, and queer relatability, and its commitment to all of the above is commendable. Yet as much as the film subverts mainstream romantic comedy (often loudly), it relies on the same genre "hallmarks" to tell its story.

Bros follows successful LGBTQ podcaster and curator of the newly opened LGBTQ History Museum, Bobby Lieber (Eichner), a 40-something New Yorker who has "settled" with being single long-term. Within the opening ten minutes of *Bros*, we've joined Bobby on an awkward casual Grindr hookup, seen him audition (miserably) for *Queer Eye*, and celebrated the relationship milestones of his friends: adoption, a throuple—and humorously, a gender reveal orgy. When he meets Aaron Shepard (Luke Macfarlane) at a party for a new gay dating app called Zellweger (branded for guys who want to talk actresses and go to bed, as one character explains), the chemistry isn't instantaneous, it's awkward: Bobby casually insults Aaron, and Aaron ghosts their conversations twice. Even after agreeing to a date, their interests and personalities seem incompatible. It isn't until a steamy offer at the end of their date that their chemistry is confirmed. Sure, you know these guys will end up getting together, but the bumps in the road to that relationship feel convincing enough.

Bros succeeds in portraying a slice of gay life that those in Eichner's demographic will immediately recognize and identify with--especially with queer dating and relationships. The script goes out of its way to correct and subvert assumptions about LGBTQ culture, often humorously, through its scenes involving the LGBTQ History Museum, made up of various queer identities squabbling for ownership of the museum's centerpiece exhibit. The script could have written these roles to become more than representation checkboxes, but their scenes do posit interesting questions of how we define LGBTQ culture equally by struggle as we do joy. A highlight of the film is Eichner's moving beachside monologue on his own struggle to keep "the loud flamboyant Bobby" quiet.

Yet some of the character choices towards harmony strain credulity with the divide between Bobby and Aaron's personalities. Sometimes Bobby is too provocative in some contexts to be believable, in the same way that Aaron is too gracious in others. Understandably, there needs to be conflict for the plot to move forward, but in *Bros*, sometimes that romantic resolution feels shoehorned instead of a natural outcome of the plot. This is most evident in its lampooning of Hallmark films at several points throughout the movie, yet its final act hinges on a conclusion straight out of a Hallmark movie.

Early in the film, Bobby relates a story of how he (his character) was approached by a movie producer to write a gay romantic comedy: "Write a gay movie that straight people will like. We just want to make a movie showing gay and straight relationships are the same. We're just trying to make a nice movie about nice gay people." Bobby fires back: "There's your first mistake, not all gay people are nice." With *Bros*, Stoller and Eichner makes sure we see both sides.



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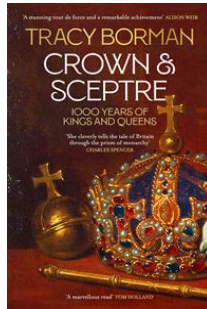
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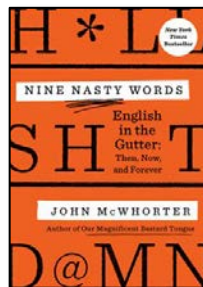
Four Books for Consideration

Book
Reviews by
Steve Person

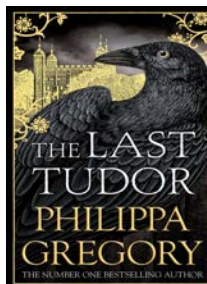
Newsletter readers, I've been doing much reading and thought some of you may be interested in taking on one or more of these very different books.



The first is Tracy Borman's *Crown & Sceptre*. If I were to teach a course in British history, this would be one of my text books. Reading textbooks is not always a scintillating prospect, but Borman wrote an exceptionally literate and readable account of the British Monarchy from William the Conqueror to Queen Elizabeth II. She explains each reign's notable accomplishments and/or failures. I was especially struck by the similarities in actions between Henry VIII and Donald Trump although Henry not only read books but also wrote them. Trump doesn't even know how to hold a book properly let alone read one.



Nine Nasty Words: English in the Gutter: Then, Now, and Forever by John McWhorter. This fascinating look at the origin, usage, and currency of swear words used over the centuries and how such words changed over time is a delightful romp through those words our mothers told us not to use. I won't point out any of these words in this article but will leave it to you to discover how magical the English language is.



Philippa Gregory is a master at writing historical fiction. I've read many of her intelligent and worthwhile looks into the lives of historical figures. She employs actual people and situations in her books but adds conversations that may or may not have happened. *The Last Tudor* traces the lives of Tudor and Stuart dynasties, and you may be surprised who the last Tudor really was.



Why We Did It: A Travelogue from the Republican Road to Hell by Tim Miller. I have never understood why a gay man such as Miller ever wanted to be associated with the Republican Party. This expose of Donald Trump's hold on that party is related through conversations with many of his friends—almost all of whom no longer speak to him—and how those relationships deteriorated from 2015 to the present. Miller is a frequent contributor on MSNBC political programs. He is erudite and especially easy to look at! It's a very readable book that shows how one man destroys everything he touches.