



First Friday News & Views



Monthly Newsletter of the First Friday Breakfast Club, Inc.

May 2023 / Volume 28 / Issue 5

Next Meeting

May 5
7:00 a.m.



Location

Hoyt Sherman Place
15th & Woodland
Des Moines



May
Speaker



Kathie
Obradovich

Website

ffbc Iowa.org



Meet the Board Members

by Byron Huff, Board President

This is the last of my series covering the Board members and one other person not on the Board who provides expertise for our website, email, and other IT services. I hope you have enjoyed learning about the people who make the First Friday Breakfast Club function.



Phil Williams

Phil has been on the Board for over 12 years. During that time he has always been there to volunteer for many events in which FFBC participates, including Iowa Safe Schools Governor's Conference, Capital City Pride, and more. Phil is also an amazing baker as he regularly brings "treats" (which we all appreciate!) to our Board meetings.



Phil Williams is an engineer with Consolidated Communications, Inc., where he provides high-speed Internet services over fiber. He has been at his job for two years and has 37 years experience in this work.

Phil works out regularly and plays volleyball, softball, dodgeball, basketball, and kickball with the Pride Sports League. He also is on the traveling softball team which is a part of the North America Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA).

In addition to the First Friday Breakfast Club Board of Directors, Phil has been on the Board of Directors at his credit union for 24 years and currently serves as Chairperson on the Board.

Phil lives in Des Moines and has three daughters, two sons-in-law, one grandson, and two more grandsons on the way. Besides staying active, Phil likes to do a little gardening, baking, and cooking.

[continued on page 2]

Jonathan Wilson

In February 2021, Jonathan stepped down as President of FFBC, handing that role to me [Byron]. The past two plus years have gone by so quickly that it is hard to believe how far we have come as the Board continually works to improve and modernize how we operate. As I said in the March 2021 newsletter, I am truly honored Jonathan put his trust in me to take on this role.

Jonathan Wilson was the co-founder of the First Friday Breakfast Club (FFBC) in early 1996 as an association of gay, bi, and trans men. It was intended, and remains, a monthly safe place for men who were out or in the process of coming out. He also was instrumental in creating and organizing a lesbian counterpart. More recently, he participated in the decision to extend FFBC membership to allies of gay, bi, and trans men.



For more than 25 years, Jonathan served as President of FFBC, served on its Board of Directors (and continues to do so), and, as an attorney, provided gratuitous legal services to achieve tax-exempt status for FFBC, as well as to comply with pertinent legal requirements of the organization. He assisted members with estate planning for legacy gifts to the FFBC. He has written more than 650 monthly newsletter articles on a wide variety of subjects, and during his tenure in leadership, FFBC has raised more than \$475,000 in funds for scholarships given to Iowa high school students who have done significant – often courageous – things to reduce homophobia and educate about LGBTQ+ issues in their schools and communities.

Those scholarships bought FFBC a “ticket” to Iowa high school graduations across the state of Iowa, often in front of audiences, especially in rural Iowa, who thought that they had never before seen an openly gay person. That’s what they thought; but more than once, the award was followed by a standing ovation. Did anything like that happen at your high school graduation?

It has made a difference. On one occasion, for example, a high school counselor who had received the annual, mailed announcement of the scholarship opportunity, returned it to sender unopened. Jonathan, who had served on the Des Moines School Board for a dozen years, happened to be acquainted with the superintendent of the school district that employed that counselor. Learning that, Jonathan gave the superintendent a friendly call and explained what had happened. The superintendent, to his credit, replied that two things were going to happen. First, he would

[continued on page 3]

Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **Ken Hanson** for introducing **Sheriff Kevin Schneider**, our April speaker. Thanks to **David Cotton** for managing our website, to **Nicholas Williams** for managing our Microsoft IT infrastructure, and to **David Wilfahrt** for managing FFBC’s finances. 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 **June 2023 newsletter** will be **May 22**. If you have something on your mind to share, type it up and email it to Wade (wadecpetersen@gmail.com) by the copy deadline.

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.



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.

["Meet the Board Members" continued from page 2]

personally see that the FFBC scholarship opportunity would be relayed to every high school student in the school district. Second, while he remained superintendent, such a thing would never happen again. Progress.

Thanks partly to the FFBC leadership of Jonathan Wilson, progress has been made toward equality for all people under the law.

Nicolas Williams

Nicholas has worked with the FFBC Board since early 2019 to help bring our paper systems into the electronic age as we digitized documents into the cloud, automated the R.S.V.P. system, and so much more.

Nicholas is a talented and accomplished IT Director with an impressive background in networking and telecom, as well as infrastructure services. He has gained a wealth of experience in the IT industry. Nicholas has a strong passion for technology and has demonstrated a natural ability to problem-solve and innovate in his work.



Throughout his career, Nicholas has gained extensive expertise in network design, implementation, and management, as well as telecommunications and infrastructure services. He has worked in various industries, including education, healthcare, and government contracting, providing him with a broad perspective on how to approach IT challenges in different environments.

Nicholas is known for his technical acumen, ability to troubleshoot complex issues, and his strong leadership skills. He has led successful technology initiatives, resulting in significant improvements in operational efficiencies and user experiences. Nicholas is a skilled communicator and has a track record of building strong relationships with stakeholders, including technical and non-technical personnel.

Nicholas has already made a significant impact in the IT industry. He is recognized as a leader in his field, demonstrating a strong work ethic, a passion for innovation, and an unwavering commitment to delivering high-quality results.



Future Speakers

June 2:

Zach Wahls

Iowa Senate
Democratic Leader

July 15:

**FFBC Donor
Recognition &
Member Party**

John Schmacker's
House & Gardens

August 4:

Kendra Weston

Executive Director
Lavender Legal Center

September 1:

C.J. Petersen

Executive Assistant to
State Auditor Rob Sand



A Starbucks Hiatus

by David Wilfahrt

“Venti, non-fat, no whip, no foam, no froth, extra hot mocha with two Splenda added, please.” My typical Starbucks coffee order. On occasion the order is decaf; on occasion I add an extra shot.

March 2023 took me on an impulsive coffeehouse tour of the Southeastern U.S. Always a fan of a good road trip, I thought I’d augment springtime sightseeing with **coffeehouse exploration**. I swore-off Starbucks for this journey. Only novel, local haunts were allowed.

I’ve been frequenting coffeehouses for decades and seek a certain look, vibe, and atmosphere that entices me to settle in and nestle for an hour or so, to read a prior patron’s wrinkled newspaper, or to flip open my laptop to review texts and emails. Coffee and in-depth conversation with friends I probably enjoy more than cocktails or dinner with friends.

When selecting a coffeehouse, first and foremost is the seating. One needs a comfortable chair for one’s tush. A hard metal or wood surface won’t cut it. It needs to be upholstered, preferably leather. The chair can be well-used, even a bit dirty or grimy is okay by me. Worn threadbare arms add to a chair’s character; you know it has provided hours of comfort to others. A chair needs to be snug and cozy for a cloudy 52-degree spring day.

Second, an inventive selection of high-sugar baked goods is important. Scones, croissants, muffins, coffeecake, cookies, or a biscotti for dipping enrich the experience. No one said drinking mochas and eating baked goods was a low-calorie affair. A baked good isn’t a requirement for every visit, just occasionally.

Third, the background music must be just that...in the background. While it can be jazz, classical, reggae, or even disco, it can’t dominate the peaceful harmony of the place. Noise-cancelling Apple AirPods work well when the music fails this test. They also help when a coffeehouse’s desirable low-level murmur of conversation becomes a bit too boisterous.

Let’s grab a coffee and some conversation soon, my friends!



“Silky smooth mocha”
Origin Coffee Bar, Savannah, GA

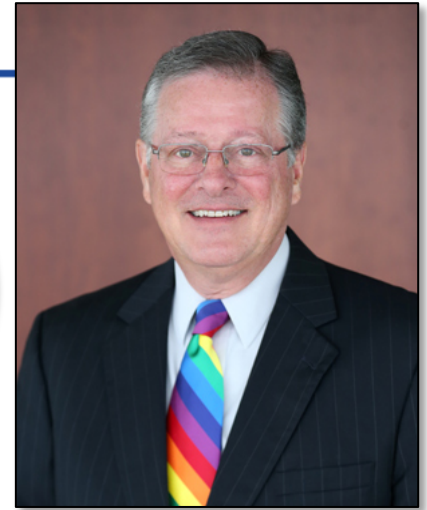
Southeast U.S. Tour Stops 2023

- **Fayetteville, AR: Doomsday Coffee** – College hangout near University of Arkansas
- **Hot Springs, AR: Collective Coffee & Tea** – Best leather chairs
- **Greenville, MS: Grounded Sister Coffee** - Small town hangout in the rural Mississippi Delta
- **Vicksburg, MS: Highway 61 Coffee** – Dark and cozy interior, charming town
- **Jackson, MS: Native Coffee** – A touch routine and pedestrian
- **Mobile, AL: Nova Espresso** – Decadent cookies, lovely outdoor garden setting
- **Tallahassee, FL: Black Dog Coffee** – Park and lake setting with Spanish moss-covered trees
- **Daytona Beach, FL: Waffle House** -- Don’t forget hashbrowns, visit any of their 1,900 U.S. locations
- **Saint Augustine, FL: The Kookaburra** - Tight and touristy
- **Savannah, GA: Savannah Coffee Roasters** – Great brick interior
- **Savannah, GA: The Gallery Espresso** – Art exhibit and coffee, most of it for sale
- **Savannah, GA: Origin Coffee Bar** – Slick and minimalist, picturesque mocha
- **Beaufort, SC: Superior Coffee & Cider** – Quintessential southern charm with porch
- **Charleston, SC: Second State Coffee** – Quiet neighborhood feel, off the beaten tourist path
- **Charleston, SC: Clerks Coffee Company** – Upscale, great savory croissants
- **Charleston, SC: Mudhouse Coffee** – Just opened, petite, out of Charlottesville, VA
- **Greensboro, NC: The Green Bean** – Progressive mecca in the heart of downtown
- **Waynesboro, VA: Farmhaus Coffee** – Truly an old farmhouse in the Shenandoah Mountains
- **Lexington, KY: Third Street Stuff Coffee** – Uber-liberal Funkytown meets Burning Man
- **St. Charles, MO: Picasso’s Coffee** – Somewhat typical storefront in historic downtown



Girls Basketball: A Brief History

by Jonathan Wilson



Girls basketball has been in the news much of late, especially when two teams advanced to the final game of the NCAA national championship, neither of which had ever before made it that far during March Madness. One of those teams was the Iowa Hawkeyes. Way to go Hawks!!

It occurred to me that a little history about the girls' basketball program in Iowa might be of interest. I served on the Des Moines School Board from 1983 to 1995 and was a witness to and participant in some of that history.



Iowa was one of the last states to abandon what was called 6-on-6 girls' basketball. No female Iowa high school athlete today was alive during the transition, and few would even know what 6-on-6 girls' basketball was. It was half-court basketball, with three offensive players and three defensive players. Neither of those groups was permitted to go past the center court demarcation line.

It was a problem; Iowa girls' basketball players could only demonstrate their defensive **OR** offensive skills, but not both. Players, however, were being recruited by colleges, all of which were then playing the 5-on-5 (current rules) version of the game, and female athletes were competing for scholarships. The situation put Iowa girls at a distinct disadvantage. How could recruiters know whether an excellent defensive player could make a basket, and how could recruiters know whether an excellent offensive player could play effective defense. The whole situation was offensive to fair-minded people.

Actually, before 6-on-6, there was 7-on-7 girls' basketball, three offensive and three defensive players with the same half court limitation. The seventh players were "jump centers," one on each team with the sole responsibility to meet at center court for a jump ball to put the ball into play and then leave the court until it was time for another jump ball. The two tallest girls were typically the "jump centers," and it didn't matter whether they could play effective defense or make a basket.

Members of the Des Moines School Board, who were unanimous in favoring a change, had frequent interactions with other school board members around the state of Iowa. Repeatedly, the response was that they really didn't need to discuss the issue on the merits because, if they were to agree to the change, "there wouldn't be enough school districts to have a meaningful state championship contest."

Des Moines School District to the rescue! Our board adopted a resolution saying that the district would move all five of its high schools to 5-on-5 basketball when and only if there were enough districts willing to do the same to allow for a meaningful state championship. That did the trick. It "forced" other school boards to discuss the issue *on the merits*, given that the opportunity then existed for the adoption of a similar resolution, without compromising the opportunities for their local girls to have a chance for a state championship as well as better opportunities for college scholarships.

It may be difficult to imagine, but the issue was quite controversial at the time and was frequently in the press. I had the opportunity to appear on a call-in radio program across from one of the district's girl's basketball coaches. In the course of the radio program, the coach commented snidely that when he was a young man his father taught him that there's a difference between girls and boys. My response was that, when I was a young man, my father also taught me that there's a difference between girls and boys – and it had nothing to do with basketball.

The Iowa girls' basketball team (and their opponents on the way to the national championship game) proved me, and like-minded school board members around the state, right. Girls are perfectly and impressively capable of 5-on-5, full-court basketball, while not compromising the real differences that do exist between girls and boys.



May Speaker

Kathie Obradovich



Kathie Obradovich of the *Iowa Capital Dispatch* has been covering Iowa government and politics for more than 30 years, most recently as political columnist and opinion editor for the *Des Moines Register*. She previously covered the Iowa Statehouse for 10 years for newspapers in Davenport, Waterloo, Sioux City, Mason City, and Muscatine. She is a leading voice on Iowa politics and makes regular appearances on state, national, and international news programs. She has led national-award-winning coverage of the Iowa caucuses and the *Register's* Iowa Poll.



Speaker Series

[Tickets are free, but you must register online]

May 11 / 6:00 / Temple Theater

Rutger Goethart



In his role as a Senior Advisor, Rutger focuses on corporate human rights due diligence, supporting companies to assess, prioritize, address and report (potential) human rights impacts. He guides companies in a practical way in the application of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, such as obtaining internal buy-in, the development of strategy and policies, risk assessment, external stakeholder engagement and feedback, relevant action-planning and external communication and reporting. Currently Rutger is supporting Shift – the leading center of expertise on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (<https://shiftproject.org>). For Shift, he works directly with various companies and organizations in assessing human rights risks and implementing ways to respect human rights.

DES MOINES GAY MEN'S CHORUS PRESENTS

JUN 8-9-10 2023

TEMPLE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

ANNUAL PRIDE CABARET

CAGES OR WINGS

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

VISIT DMGMC.ORG FOR TICKETS

Polk County Sheriff Addresses FFBC

by Gary Moore



April Speaker

With a display of Grant Wood artworks in the room marking the 100 anniversary of Hoyt Sherman Place, President of the First Friday Breakfast Club, Byron Huff, welcomed 35 members.

After a few announcements which included One Iowa's upcoming Gala and Capitol City Pride's events, Byron introduced Ken Hanson to present April's speaker. For those who may not be aware, Ken works for the sheriff supervising the preparation and serving of the three meals a day for 1000 inmates at the Polk County Jail. Ken, after giving the extensive background of **Sheriff Kevin J. Schneider**, noted that after 16 plus years working for the sheriff, he also had additional insights to share. Sheriff Schneider was a great advocate for his staff, as well as being involved with programs for refugee children. As an active Shriner, the sheriff often puts on a clown costume to support and entertain children. With those kind words, Ken introduced Sheriff Kevin J. Schneider.

Sheriff Schneider noted that in his 40 years with the sheriff's office, he has worked in most major positions. Sheriff Schneider is a consummate professional, working his way through all civil service ranks from deputy to chief, culminating in his appointment as Polk County Sheriff in 2018, and elected Sheriff in 2020.

In his role as sheriff, Schneider leads the largest sheriff's office in the state of Iowa with over 600 employees, administers an \$80 million budget, and provides 911 communication services for 30 police and fire agencies, as well as management of the Polk County Jail, the largest detention facility in the state.



Sheriff Schneider detailed the breadth and depth of the sheriff's office and all that falls under their responsibility:

- **maintaining their new 21 million dollar headquarters**
- **supervising dispatching for 30 different agencies under the 911 system which handles over 200,00 calls a year**
- **50 officers downtown for the courts to include court security and transport of prisoners**
- **patrolling 592 square miles of territory that Polk County encompasses**
- **providing animal control officers for the county and various municipalities**
- **8-10 staff to serve civil papers, divorce, and other court papers**
- **four officers that specialize in mental health calls**
- **supervision of the state's largest detention center which means providing security, food, and medical care**
- **supervision of court order ankle bracelet monitoring**
- **primary law enforcement for smaller communities in Polk County like Bondurant, Runnels, Grimes, and Alleman**
- **coordination with other community resources such as education, mental health, drug treatment, and work training**

All of this and more reflects a full-service police force with all the specialty teams that you would associate with a large metropolitan police force and then assuring the public that all of this is done with national standards and best practices.

He noted that the number of calls for assistance is up over 45% as well as the time spent on each call, handling whatever emergency is presented until an officer arrives. This calls for 911 dispatchers to have medical training as well as de-escalation training. He noted that, when attending national meetings and training sessions, the problems faced in Polk County are being faced across the nation: getting good help, a rise in mental health problems, more problems with youth, and an increase in drug use and deaths.

He feels today's society puts too much pressure on kids. He feels the Polk County Sheriff's Office is one of the country's best run and credits the Board of Supervisors for their support. He noted some sheriff's offices in the country are left to raise their own funds which can lead to corruption. All in all, I think attendees found the breadth of responsibilities of the sheriff for Iowa's largest county enlightening. As one attendee said, "How do you lead when handling five different jobs at the same time?"



April Meeting Photo Gallery



Photos by
Gary Moore
& Wade
Petersen



Join Us for the Next FFBC Meeting!



Ken Hanson, Sheriff Kevin J. Schneider, &
Polk County Supervisor Matt McCoy



Board Member Ken Hanson
Introduces his boss, Sheriff Schneider

14th Annual

2023

GALA

BENEFITING: **oneiowa**

Friday, June 30th
7:00 – 10:00 PM

SAVE THE DATE!

While the attack on LGBTQ rights has been unprecedented this year, we have also seen a united force for change – Iowans across the state have joined the fight for LGBTQ equality. We are excited to celebrate that collective spirit at the [14th Annual One Iowa Gala](#) on **Friday, June 30th**, at [The River Center](#)!

At the Gala, we will honor the advocates and allies making a difference, discuss the battle to preserve LGBTQ equality, and raise money to fuel our mission.

Get your tickets or sponsor the event at: one.bidpal.net/oneiowagala2023

**Sharon
Malheiro**
(1956-2023)



oneiowa

A Tribute to Sharon Malheiro (Byron Huff)

The LGBTQ+ community suffered a sad loss with the untimely death of Sharon Malheiro. She was a highly effective attorney in her career at the Davis Brown (now Dentons Davis Brown) law firm, where she served for a time as president of the firm. She was a professional colleague of the long-time president of FFBC, Jonathan Wilson, and she had recently retired from the firm.

She was the recent recipient of the LGBTQ+ Legacy Award, and for good reason. She was involved in the founding of and leadership in One Iowa. She was instrumental in the effort to achieve protection in Iowa from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. She was actively involved in the successful litigation to legalize same-sex marriage in Iowa. After that was accomplished, she legally married her long-time partner, Susan, who is left to mourn her death and cherish their memories together.

Sharon's most important legacy will be written by those who will rise to the occasion of her absence because of her example of leadership, her courage, her demonstrated tenacity, and her committed allegiance to equal treatment under the law.

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.ffbciowa.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

LGBTQ Kids Under Attack



by Supervisor Matt McCoy Polk County, 1st District

The current legislative session has been a relentless attack on LGBTQ kids in the state of Iowa. It is as if the Iowa Legislature chose to pick on and bully the most vulnerable children in our state. Nearly 20 measures have been introduced by Iowa's part-time legislature in this year alone. It is quite clear—the national agenda sweeping across the country in conservative-dominated legislatures is to advance an agenda of division, hate, and indifference.

Some of the actions that have become law: the Iowa GOP lawmakers have placed new restrictions on what accommodations and gender-affirming medical care can be provided for transgender minors. Under this outrageous law, parents and doctors are prohibited from providing gender-affirming care for children. In addition, transgender children are barred from using bathrooms that align with their gender identity. Since Iowa became a state, there has never been a reported case where a transgender child created problems in a bathroom that aligned with their orientation. Finally, kindergarten through sixth grade students are prevented from receiving any program, curriculum, test, survey, questionnaire, promotion, or instruction related to gender identity or sexual orientation.

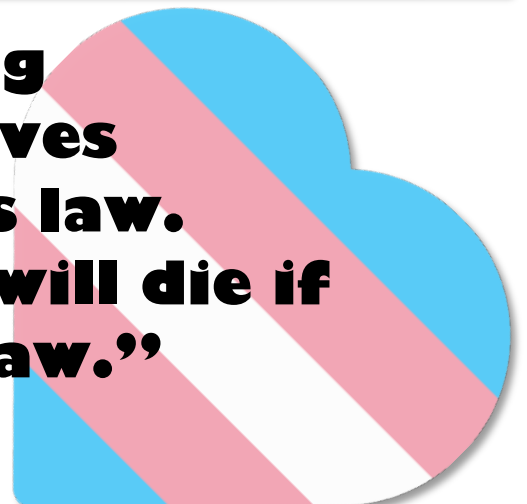
Attacks on public health have begun this year. The Iowa Legislature has formally removed the requirement to teach children about AIDS, HPV, and the HPV vaccine. The legislature now requires schools to provide parental consent before a child can participate in a survey about their mental, emotional, or physical health. This would also apply to any survey that would measure sexual behavior, illegal activities, or political or religious thoughts.

Iowa Safe Schools continues to be the last champion defending LGBTQ children in our state. They are scheduled to host the Governor's Conference (which she has never attended) this year on April 28. This conference draws LGBTQ students and allies from the state and Midwest. Many of these schools have very active gay-straight alliances and work to provide a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment, and their work is ever more important because of the hateful bills passing through the Iowa Legislature and signed by our governor. I am proud that I was able to support a \$10,000 sponsorship grant to support this conference, and I will be attending this event to support the important work that Iowa Safe Schools continues to accomplish. Make no mistake about it, the LGBTQ community is under a full-frontal attack. This is only the beginning of the conservative attack on our community. If you're not volunteering or contributing dollars to support Iowa Safe Schools, I would encourage you to think about how you could make a difference by supporting this vital organization.



“Kids are going to kill themselves because of this law. Iowa children will die if this becomes law.”

-- Iowa Democratic Senator Zach Wahls
in debate about anti-trans legislation



Iowa LGBTQ+ Resource Organizations



First Friday Breakfast Club

Website: www.ffbcioiowa.org
Email: info@ffbcioiowa.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: pridesportsleagueadm@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.

Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves

A Movie Review by Mark Turnage



When you think “Dungeons & Dragons,” what comes to mind? High fantasy? Tabletop roleplaying games? Geeks? With the cinematic adaptation of the popular Hasbro videogame, directors Jonathan Goldstein and John Francis Daley had another word in mind: comedy, and it’s what makes their own spin on fantasy high-charisma.

Leading man Chris Pine plays Edgin Darvis, a lute-strumming, silver-tongued bard who finds himself in prison with his barbarian companion Holga (Michelle Rodriguez, obviously) after their latest heist ended up being a trap orchestrated by evil wizard Sofina (Daisy Head). Desperate to reunite with his daughter Kira (Chloe Coleman), Edgin and Holga resolve to find former heist partner and Kira’s guardian, Forge (Hugh Grant, always a delightful cad) with the help of a human-wary, shapeshifting druid and a clumsy, down-on-his-luck sorcerer. Of course, Sofina has other plans—namely, ending the world, which the group of ex-thieves discover when the meeting with Kira goes awry.

The film’s choice to blend fantasy and camp mean the story doesn’t take itself or its characters too seriously, yet the narrative is packed with enough creature cameos and references to amuse a die-hard player. Rege-Jean Page of *Bridgerton* fame plays one of the most comedic characters—a no-nonsense paladin knight played straight in a group of modern-sounding, wisecracking thieves. A strong ensemble cast does this film wonders. Like a good in-game campaign, the script is smart enough to pace itself well for a two-hour movie. Yet it’s the buddy comedy chemistry between Pine and Rodriguez that becomes the film’s emotional centerpiece, and more often the source of the movie’s best jokes. A particularly hilarious secret celebrity cameo both plays up a running joke with Rodriguez’s character and provides one of the most moving scenes in the film on the nature of relationships, chosen family, and growing apart.

One of the appeals of the game “Dungeons & Dragons” is its accessibility to new players—yes, the character sheets and calculating dice rolls may slow things down sometimes, but a good Moderator of the story takes this into account and provides character-driven moments (and plot twists, of course) to make it interesting for everyone playing. This is the spirit behind the *Dungeons & Dragons* movie—instead of being buried in self-serious lore or heavy stories and somber characters, the tone is couched in fun, silliness, and magic tricks. Yes, the heroes do face a fearsome dragon in a dungeon—but it’s a comically corpulent lizard whose biggest threat to the heroes is its own gluttony and girth. The narrative here is light on complexity, and heavier moments with both Pine and Rodriguez aren’t lingered on long or too deeply in favor of a faster pace. This “Lord of the Rings Lite” is accessible, has jokes, and naturally, has interesting playing fields.

The finale does have some recycled *Goblet of Fire* vibes, and Sofina isn’t given much to do other than glower, turn looks, and menace everyone around her, if I’m allowed to have my villain gripe. When your second-string villain has that much more charisma, it makes you wish they were the big bad instead. Yet the reluctant (and at times apathetic) attitude towards stopping Sofina and her red-clad ilk by the main characters feels convincing, like the real-world attitudes towards zealots in red hats.

Even if you don’t know the difference between a roll for initiative and a saving throw, *Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves* offers enough comedy, character development, and accessible fantasy to make this film a critical hit.

Board of Directors

David Cotton	Gene Larson
Jim Flansburg	Deb Madison-Levi
Ken Hanson	Wade Petersen
Brad Holland	Joe Raetz
Byron Huff	David Wilfahrt
Scott Kuknyo	Phil Williams

Jonathan Wilson (Emeritus)

Contact Us At: info@ffbciowa.org

Officers

Byron Huff
President

David Cotton
Vice President

Joe Raetz
Secretary

David Wilfahrt
Treasurer



Newsletter Editor

WP Wade
Petersen

Webmaster

**David
Cotton**



Publication



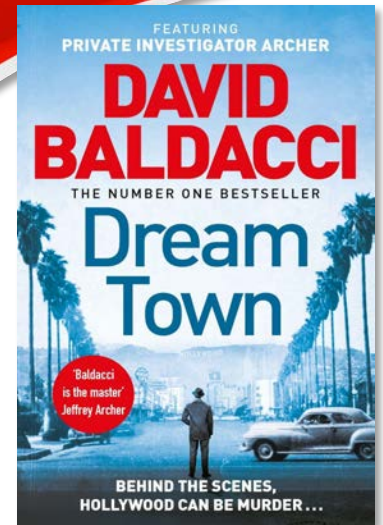
©2023
FFBC Board
of Directors

First Friday Breakfast Club
P.O. Box 41611
Des Moines, IA 50311
(515) 954-2996

Dream Town

by David Baldacci

Book
Review by
Steve Person



Dream Town is the third installment of Baldacci's mid-twentieth thriller with the lead character of Aloysius Archer. Archer, a World War II veteran, arrives in Hollywood on New Year's Eve, 1952, and squires his actress and potential love interest, Liberty Callahan, to a nightclub where they intend to bring in 1953 with appropriate fanfare. Callahan introduces Archer to one of her Hollywood connections, one Eleanor Lamb, a down-on-her-luck screenwriter—or is she? Once Lamb discovers Archer's occupation as a private eye, she asks him to investigate the strange goings on at her Malibu home complete with menacing phone calls and a blue automobile lurking outside her house.

When Archer arrives at Lamb's house, he discovers a dead body but no Eleanor Lamb. She is missing. But where? As he rifles through her desk, he finds a number of matchbooks from an establishment in Chinatown called The Jade. It is one of the more sinister "businesses" in that particular part of Los Angeles. Once inside, he discovers that strangers who enter are not welcome, but he also sees a famous Hollywood actress, Samantha Lourdes, disembark from her Rolls Royce and enter with no problem whatsoever. Archer manages to sneak into the inner sanctum of this lair of secrets but is discovered. His encounter there with a man named Paley leaves Paley with injuries from Archer's superior fighting skills, but Paley successfully manages to stab Archer. Bleeding, Archer bursts into the star's Rolls as she is pulling away from The Jade. Her chauffeur drops him off at his car parked a few streets away.

And thus the ensuing events take Archer to the seamier gambling meccas of Las Vegas, to the Hollywood mansions of important movie moguls and producers and their even more influential wives, and ultimately to luxurious homes at Lake Tahoe. All in search of Eleanor Lamb. One suspicious aspect of Lamb's Malibu home concerns her neighbors who ostensibly are spending a month in Paris. The ever-curious Archer breaks into these neighbors' garage and finds curiosities that eventually explain that strange patch of out-of-place and discolored lawn in these people's otherwise meticulously kept back yard. Hmmm. Whatever could explain that?

The bodies pile up, the excitement builds, and secrets that most thought would never be discovered become apparent as they do in most of Baldacci's stories. He does a bang-up job of reproducing the atmosphere of 1953 America and Hollywood in particular. His research most certainly serves him well with this adventure. He is one of this genre's most successful writers. If you like a good thriller, this one is for you.

