



First Friday

Scholarships

Edition



News & Views

Monthly Newsletter of the First Friday Breakfast Club, Inc.

July 2023 / Volume 28 / Issue 7

No July Meeting
**FFBC Donor
Recognition &
Member Party
July 15**

Location
**Home/Gardens of
John Schmacker
3724 Hunter Ave
Des Moines** 

Free Event
7:00 – 10:00
Beer, wine, food!
*** More details on
page two.**

Website
ffbc Iowa.org



Here's To The Scholars!

by Byron Huff, Board President

This year we honored **14** amazing humans at our June 2 awards ceremony; the summary in this newsletter will give a brief reason the Scholarship Committee selected each of them to receive a **\$3,000 scholarship**. A record attendance of approximately 114 gathered in the beautiful art gallery of the historic Hoyt Sherman Place where smiles, applause, and tears permeated the room. If you missed this amazing moment in time, go to our website where you will find a video recording.

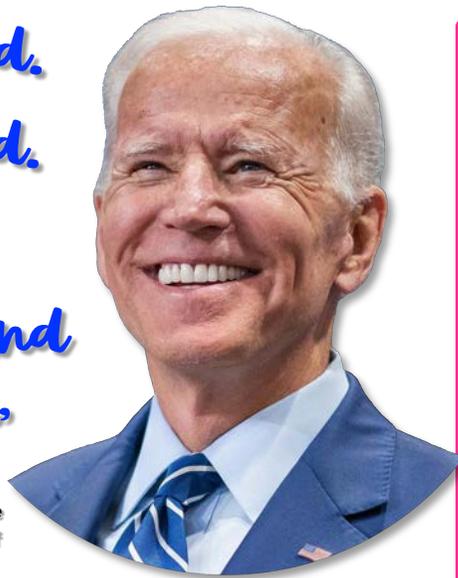
Our meeting this month will be in the evening for those of you who are not morning people. Our annual donor appreciation event is held in a beautiful outdoor space that offers mammoth shade trees and amazing landscaping owned and maintained by FFBC member, John Schmacker. Please join us on July 15 for this free evening of food, drink, and great conversation! Please [RSVP](#).



I hope you will continue to follow and support FFBC as the need for our scholarships continues to be strong. The unrestricted amount we award is truly appreciated with heartfelt tears of joy from the recipients and their families. Recognition of the amazing accomplishments our scholars represent gives them strength and the resilience to continue the fight for LGBTQ+ equality. Please consider a [donation](#) for our 2024 awards; you can even set up a recurring donation on our webpage. **Thank you!**



*"You are loved.
You are heard.
You are
understood. and
you belong."*



President Joe Biden speaking at a Pride month celebration on the south lawn of the White House, June 10, 2023



FFBC Annual Summer PARTY & Donor Appreciation Event

This is a **free** event!

Serving beer, wine, & light appetizers/food.



The annual party & donor appreciation event is Saturday, July 15, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.

at the home of **John Schmacker** (3724 Hunter Ave., Des Moines; north of University on 39th street, east on Hunter to the last house on the right).

Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **Byron Huff** for introducing **Iowa Senator Zach Wahls**, our June 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 **August 2023 newsletter** will be **July 24**. If you have something on your mind to share, type it up and email it to Wade (wadecpetersen@gmail.com) by the deadline.



Fundraising efforts are ongoing to fund our scholarship program. To date we have awarded over **\$450,000** for scholarships 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**. 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.





Broadway Singalong

July 26 | 6:30 - 10:00 PM
Noce | 1326 Walnut St | Des Moines

Join us for a fully interactive evening of Broadway show tunes performed by a stellar cast featuring a very special guest performer...YOU! Come and enjoy and sing your favorite Broadway songs. Doors open at 6 PM. All ages welcome from 6:30 - 8:30 PM. 21+ from 8:30 PM onward.

The Project of Primary Health Care



30th Anniversary Event
Saturday, July 22
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Bob Shetler Picnic Area | Saylorville Lake



It's our 30th anniversary since being recognized as a 501c3 non-profit organization, and we want to commemorate this special occasion with all of you! We cordially invite you to join us for a day filled with celebration, reflection, and unity.

Future Speakers



August 4:

Kendra Weston

Executive Director
Lavender Legal Center

September 1:

C.J. Petersen

Executive Assistant to
State Auditor Rob Sand

October 6:

"Coming Out"
Panel Discussion



<https://qlibrary.org/>



Quatrefoil Library is a 100% volunteer-run organization and community center in Minneapolis that cultivates the **free** exchange of ideas and makes accessible LGBTQ+ materials for education and inspiration. The library launched **ebooks** and **audiobooks** last year so that LGBTQ folks and the people who love them can access supportive resources regardless of geographic location. Membership is free, and expanding the digital collection is a priority for 2023. **Bonus:** Quatrefoil was founded by Iowans David Irwin and Dick Hewitson. *****Information submitted by John Brentnall, former FFBC Board Member from 1995.**



Dis-United Methodist Church

by Jonathan Wilson

I grew up in the United Methodist Church; my father was a UMC clergy member who served for several years as pastor of the United Methodist Church in Bloomfield; my sister is a UMC clergy member; and I was married in the Bloomfield UMC at its previous location in Bloomfield.

The UMC has been struggling for YEARS with the subject of homosexuality. Its official church Discipline says that homosexuality is incompatible to Christian teaching. It is probably not surprising that the statement in the Discipline was off-putting to gay children of God and their families (moms, dads, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins) who love and support them. It created an unwelcoming environment, and thanks to that “filter,” doubtless led to a loss of members and potential members.

A recent agreement was reached that allows individual United Methodist Churches to disassociate and become independent, free-standing churches (by whatever name they may choose), or to affiliate with the newly created “Global Methodist Church.” Each individual church membership was required to vote on the choice; disassociation required a 2/3 majority vote; required the church to pay two years of “apportionments” to the conference in which they previously had connectional association; and required the church to fund vested clergy retirement account(s). Against that backdrop, there have been only 83 churches in the entire state of Iowa that have voted to disassociate, which is about 11% of all Iowa UMC churches. Given the years of congregation membership declines due, in part, to the hostile environment created by the UMC Discipline for gay children of God and their allies, it’s remarkable that more churches didn’t disassociate. God works in mysterious ways.

I struggled for years with the conflict between the UMC Discipline and my reality as a gay man. Ultimately, I came to an Aldersgate Experience, the epiphany felt by John Wesley (the Anglican priest who founded the Methodist church movement). It happened after my UMC clergy father gave me a Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, copyrighted circa 1934. Out of curiosity, I looked up the terms “homosexual” and “homosexuality,” and neither term appeared in that unabridged dictionary. That further piqued my curiosity, and I did a bit of research. I learned that it was not generally recognized that, until early in the 20th century, gay children of God even *existed*. For more than 1900 years after the Bible was written, it was believed by the authors and all readers in the Biblical audience were straight -- heterosexuals. Based on that factual misunderstanding, it is no wonder that same-gender intimacy would be viewed as contrary to nature, an “abomination,” and sinful -- incompatible with Christian teaching.



In a similar vain, the Biblical writers and their readers believed, for about 1,492 years (think Christopher Columbus) that the earth was flat, that heaven was up and hell was down (think Tower of Babel), that the earth was the center of the created universe, and that the sun went around the earth rather than the other way around. All were factual errors. We have readily “forgiven” the Biblical writers for their now-obvious mistakes of FACT in order to search the Scriptures for the capital **T** truth that we hope to find there for guidance. We need to be equally forgiving of the Biblical writers for their mistake of FACT about whether or not gay children of God exist. The percentage really doesn’t matter. We need to recalibrate our understanding of the Biblical admonition about homosexual intimacy – gay men should not be engaging in intimacy with unsuspecting straight women; it will be unnatural, an “abomination,” and sinful. In short, it is not likely to work out well. The UMC Discipline is simply, albeit understandably, wrong.

To the great credit of the voting members of the Bloomfield United Methodist Church, the congregation did not vote to disassociate from the UMC. Had they done otherwise, I’m pretty sure that my deceased father would have been rolling over in his grave. After I came out to him as a gay man, he wrote to me that he had prayerfully reconsidered the Scriptures on the subject and concluded that any purported Christian who condemns homosexuality has misunderstood the Word of God and misunderstood the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was right.

There will be some misguided members of the Bloomfield UMC who will elect to go elsewhere for the nurture of their Christian faith. That is their right. I, for one, plan to send a financial contribution to the Bloomfield United Methodist Church.

There are now something like 40,000 +/- Christian denominations. Most have formed as a result of pretty petty differences over the interpretation of Holy Scripture. They have then had to emphasize those differences in order to maintain their “brand,” their identity, and largely have neglected emphasizing those shared Christian beliefs that could/should bind them together. Christ would be rolling over in his grave if he were still in it.

FFBC Scholarships

Awarded

by Gary Moore



The sun shown down on the **14 scholars** that the FFBC Scholarship Committee decided to honor out of the 35 applications received from around the state of Iowa. The First Friday Breakfast Club each June selects a number of outstanding students who have demonstrated leadership and scholarship and who have significantly fought homophobia within their communities. The scholarships are awarded regardless of gender, gender identity, or race and can be used for continued education.

It is a morning where FFBC members lead off PRIDE month with a deep appreciation of the strides the gay community has made and with awareness of the struggles that still lie ahead. Guest speaker, Iowa Senator Zack Wahls, a previous FFBC scholar, addressed the well over 100 in attendance which included FFBC members, families of scholars, and the 14 scholars. He noted that the just-finished legislative session was one of the most hateful and troublesome for the LGBTQ community in many years; it was a session where state Republicans decided to concentrate on their base by playing to the tune of nationally inspired themes. Senator Wahls stated, “We are not going back” despite the Republican legislature and the governor punching down on the LGBTQ community.

Senator Wahls noted that legislation passed will prevent Iowa parents from making choices for their children, a “don’t say gay” bill, a forced outing law disregarding professional ethic standards, a book banning law, and passed a law preventing talking about HPV and HIV in health classes. He noted that demagoguery to the Republican base seems to mean more than the well-being of their constituency. “Basic respect, fundamental rights, tolerance, and decency should be above politics. That is what we are fighting for.”

Wahls said that the one word he would use to describe the Republican legislators this year is *fear*. Zach noted how the governor went out and campaigned against members of her own party if they did not agree with her, creating an atmosphere of fear. He felt there is an atmosphere of fear among businesses who also fear retribution. Remember, he said there is no courage without fear. **“Fear comes before courage”**...a concept most LGBTQ people are well aware of. The only way to correct this bad legislation is to get out and vote, and to get out and organize, including for school boards and city councils. We must meet the organization skills of the far-right Mothers for Freedom and other special interest groups that are funded by national far-right groups.



June Speaker

June Speaker

Iowa Senator Zack Wahls

Upon the conclusion of Senator Wahl’s remarks and discussion period, Ken Hanson and Tim Schreck thanked the families of our scholars for their support, the selection committee, and the donors before introducing each of FFBC’s 2023 Scholars. Each received their award after a brief description of their accomplishments that resulted in their selection.

As I looked around the room in between taking pictures, I could not help but notice the smiles and pride filling the faces in the room, the pride of parents, and the pride of FFBC members. As the stories attached to these young scholars were told, you could see tears wiped away here and there as members remembered and connected with their experiences of many years ago. What a great way to start **PRIDE!**

First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarships

2022-2023 Scholarship Committee

Ken Hanson
(Chair)

David Cotton
Jim Flansburg
Chris Russell
Tim Schreck
Phil Williams

At the FFBC meeting on June 2, 2023, people gathered to celebrate this year's group of **14** Iowa high school seniors who have distinguished themselves with efforts to reduce homophobia and educate about LGBTQ+ issues in their schools and communities.



Each scholar will receive a scholarship of **\$3,000**, in two installments, to be used for *any* expenses incurred during their post-high school educational endeavors. It matters not whether that endeavor is in college somewhere or a technical school. The scholarships are awarded to deserving students, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, or other personal characteristic. Thus far, more than **\$450,000** has been awarded, thanks to the generosity of FFBC members and LGBTQ+ allies. **One hundred percent of the money raised goes to the scholarships;** contributions are not used to raise the money, a somewhat unique thing that can be said about the FFBC scholarship program and fundraising. The more money raised, the more money given.

This year we honored: **Max Cline, Levi Cooper, Kendall Duit, Kenzie Fick, Leo Friedman, Lilly Beth Froehlich, Beatrice Goldberry, Jackson Kaune, Beau Kell, Olivia Moody, Dallas Olberding, Ava Rossow, Dakota Walling, and Noah Wasek.** As you can see from their brief backgrounds on the following pages, their collective efforts have reached all across the state of Iowa.



(left) FFBC President, **Byron Huff**;
(center) Scholarship Chair, **Ken Hanson**;
(right) Scholarship Committee Member, **Tim Schreck**

Photos by
Gary Moore,
Wade Petersen,
& Ken Hanson

“This year, with the unimaginable happenings in our statehouse, we have a special message for our scholarship awardees...you are Welcome here! You are safe, you are necessary, you are important, and we celebrate you today for being exactly the stellar individuals you are meant to be.”

(Tim Schreck, Scholarship Committee)

2023 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Max
Cline**

Cedar Rapids Washington High School



Max is a graduate of Cedar Rapids George Washington High School, and the recipient of the FFBC scholarship sponsored by John Charles and David Nelson. The first line that we read in Max's essay was "I have always believed in standing up for the little guy." And Max expanded on that over the years by leading protests against anti-queer legislative actions, as well as fighting for people with disabilities, women, people of color, and all who are oppressed. His out-front presence during a protest against Iowa's anti-trans athlete laws led to family conflict, but Max remained steadfast. His leadership came out in eighth grade when he sort of nominated himself as "King" of the junior high GSA (and everyone else supported him), and again in high school when he assumed leadership of the GSA as a junior. The GSA has fought for gender-neutral restrooms and created a school-wide Ally Day, and is now a safe space for everyone in the school.

**Levi
Cooper**

Carlisle High School



Levi graduated from Carlisle High School and is the recipient of the scholarship sponsored by the Polk County Board of Supervisors. Here are a few of Levi's activities in the past couple years: creator and leader of the school diversity club called RALLY, student ambassador for new kids, and AmeriCorps leader helping fellow students learn about college options and preparation. Levi led a fundraiser which allowed the GSA to create and provide 40 blankets for local senior citizens. During the Student Day at the Capital, Levi spoke one-on-one with his local legislator about the proposed book bannings. He related his story of needing some of those books as a child in order to feel he belonged and was not the only gay person out there. And he did all this while working toward high school graduation, and earning an associate's degree at DMACC! Levi has long-term plans to get a music therapy degree, and to continue his work of service and advocacy, caring for anyone who crosses his path.

**Kendall
Duit**

Iowa Falls-Alden High School



Kendall Duit graduated from Iowa Falls-Alden High School. They have been openly queer for a while, and proudly so, while taking on various leadership roles in their concert and jazz bands. During their junior year, an opportunity arose to be a leader for the LGBTQ community they love. A teacher at the high school decided that it was time to start a GSA, and Kendall was asked to be the junior class representative. In their senior year, Kendall was named president of the GSA club. There have been some ups and downs, but the club survives, and Kendall hopes the groundwork that they have put in with potential future GSA leaders will help to establish the club as a long-term fixture for the high school. Kendall hopes to have a future in creating and managing music performance. We like the sound of that!

2023 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

Kenzie Fick

Roland-Story High School



Kenzie Fick is a graduate of Roland-Story High School. One of her recommendation letters described her as “an athlete, an actor and an advocate.” And looking at the list of activities she provided, that makes sense as it appears she did everything she could in high school! The activity that caught our eye was how she led the effort to resurrect the school’s GSA. The club had been inactive for several years due to low participation, but also, lack of support from school officials. Kenzie became the leader of the renewed GSA club, and helped to create an environment for experiencing (in her words) open and comfortable queerness. As a highly visible, openly queer student, Kenzie also became the go-to person for students and staff who had questions, were just becoming aware of their sexuality, or were not comfortable being open in the conservative environment of her school. By being her true self, Kenzie earned the respect and admiration of many.

Leo Friedman

Newton High School



Leo Friedman is a graduate of Newton High School and will receive the scholarship sponsored by David A. Cotton, a fellow Newton High grad. While the Covid pandemic had its many challenges, it allowed Leo space to see that the homophobic friends in his life were not who he needed, and started to surround himself with open-minded, welcoming people. In his senior year, he came to fully understand and accept that he is bisexual. At the same time, he saw what was happening around books and education in Iowa, and decided to respond by creating the Newton High School Filmmaking club. This year, with a club membership (and cast) of dozens, the dystopian feature film *The Refinement* was born - an anti-totalitarian epic, with a gay, positive, loving relationship at the center. Hundreds have seen the film, and another positive image of gay love is in the world! Leo has hopes of working in mathematics, while dreaming of greatness in the arts.

Lilly Beth Froehlich

Waukee High School



Lilly Beth is a graduate of Waukee High School and is awarded the scholarship sponsored by Bruce Carr & Robert Thelen. Lilly Beth’s advocacy started at a young age when she confronted her less than receptive church youth group and pastor about her identity. Lilly Beth understood she was bisexual, and was tired of feeling isolated and excluded in that space. In the following years, Lilly Beth had the opportunity to meet a group of older LGBTQ and queer kids who helped her fully accept herself. Then she took off – she became a visible leader of protests against anti-trans legislation, she led the “Say Gay” walkout at her school, and jumped at the opportunity to join the Iowa Youth Cabinet. Lilly Beth has had the opportunity to address many of our state leaders about LGBTQ realities in the face of difficult legislation. Lilly Beth hopes for a future studying Environmental Policy, continuing to fight the good fight.

2023 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Beatrice
Goldberry**



West Liberty High School



Beatrice is a graduate of West Liberty High school, and the recipient of the scholarship sponsored by Trudy Holman Hurd. She is also THE advocate and ally you want in your corner! Beatrice told us about the challenges her younger trans brother faced in his life. Having witnessed some of the worst of homophobia impacting her brother, Beatrice was inspired to support every member of the LGBTQ community however she could. She participated in the West Liberty GSA, led by a supportive teacher. But when that teacher left the school, and no other teacher would step up, Beatrice took over the leadership role. She recognized that the GSA needed to continue, as a safe space for every student. As of March, a couple GSA members had led a well-attended walkout to protest state legislation, Iowa Safe School had been engaged for a visit, and a new teacher advisor has stepped forward for next year. Beatrice also works as an Americorps assistant, helping fellow students prepare for college.

**Jackson
Kaune**



Dallas Center-Grimes High School



Jackson Kaune is a graduate of Dallas Center Grimes High School. The two words that came up over and over again in Jackson's application were leader and advocate. He has held primary roles in various organizations at DCG, with the most impactful as leader of the CommUnity Club, which was started post-Covid and is focused on diversity, equity and inclusion. Jackson signed on as co-leader of the club, and immediately jumped into educating his school about the range of communities and cultures represented at his school. Jackson also participated in the GSA and spent a day of conversations at the state capital, talking to any legislator willing to explain themselves to a well-informed student advocate! Jackson told us he didn't really have to come out because his closet was made of glass! But Jackson chose to step from that safe environment into advocacy for so many who were less fortunate and less protected, and we think that is fabulous.

**Beau
Kell**



Cedar Rapids Washington High School



Beau is a graduate of Cedar Rapids Washington High School. Beau's primary drivers are about inclusion and acceptance. About three years ago Beau realized they were a transgender male. While family understanding and acceptance took some time, they found a supportive community of queer friends pretty quickly. And then they went to work as the student editor for the school yearbook. Beau included a spread about the GSA, and this year, will include features about anti-LGBTQ legislation in the state and how CR Washington students responded with walkouts and other activities. Beau told us that they want to represent the LGBTQ community, both its issues and JOYS, in the yearbook, and their efforts are supported by the school. Beau has future plans to work in the field of education, always motivated by promoting inclusion and acceptance.

2023 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Olivia
Moody**

North Polk High School



Olivia graduated from North Polk High School and is awarded the scholarship sponsored by Jane Ann Cotton. Although she was in high school when she identified as pansexual, Olivia told us that at a younger age she was “the knight in shining armor for her middle school queer community.” In high school, Olivia has carried on, through involvement in student government, reenergizing the GSA, and even planting the seeds for a future gender-neutral homecoming court. She is an active member of Future Farmers of America (FFA), despite facing prejudice and homophobia on a regular basis. Olivia also created a school environment club, and in 2022, she was named the Beekeeper Honey Queen by a regional Iowa beekeeper organization. One of Olivia’s letters of recommendation described her this way, “Olivia spent her high school years building a stronger, healthier, kinder world.”

**Dallas
Olberding**

Mount Vernon High School



Dallas Olberding is a graduate of Mt. Vernon High School, and the recipient of the scholarship sponsored by Phil Brawner & Ted Johnson. Dallas gets things done! He is a fierce advocate, leading school protests against recent anti-LGBTQ legislation. As a member of the yearbook and website staffs, in 2022 Dallas was named one of 10 Emerging Journalists by the Iowa High School Press Association. He is a carrier of important messages, most notably his All-State Speech performance of “A Poem for Pulse” to ensure the queer community was represented in state speech competitions. Then there is dancing. Dallas uses his love of dance as yet another venue to tell the world who he is. He puts beginner dancers, 5-8 year olds, through their paces, and has been lead performer in various school and community performances. In fact, on the day we notified Dallas of his scholarship award, we had to cut the call a bit short because he had to get back to rehearsal, as choreographer for the spring school musical.

**Ava
Rossow**

Des Moines Roosevelt High School



Ava is a graduate of Roosevelt High School in Des Moines. She came to understand her sexuality in grade school, and with a supporting community, made a lot happen in high school. Ava led the GSA organization at Roosevelt for three years, working to create an open and accepting environment for all students. She understood how lucky she was to have a supportive family and friends, and worked to create that environment for anyone needing a safe space. She and GSA members have participated in Student Day at the Capital, the Governors Conference and other social cause activities. Ava was at the front of a school protest against recent anti-LGBTQ legislation being debated at the Iowa capital. She also works with EyesOpenIowa, an organization that focuses on providing comprehensive sex education information, as a member of their Youth Leadership Board. Ava’s advocacy impressed us greatly, and we see a fantastic future for her.

2023 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

Dakota Walling

St. Ansgar High School



Dakota is a graduate of St. Ansgar High School. Dakota grew up in Manly, and attended classes in St. Ansgar, the smallest school that is represented among our scholarship winners with a graduating class of 37. It is a rural, conservative, northern Iowa community, and yet, during his junior year, Dakota knew that he had to come out and live as a transgender man. He is the first student in the St Ansgar system to come out as transgender. He faced extreme homophobia, from family and former friends, but remained true to himself. Before senior year, two single use restrooms at the school were re-labeled as non-gender due to Dakota's advocacy. One of his references told us "Dakota has been an advocate for LGBTQ youth, has led by example, and has left a positive impact on our school and community." And "whether he realizes it or not, Dakota is a role model for our younger students who feel they have to hide their true selves." That is spectacular!

Noah Wasek

Marion High School



Noah is a graduate of Marion High School. Noah came to understand he is gay early in high school. And though a bit nerve-racking, the act of coming out to his family and some friends was met with support and love. But other experiences were harder, so what Noah did was find the places and the people where he felt supported and wanted. He was a pretty good player, but he dropped football, stayed in band, and his junior year, became the drum major for the band. THE high profile, leadership role which Noah earned and embraced as an openly gay man. He became student director for the fall school play the past two years. As a member of the choir, he worked with school administration to implement a policy allowing students to room with whomever makes them feel safest on class trips, regardless of gender. In multiple situations, Noah experienced homophobia, and then found a way to move past it and find a better space, to the benefit of his school, his classmates and himself.



*"It takes courage
to grow up and
become who you
really are."*

-- E.E. Cummings

Scholarship Awards Photo Gallery



114
June Meeting
Scholarship
Attendees!

Photos by
Gary Moore,
Wade Petersen,
& Ken Hanson



Scholarship Awards Photo Gallery



Photos by
Gary Moore,
Wade
Petersen,
& Ken Hanson



Max Cline



Ava Rossow



Olivia Moody



Lilly Beth Froehlich



Leo Friedman



Jackson Kaune



Beatrice Goldberry



Levi Cooper



Beau Kell



Noah Wasek



Kenzie Fick



Dakota Walling



Kendall Duit



Dallas Olberding



2023

Pride Fest



FFBC Booth



Board Members
Ken Hanson
& Joe Raetz
Carry the
Parade
Banner



Board Member Deb Madison-Levi Represents FFBC with her Vintage Ice-Cream Bicycle & Freeze-Pops for the Crowd

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.ffbcia.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

Biden-Harris Administration Delivers for Iowans



**by Supervisor Matt McCoy
Polk County, 1st District**

On June 14, 2023, I had the privilege of being invited to the White House with other prominent Iowa leaders to discuss the achievements of the Biden-Harris Administration and the impact that they have delivered for Iowans. This administration, unlike past administrations, was able to pass a bipartisan infrastructure law that is guaranteed to impact every single Iowan in a positive manner. Over the next five years, more than \$1.5 billion will be spent upgrading Iowa's aging bridges and roads.

Five million will be spent upgrading broadband infrastructure to provide equity and access for rural Iowa. Two hundred thirty-six million will be invested in improving clean and safe drinking water with more than \$74 million dedicated to lead service line replacements. Three hundred five million, over the next five years, will be invested in public transit across the state. More than \$11 million will be invested in clean, electric buses. Fifty-one million will be invested in vehicle charges over the next five years to prepare Iowa for the widespread adoption of electric vehicles. There will be \$67.9 million invested in clean energy and energy efficiency programs for low-income Iowans. Our airports are expected to receive \$88.9 million in 2022 and 2023 for necessary improvements. The final area is climate where more than \$71 million will be invested in resiliency with \$19 million targeted toward flood mitigation.

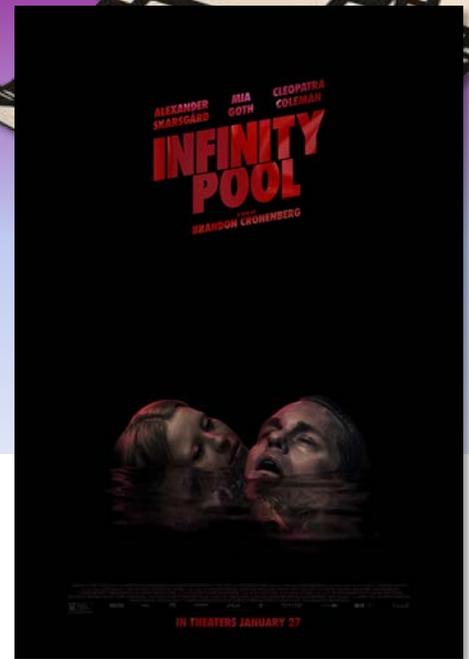
This administration has passed more positive pro-Iowa legislation than any administration in the past 50 years beginning with COVID-19 recovery through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), cutting the cost of prescription drugs for low-income Iowans, lowering health insurance premiums, and expanding coverage through the Affordable Care Act and the federal marketplace which has allowed thousands of Iowans to gain affordable healthcare coverage. It is critical that we share the success stories of this administration as positive news tends to be co-opted by Governor Reynolds and turned into Republican talking points. This meeting in D.C. was a first step effort into controlling the narrative moving forward that Biden and Congressional Democrats delivered for Iowa.





Infinity Pool

A Film Review by Mark Turnage



Successfully synthesizing social allegory into a fictional narrative can expand an audience's perspective by reframing social issues similarly to a mystery: leave enough clues, and the allegory will subtly fill in the blanks, meshing smoothly with the plot, its characters, and their motivations. When the allegory becomes too heavy-handed, the audience's "willing suspension of disbelief" drops, and what was meant to be compelling instead becomes tedious. Directed by Brandon Cronenberg, son of director David Cronenberg (the latter famous for cerebral body horror such as *The Fly* and *Scanners*), *Infinity Pool's* trippy social allegory carries the themes of Cronenberg's other work, namely the corrosive effects of wealth and privilege on the body and mind (see also my November 2020 review of *Possessor*). But while *Possessor* was buoyed by complex characters that complimented its plot, the motifs and character development of this *Infinity Pool* could be deeper and splashier.

Alexander Skarsgård plays washed-up novelist James Foster, dismally married six years to his wealthy spouse Em (Cleopatra Coleman) and on vacation at a posh resort in the fictional seaside country of Li Tolqa for creative inspiration. But this hotel is no White Lotus: the staff warn guests not to leave the heavily guarded hotel grounds, painting the outside city and its locals as inhospitable and even violent. These warnings do nothing to shake the provocative enthusiasm of Gabi (a stellar Mia Goth), a resort guest, actress and fan of James' first book, who introduces herself and her husband Alban to the couple and encourages them to explore the countryside together against the hotel's advice. Their wine-drenched, lazy afternoon turns seductive and reckless, and an intoxicated James accidentally runs over a local man on the way back to the hotel. When confronted by police after Gabi convinces them to leave the scene, James is informed of the strange and brutal justice system of Li Tolqa: execution by the victim's firstborn son, or pay a hefty fee to be cloned, and watch James' duplicate be executed in his place. Em chooses survival in horror and guilt; James chooses the same out of morbid curiosity. What begins as a desperation to escape becomes an addiction to stay for James: led by the affections of Gabi and her social circle, his days become fueled by sex, drugs, booze, and sadistic crimes against the locals without consequence. And we can't forget their horrifyingly warped masks ("a celebration of the local culture for sale in the gift shop," the hotel staff explain).

The plot's clone conceit offers a seemingly mind-bending premise: if the clone is created with all of one's memory intact, how can you be sure the original "you" is the one that survived? But in the context of this "one-percenter meets *Heart of Darkness*?" allegory, that's the thrill to the main character and also part of the message: it's his humanity being killed off each time he pays to escape his consequences. James is written as an extremely passive character to begin with, but to make a one-percenter character likeable, you have to make them charismatic or relatable, and it's where *Infinity Pool* runs dry. The film's third act is woozy and drawn-out, which is to be expected with Cronenbergian territory, yet *Infinity Pool* leans into the metaphorical with more investment than its own narrative. Skarsgård's James often comes across as flat at best, unlikable at worst, and his genuinely scary predicaments are more difficult to become invested in as a result. However, Mia Goth continues her scene-stealing streak (check out *Pearl* for a character tour-de-force), amping up her charisma and mania as the film gets wilder and more surreal. Big Harley Quinn vibes.

What does translate well in this film is wealth excusing those who have it from accountability and responsibility—to other people, to the environment, even to themselves. Even if *Infinity Pool* is a bit shallow when it comes to its character development, it is grasp of this theme, and the horror behind it, that is enough to make waves.

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Goldie: A Lotus Grows in the Mud

by Goldie Hawn



A
Book
Review by
Steve Person



I first became aware of Goldie Hawn in 1968 when she appeared as the ditzy blonde on *Rowan and Martin's Laugh In*. Her zany antics on that television show endeared her to viewers, and it wasn't too long after that Hollywood came calling. Her kooky yet sincere character in the film version of the Broadway comedy, *Cactus Flower*, earned her the Best Supporting Oscar in 1969.

This memoir chronicles her observations on myriad aspects of both her personal and professional life. The 35 essays in the book range from "Growing Pains," "First Love," "Life's Purpose," "Altered States," "Wonder," "Embracing Strangers," "Faith," "Death," and 27 other topics.

The daughter of a Jewish mother and a Catholic father, Goldie grew up in a Washington, D.C. suburb, Takoma Park, Maryland. Her father was a gifted musician and played gigs in such heady venues as The White House, leaving him absent many evenings a week. During the day, he taught himself the craft of watch repair. Goldie worshiped her father and tried hard to follow his advice on subjects from fishing to tenacity. His death shattered Goldie and her older sister, Patti.

Goldie's mother, Laura Hawn, played a pivotal role in Goldie's life. Her stalwart sense of being the keeper of the home, impressed upon Goldie that sometimes a person's talent goes wasted when more pressing concerns—such as being a wife and mother—take center stage when she, herself, could probably have been a sensation in a more glamorous occupation. A habitual smoker, she lived until her eightieth birthday which, as it turned out, was also her death day.

Although Mr. and Mrs. Hawn never divorced, they eventually did lead separate lives with Goldie's father taking his yellow Volkswagen Beetle out West. In her senior years, Goldie's mother came to live with Goldie and Kurt Russell. Although Goldie had two husbands—the first marriage lasted six years and the second four years—it was Russell who became her lifelong love, but they never married. Their children—both his and hers—bonded successfully, and Goldie had a child with him.

The most impressive aspects of Goldie Hawn are her capacity for helping others and her lifelong search for spiritual guidance. Although she practiced both her mother and father's religions, neither satisfied her quest for divine guidance. She searched for inner peace from such diverse locations as Machu Pichu to third-world Africa, and finally found it in remote India.

Early in life, she escaped a near-death experience. Her mother told her she had a guardian angel. When asked who that might be, her mother replied, "Your Aunt Golda. We named you after her."

The book is not necessarily in chronological order. The 35 essays can be read and absorbed in any order the reader might wish. However it is read, the book, like Goldie Hawn herself, is a treasure.