



First Friday **PRIDE** Edition News & Views

Iowa's LGBTQ+ Newsletter of the First Friday Breakfast Club

June 2024 | Volume 29 | Issue 6

Next Meeting

**Friday,
June 7
6:45 a.m.**



Location

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



Speaker

**Sarah Brown
Wessling**

**National Teacher
of the Year 2010**



Website

ffbc Iowa.org



Pride

by Byron Huff, Board President

The word “**pride**” is an integral cultural concept within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) community, representing solidarity, collectivity, and identity as well as resistance to discrimination and violence.

Pride Month is typically June and dedicated to the celebration and commemoration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) pride. Pride Month began after the Stonewall riots, a series of gay liberation protests lasting six days in June 1968.



In 1979, Des Moines held its first official Pride march; a group of courageous people marched from the Iowa State Capitol to the Blazing Saddle. Organized by local activists, this event set the stage for future celebrations and signaled a growing willingness to demand equal rights and recognition.

The 1980s and 1990s were decades of both progress and adversity for the LGBTQ+ community in Des Moines. The AIDS crisis hit hard, and the community responded with increased activism and support networks. Organizations like the **AIDS Project of Central Iowa** played crucial roles in providing education, support, and advocacy during this challenging time. The federal government first recognized Pride Month in 1999 when President Bill Clinton declared June “Gay & Lesbian Pride Month” where he also noted the 30th anniversary of the Stonewall riots.

The turn of the century marked a significant period of growth for Pride in Des Moines. The annual Capital City Pride festival has become a cornerstone event, drawing thousands of attendees each year. This festival, featuring parades, concerts, and educational activities, showcases the vibrant and diverse LGBTQ+ community in Des Moines.

[continued on page 2]

JOIN US

Don't Miss the Record-Breaking 16

Scholarship Awards To Be Given Out This Month!



[“Pride” continued from page 1]

Legal and societal changes also mirrored the progress seen in Pride celebrations. The legalization of same-sex marriage in Iowa in 2009, six years before the national legalization, was a monumental victory for LGBTQ+ rights and was celebrated widely within the community. In 2009, President Barack Obama declared June LGBT Pride Month.

Marking 45 years this year, Pride in Des Moines is a large, inclusive celebration that honors the history and progress of the LGBTQ+ community while recognizing the ongoing struggles for equality. **Capital City Pride**, now one of the largest Pride events in the Midwest, includes a wide range of activities such as drag shows, family-friendly events, and educational workshops.

The community’s dedication to inclusivity is evident in the broadening scope of Pride events throughout the year which aims to increase visibility and represent the diverse experiences within the LGBTQ+ community, including those of people of color, transgender individuals, and other marginalized groups.

The history of Gay Pride in Des Moines is a testament to the resilience and strength of the LGBTQ+ community. From its humble beginnings to the vibrant celebrations of today, Pride in Des Moines reflects the city’s journey towards greater acceptance and equality. As the community continues to grow and evolve, so too does the spirit of Pride, fostering a more inclusive and loving society for all.



Happy
PRIDE
Month

“It’s called Pride, not hide! Everybody, more than ever, is wearing their hearts on their sleeves and wearing their messages on their backs. I think we all know what’s up. We all can feel it right now. It’s time to represent and it’s time to persist and keep going. There’s progress to be made and we’re moving forward.”

- Lizzo

Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **Byron Huff** for introducing our May speakers, **Courtney Reyes** and **Max Mowitz**, from **One Iowa**. 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 newsletter contributors!*

The **deadline** for the 2024 **July newsletter** will be **June 17**. 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. As of 2024, we will have awarded over **\$495,000** 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 the **2024 Scholarship Committee** for excellent work to choose our **16** scholar awards!

Ken Hanson (chair)
Kevin Chorniak
David Cotton
Jim Flansburg
Aria Huizenga
Paul Richardson
Chris Russell
Tim Schreck





The Power of Prayer: Getting to “Yes”

by Jonathan Wilson

I regularly see posts on Facebook making theological statements, often claiming the power of answered prayers. Typically, these posts are followed in the *Comments* by a chorus of “Amen,” and/or expressions of “Thank you, God!” or “Thank you, Jesus!” Recently, a post asked whether prayers are answered, and the *Comments* were unanimous that, if you pray, believe, and have faith, your prayers will be answered. “Amen, and Amen.” “Hallelujah!”

It is my personal belief that *all* prayers are answered; some are answered “No,” and some are answered “Yes.” My own perceptions about prayer have evolved. When I was a child, I believed in Santa Claus, and, when it came to prayer, the God that I envisioned in my prayers was a lot like Santa Claus. God was male; artist renditions of God looked a lot like pictures of Santa Claus, but in a different costume; and God’s role was also a lot like that of Santa Claus, keeping track of whether I had been naughty or nice, and had demonstrated enough faith in order to determine my entitlement to get what I wanted.

Over time I have reflected on the scriptural assurance that God already knows what things I need, without being asked (Matthew 6:8). As that assurance has soaked-in, I’ve been led to revise my understanding and expectations of prayer, still believing that all prayers are answered – some “Yes” and some “No.” All are answered. That conclusion, in turn, led to a search for clues about how to get “Yes” and to avoid “No” in answer to my prayers.

If God already knows what I need – without being asked – prayer would seem a bit redundant. In that construct, asking for something I actually do need, and receive, will prompt me to believe that I got a “Yes” answer (and feed my “Santa Claus” perception of God). If what I prayed for does not materialize, I decide that I got a “No” answer, and it’s somehow my fault for lacking sufficient

faith or not praying hard enough, even though God already knew I needed whatever it was.

For myself, I have adopted a slightly different construct about prayer: if I’m praying for God to DO something I want done – Santa Claus style – the answer will consistently be “No.” I no longer believe that God is a “Santa Claus” residing in heaven rather than at the North Pole, awaiting the prayers of those with sufficient faith. God is not a divine errand boy.

Under my adopted construct, if I’m praying for insight and/or motivation to do what I can do to address whatever is going on in my life or the life of others I care about, the answer will always be a resounding “Yes.” And, get this, the more and the harder I pray for insight and/or motivation, the greater the likelihood that the requisite insight and/or motivation will be forthcoming.

Far be it from me to be telling anyone else how to pray. I am simply sharing my personal take on the purpose, meaning, and power of prayer. I no longer hold to the “Santa Claus” version of God that I held as a child. As I’ve become a man, I’ve put away such a childish notion (1 Corinthians 13:11). Now, I perceive prayer as a call to get up off my knees and get busy; God has no hands but our hands.

If your perception of God and the purpose and power of prayer is different from mine and is working for you, go for it.

The objective should be getting to **YES**.

“Our truest life is when we are in dreams awake.”

(Henry David Thoreau)





For Pride Month updates, go to:

www.capitalcitypride.org/pride-fest

Events and dates have been updated at the time of the newsletter publication. Please check Capital City Pride's website for further updates.

2024 Event Calendar

- **Saturday, June 1: Pride Walk**
(3:00 - 4:30 PM | Sculpture Park to the Capitol)
- **Saturday, June 1: Mr./Ms./Mx./Teen Pride Pageant**
(5:00 - 8:00 PM | The Garden)
- **Sunday, June 2: PrideFest Kickoff Drag Brunch (21+)**
(10:30 - 1:30 PM Seatings | Tonic Bar / Court Avenue)
- **June 3 - June 8: PrideFest Blood Drive (First Ever!)**
(LifeServe Blood Center | [Appointments Online](#))

PrideFest Weekend

- **Friday, June 7: Festival Opens** (5:00 PM - 11:00 PM)
- **Saturday, June 8: Festival** (10:00 AM - Midnight)
 - **Capital City Pride Stride 5K**
(8:00 - 9:30 AM | Brenton Skating Plaza Start)
 - **Capital City Pride Pet Parade**
(9:30 - 11:00 AM | Community Stage)
 - **Silent Disco**
(7:30 - 9:00 PM | Community Stage)
- **Sunday, June 9: Festival** (10:00 AM - 5:00 PM)
 - **Pride Yoga** (9:00 AM | Family & Youth Zone)
 - **Cardio Dance Party** (10:00 AM | Community Stage)
 - **Ecumenical Worship Service** (10:00 AM | MainStage)
 - **Pride Parade** (12:00 - 1:30 PM | Grand Avenue)



-
- **Friday, June 21: Let Love Serve Volleyball Tournament**
(6:00 PM - 11:00 PM | Sands Volleyball Club)
 - **Sunday, June 23: All Ages Drag Brunch**
(11:00 AM - 5:00 PM | tixservdevents.com)
 - **Sunday, June 23: Pride Night at Paws & Pints**
(3:00 - 6:00 PM | 6218 Willowmere Drive, DSM)
 - **Friday, June 28: I-Cubs Pride Night**
(4:00 - 9:30 PM | Principal Park, DSM)



FFBC Membership

FFBC membership is open to all members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies.



We welcome **everyone**, regardless of sexual orientation or gender.

Meetings are held the first Friday of every month from 7:00 AM - 8:15 AM at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines. The following membership rates help us cover our food and facility costs.

In-Person Meeting Rates

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

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

Regular Meeting Schedule

6:30 AM - Doors open

6:45 AM - Breakfast service begins

7:00 AM - Meeting begins



Iowa Pride



Celebrating Pride across the state



PrideFest: Capital City Pride
East Village | Des Moines
Friday - Sunday, June 7-9
Other Events Throughout June
www.capitalcitypride.org



Ankeny Pride
Saturday, June 22; 4:00 - 9:00
Ankeny Market & Pavilion
[Facebook Page](#)



Iowa City Pride
Saturday, June 15: 12:00 - 10:00
Downtown Iowa City
www.iowacitypride.org



Ames Pride
www.amespride.org

ames pride



Mason City Pride
Saturday, July 20
Central Park
[Facebook Page](#)



Cedar Valley Pridefest
(Cedar Falls & Waterloo)
Friday, August 23: 5:30 - 12:00
Saturday, August 24: 12:00 - 12:00
West 4th Street | Downtown Waterloo
www.cedarvalleypride.com



Ottumwa Pride Block Party
Saturday, June 1; 3:00 - 10:00
Central Park
[Facebook Page](#)



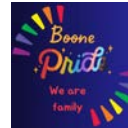
Quad Cities Pride
Unity Pride Month
Saturday, June 1: Unity Parade | 11:00
Schwiebert Riverfront Park
qcunitypride.org



Orange City Pride
prideorangecity.org



CR Pride (Cedar Rapids)
Saturday, June 8: 1:00 (Parade)
@ NewBo/Czech Village
Saturday, July 6: 12:00 - 6:00
Festival
crprideia.com



Boone Pride
April 13: 10:00 - 6:00
[Facebook Page](#)



Heartland Pride Festival
Council Bluffs/Omaha
July 13: 12:30 - 10:00
<https://heartlandpride.org>



Dubuque Pride Festival
Saturday, June 1: 12:00 - 4:00
[Facebook Page](#)



Sioux City Pride Festival
Friday, May 31 (Parade)
Saturday, June 1 (Festival)
11:00 at S.C. Convention Ctr.
Sunday, June 2 Pride Brunch
[Facebook: Sioux City Pride](#)

- **West Des Moines Valley Junction Pride:** (June 30, 2024)
- **Coralville:** Pride Festival (September 2 Hyatt Regency)
- **Decorah:** [Pride Festival](#) (October 12)
- **Fort Dodge:** (June 22; 10-5)
- **Ottumwa:** [Pride Festival Block Party](#) (June 1)
- **Vinton:** [Benton County Pride](#) (June 15; 11-3)
- **Fort Dodge:** [Pride Festival](#) (June 22; 10-5)
- **Spencer:** [Spencer Pride Festival](#) (October 5)
- **Burlington:** [Pride on the Riverfront](#) (June 22, 2024)



oneiowa
HEALTHCARE • WORKPLACE • LEADERSHIP

15th Annual **2024**

GALA

BENEFITING: **oneiowa**

FRIDAY, JUNE 14

VIBRANT MUSIC HALL

Doors open at 6 pm - Get Tickets at onecau.se/oneiowagala24

Get ready to Rock Out Loud & Proud at the 15th Annual One Iowa Gala on June 14th! Join us for an electrifying night as we honor the relentless advocates and allies championing LGBTQ+ equality across Iowa. Immerse yourself in live music and performances, engage with our custom printmaking station and live mural, bid on amazing silent auction packages, and capture the moment at our incredible photo booths.

WE SUPPORT
PRIDE

Empress 31 Big Momma Jean Presents:

"JUST SAY GAY" **PRIDE DRAG SHOW**

Friday June 7th | 8PM
Open to ALL Entertainers

525 E. Grand Ave. DSM, IA
All Net Proceeds to Benefit Guardian Angels Scholarship
WWW.IMPERIALCOURTOFIOWA.ORG

Future Speakers



Saturday, July 13:
Donor-Member Summer Party
Home of John Schmacker

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

August 2:
Daniel Zinnel
C.E.O. Proteus

October 4:
Coming Out Panel
Various Speakers

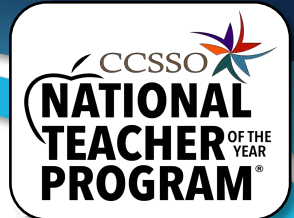
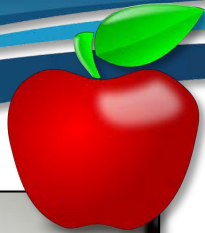
November 1:
John & Terri Hale
The Hale Group | Advocates Working for Better Lives for Iowans

"For this community and for our nation and for the world, Pride Month represents so much. It stands for courage — the courage of all those in previous generations and today who proudly live their truth."



- President Joe Biden



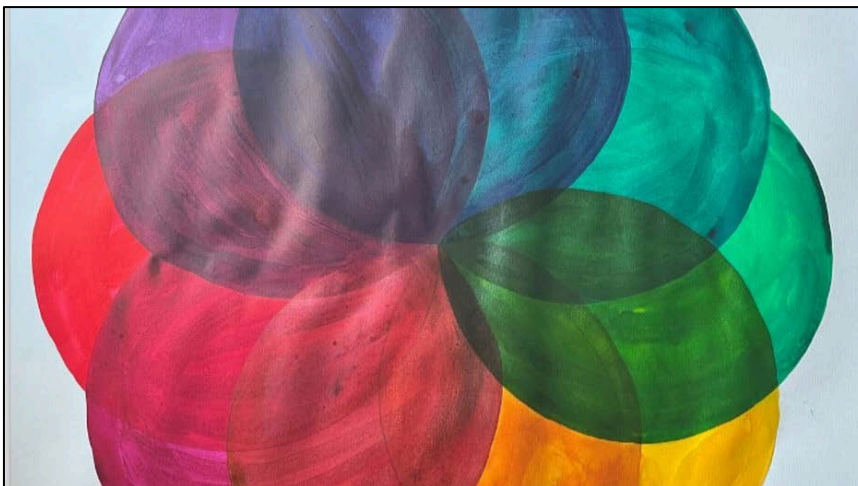


June Speaker

Sarah Brown Wessling



Sarah Brown Wessling, NBCT. Sarah is the 2010 National Teacher of the Year and a 25-year veteran of the high school English classroom. She is the Director of the National Teacher of the Year Program which she was a part of as a facilitator and designer of professional learning for 12 years prior to taking over the program. She is proud to be a National Board Certified Teacher since 2005 and most recently served as the Vice Chair for the NBPTS Executive Board. Sarah is a frequent speaker and facilitator of professional learning around the country and an avid blogger and writer. She also served as the Teacher Laureate for the Teaching Channel for many years. Sarah is author of Supporting Students in a Time of Core Standards and maintains a website at: sarahbrownwessling.com. She is, most importantly, mom to Evan, Lauren and Zachary who keep her grounded and laughing. She's an avid runner and reader who loves live music, traveling, and everyday adventuring. She works full time from Des Moines, Iowa.



QUEER YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER

TEEN AND 18+ ART GATHERINGS

TEEN ART GATHERINGS

2nd SUNDAYS | 1 - 4 PM
JUNE 9 | JULY 14 | AUGUST 11

18+ ART GATHERINGS

2nd MONDAYS | 6 - 7:30 PM
JUNE 10 | JULY 15 | AUGUST 12

ALL CLASSES HELD AT MOMENTUM STUDIO #109
MAINFRAME STUDIOS, 900 KEOSAUQUA WAY
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309

FREE; NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

PROGRAM CONTACT: DRANSMEIER@DESMOINESARTCENTER.ORG
4700 GRAND AVENUE | DES MOINES, IOWA | DESMOINESARTCENTER.ORG



“Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.”



- Dr. Seuss



One Iowa Updates FFBC On Its Mission and the 2023-24 Legislative Session

by Gary Moore

It was a beautiful foggy morning that greeted First Friday Breakfast Club (FFBC) members as they gathered to share an early morning meal and to listen to the Executive Director, **Courtney Reyes**, and Program Director, **Max Mowitz**, of One Iowa, the state's leading advocacy organization for the LGBTQ+ community.

Max Mowitz (*he/him/they/them*) is a long-time friend of FFBC, having been one of our **scholars** in 2011. They have been with One Iowa for five years and they take pride in their work organizing and implementing LGBTQ+ employee training sessions for corporate and business partners. This is training that helps make work cultures a safe place for LGBTQ+ members and helps employers know the basics in LGBTQ+ policy. Max also noted the organization has attended all 15 Pride events across the state each year. He is particularly interested in helping businesses understand the basics concerning LGBTQ+ health and mental health care especially since a recent survey noted that 16% of LGBTQ+ have been denied services. Max is active in organizing the LGBTQ+ Leadership Institute which identifies community leaders and then amplifies their strengths by providing information on media training and engaging others. Max is also involved in serving trans and non-binary with affirming care.

Courtney Reyes (*she/her/hers*) then reviewed with members the state of affairs concerning Iowa's political realm. She noted that many who have been seen in the past as on the far right fringe have gained positions of power in the state legislature which, this year, led to over 40 bills hostile to the LGBTQ+ community. Courtney was proud to report that none of these bills passed, thanks to the coalition of progressive partnerships. This effort has taken a toll on all concerned for the LGBTQ+ community and the fight to protect continues. People on the fringe are still in power and vigilance is still required. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is under attack as evidenced by legislative and executive actions through the Board of Regents and the Legislature's passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, an open invitation to discriminate.

Courtney encouraged all to be loud in their refusal to be eliminated. Everyone has a right to a nourishing environment. She encourages the members to be hopeful but filled with rage. She hopes that part of that hope will be nourished with the upcoming One Iowa Gala, June 14th. Information can be found on their website.



May
Speakers

One
Iowa

Max Mowitz
&
Courtney Reyes



Initiatives:

- Healthcare Access
- Workplace Culture
- LGBTQ+ Leadership Institute
- LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Training
- Transgender Iowans
- LGBTQ+ Older Adults



May Meeting Photo Gallery

Photos by
Wade Petersen





Scholarship Awards Breakfast

Friday, June 7
7:00 a.m.

Hoyt Sherman Place

Des Moines

This year we will award **\$3,000 scholarships** to **16** Iowa high school seniors, underwritten by you, our members, and allies!

Doors Open Early!

We encourage you to arrive early to Hoyt Sherman Place, with breakfast available beginning at 6:30 a.m. Come acquaint yourself with these 16 accomplished young adults!

Scholarship Awards Breakfast Schedule

- 6:30 a.m. - Doors open
- 6:45 a.m. - Hot breakfast service begins
- 7:00 a.m. - Speaker & Awards Program
- 8:15 a.m. - Program concludes - This meeting may run longer than our normal breakfast gathering.

PRIDE TAILGATE

JUNE 8TH **NOON - 4PM**

& walk w/ us in the Pride Parade on Sunday the 9th!

JOIN US FOR A STUDENT CENTERED PRIDE CELEBRATION!

Rebecca Black
2024 PRIDEFEST ENTERTAINMENT
MORE ACTS TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON
Monét X Change
Shea Couleé
Bettmik
CAPITAL CITY PRIDE
PRIDEFEST • JUNE 7-9, 2024 • DES MOINES, IA

Don't miss the **Dubuque** regional launch of the Iowa LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce.

THURSDAY
JUNE 13, 2024
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
VOICES STUDIOS
DUBUQUE, IA

IOWA LGBTQ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SPONSORED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

TelePrEP
Get PrEP Online

Go to www.prepiowa.org/teleprep

TelePrEP offers PrEP services over video chat. Labs will be drawn through partnering clinics.

TelePrEP is perfect for people who don't live near a major city.

PrEP is a medication that prevents HIV up to 99%. It is more effective at preventing HIV than condoms alone.

Need help? Call or text the PrEP Navigator: 319-930-9093

PHC
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First Friday Breakfast Club



2024 Scholarship Donors

Underwriter (\$3000+)

- Phil Brawner & Ted Johnson
- John Charles & David Nelson
- Brig. Gen. David A. Cotton, USAF (Ret)
- Jane Ann Cotton
- Brad Holland & Joe Raetz, in memory of Bonnie Holland
- G. David Hurd & Trudy Holman Hurd Fund
- Community Betterment Grant through the Polk County Board of Supervisors

Host (\$1000 - \$2999)

- Jim Anderson & Byron Huff
- Bruce Carr & Robert Thelen
- Tom Coppess & Mike Koch
- Scott Dean
- Barbara & Michael Gartner
- Rick Gubbels & Tracy Lewis
- Ken Hanson & Wade Petersen
- Matt Hiatt & Paul Pettinger
- Gene Larson & David Phelps
- Gary Moore
- Misty Sold Team at Better Homes & Gardens powered by Place
- Jim Sterba

Advocate (\$500 - \$999)

- Peg Armstrong-Gustafson
- Mark Bienhoff & Troy Zwart
- Kevin Chorniak
- Paul E. Dark
- Kelly Ferguson
- Jim Flansburg
- Sharon & Larry Huff
- Scott Kuknyo & Jonathan Wilson
- Deb Madison-Levi
- William Moody
- Michelle & Brad Morford
- Gary Roberts
- Rich Rumsey
- Chris Russell
- Martha Smith
- Curt Stamp
- Jerry Vroegh
- David Wilfahrt



Supporter (\$250 - \$499)

- Larry Barnett & Bill Jackson
- Roger Bishop
- Michelle Book
- Nathan Coombes & Keith Wirtz
- MJ Dolan
- Debbie & Michael Hubbell
- Fred Lewis
- Patti Pierce
- Michel & Jonathon Pogge-Weaver
- Mary & George Richardson
- Janet & William Mark Rosenbury
- Michael Simonson
- Denise & David Swartz
- Michael Thompson & Allen Vander Linden
- Connie Wimer

Honors (\$100 - \$249)

- Mike Baldwin
- Rich Banyard
- Heather A. Bartz
- Andrew Brouwer
- Barbara & John Buck
- Marilyn & Frank Carroll
- Alicia & David Claypool
- Travis Correll
- Bryan Crowder
- Kurtis Denison & Robert Warren
- Mark Eikenberry
- David Feinberg
- Ben Hagen
- Ron Hankins & Jim Pech
- Joe Henry
- Harold Hinkhouse
- Shelia & James Hourigan
- Richard Joens & Scott Smith
- Mary Ellen & James Kimball
- Randall Kramer
- Donna MacNeir
- Cyril Ann & John Mandelbaum
- Matt McCoy
- Susan & Brian Moorhead
- John Schmacker
- John Steig
- Jodi & Chris Swailes
- Toni & Tim Urban
- Laura Cean Wilson

Donors (Up to \$99)

- Grace & Larry Anderson
- Margaret & Tom Chase
- Chuck Jordan
- Mary & Mark Kacere
- Karen & Aaron Kennedy
- Jennifer Konfrst
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- La Von & Wayne Marshall
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In-Kind Services

- Ascendant Wealth Management
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- Brad Holland & Joe Raetz
- PC Print Center
- John Schmacker
- Tim Schreck
- Nicholas Williams
- Phil Williams

Bequests Funding FFBC Endowment

- Charles Carnes
- Brad Holland & Joe Raetz
- Alfred Miller
- Cliff Paulsen

**Scholarship
Fundraising
Period:**

**May 2023
to
April
2024**



Visibility Counts!

As we prepare for this month's Scholarship Awards Breakfast, it is important to remember that the Scholarship Committee members make efforts to attend/present at the **senior awards ceremony** at the Iowa high schools of each of our scholars during the month of May. Imagine, delivering a brief message of hope and appreciation in front of community members and other students about these young adults who have made efforts to reduce homophobia and to educate others about LGBTQ+ issues in their schools and communities!



Scholarship Committee Chair, Ken Hanson, presents a scholarship to **Luke Mueggenberg** at Linn-Mar High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, Chris Russell, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Delaney Clark** at DSM Roosevelt High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, Paul Richardson, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Shamiyah Morgan** at Central DeWitt High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, Paul Richardson, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Claire Opdahl** at Sioux Center High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, Tim Schreck, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Tiffany Gillis** at Spencer High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, David Cotton, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Rebekah Schurz** at Carlisle High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, Chris Russell, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Owen Schriever** at Ogden High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, Tim Schreck, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Elliot Martin** at Cedar Falls High School.



Polk County Sees 11% Increase In Houseless Individuals



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

As a Polk County Supervisor, one of the important committees I serve on in the community is **Homeless Coordinating Council**. One of the things the Homeless Coordinating Council is responsible for reviewing is point-in-time surveys which are conducted several times per year where an official count of individuals experiencing homelessness is physically counted by staff and volunteers who participate in this census-like survey. This increase represents 715 individuals in Polk County in total. The number of unsheltered identified in January was 147 which is an increase from the 2023 number of 129. Eighty-four percent of unsheltered individuals reported their last permanent address as Polk County. Twelve percent previously lived in another Iowa county, and 4.5% came from out of state. The number of individuals reporting that they were fleeing domestic violence was the highest number in the last six years at 89 which is up 37% from 2023. It was 65 then. Black residents were overrepresented in the homeless population 22% of the point-in-time population identified as black/African American compared to only 8.9% of Polk County residents who identify as black/African-American.

Polk County has a severe shortage of affordable housing, particularly among the most vulnerable populations that are on the verge of becoming houseless over a missed pay period, a loss of a partner, or change in relationship status. This problem is compounded by one of the lowest vacancy rates of 5% or less in the county for available housing. While the effort has been made by Polk County to invest more than \$15 million in affordable housing, we estimate this funding directed towards Polk County Housing Trust Fund will create 400-500 affordable housing units. It is estimated that the shortage in our community is 12,000-15,000. While \$15 million is a large investment, it barely moves the needle.



Iowa has not increased its minimum wage since 2007, despite increases in nearly all of the bordering states. To afford an average apartment in Des Moines, a minimum wage worker would need to work 90 hours per week on average to support themselves. Republicans have certainly done a good job keeping Iowans poor.

**United
in SONG**

DES MOINES
GAY MEN'S
CHORUS

JUNE 14 & 15
TEMPLE BALLROOM

Cruising

A 1980 Retro Movie Review by Mark Turnage

With Pride Month approaching and the 46th International Mr. Leather Weekend in Chicago during Memorial Day weekend, I wanted to unpack a film as central to queer culture as it is polarizing: William Friedkin's 1980 thriller *Cruising*. A psychological thriller and detective story that takes place within New York City's leather/BDSM community, *Cruising* crafts a noir atmosphere out of a turning point in LGBT history. But the film's confusing editing, lack of character development, and its ambivalent depictions of gay characters during a time of widespread public homophobia make it an equally progressive and divisive piece of queer cinema.

New York City, 1980: When gay men who frequent New York City leather bars are targeted by a serial killer operating within their own community, NYPD Officer Steve Burns (a young Al Pacino) is ordered by his captain Edelson (Paul Sorvino) to go undercover into the New York leather community to find the killer. Soft-spoken and effeminate, Steve laughs off Edelson's wildly invasive and homophobic assumptions about his sexuality to determine if he's the right fit for the job, and after being briefed about the case, agrees to Edelson's plan, seeing it as a jump-start for his own career. When Steve tells his girlfriend Nancy about the job, he confides to her, "Maybe there's some things about me you don't know." As Steve investigates the basement bacchanals of New York's leather bars to find leads and blend in, he begins to experiment with (and perhaps become fearful of) his own sexuality, blurring the lines between his case, his leads, and his lovers.

Cruising adopts a noir atmosphere by borrowing a few classic tropes from the genre: the majority of its action takes place at night and exaggerates shadows in its cinematography; institutional law enforce-

ment is brutal, corrupt and unhelpful; the main character is a flawed (unreliable?) detective; while there isn't a femme fatale, there is most certainly one (or more) "homme fatales" who use seduction as bait. Friedkin is cautious not to explicitly condemn the gay BDSM community: there are scenes of minor queer characters looking out for each other; Steve refuses to participate in police-sanctioned gay-bashing, and the mayor squeezes Edelson to solve the case due to mounting political and public pressure. Gay characters are portrayed realistically and deal with everyday issues (rent, creative blocks, escapism, relationships).

Unfortunately, the most relatable characters in this film are also the killer's victims, and the film aggressively sidelines its only female character, Nancy. Steve himself isn't given much development in favor of emotional ambiguity, and the most likely suspect is given a flimsy, clichéd motive. With only ambiguity to rest on, the film's final plot twist might seem noir in its pessimism and open-endedness, but raises more problematic questions than thought-provoking ones about homophobia perpetuated within the LGBT community.

Cruising premiered during a dark age for queer culture in the United States. Figureheads like Anita Bryant spearheaded anti-LGBT campaigns on moral pretenses—three years prior in 1977, she was pied in the face live in Des Moines. States like California were considering homophobic legislation like Proposition 6, banning LGBT people from education careers. Proposition 6 was defeated largely thanks to a campaign led by Harvey Milk, who was assassinated three weeks later by ex-San Francisco Supervisor Dan White, a supporter of Proposition 6. White was sentenced to just five years for the double murder, prompting riots. *Cruising* was also released a year before the onset of the AIDS epidemic in the United States that



disproportionately affected and stigmatized the gay leather community.

Gay rights protests meant much of the film required extensive audio overdubbing; advocates argued the film was exploiting a real-life series of unsolved murders of gay men in the West Village at the time, and organized protests during production to disrupt filming. Counter protestors claimed the advocates were being as puritan as their far-right counterparts, and welcomed the representation of leather culture as a radical step forward for queer cinema. As sensationalized as the leather bar scenes are in *Cruising*, they also depict gay camaraderie, friendship, and support. Nearly all of the filming locations used real New York City leather bars and patrons as extras.

While *Cruising* has the reputation of a shock value film and certainly has its ridiculous moments (that interrogation scene), the historical snapshot of gay culture it captures is bold, racy, and unashamed.



Pride Month

At the Movies



Varsity Pride

varsitydesmoines.com/film-series/varsity-pride/



Pink Flamingos

Thursday, June 6 | 10:00 PM
1972 | 93 minutes

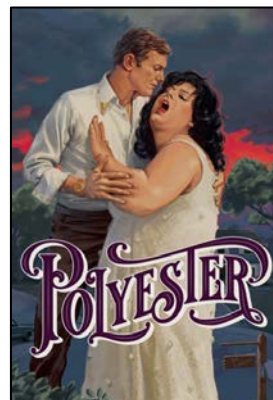
Notorious Baltimore criminal and underground figure Divine goes up against Connie & Raymond Marble, a sleazy married couple who make a passionate attempt to humiliate her and seize her tabloid-given title as “The Filthiest Person Alive.”



The Last American Gay Bar

Thursday, June 13 | 7:00 PM
66 minutes

Join us for a sneak preview of the first three episodes of the six-part series on the legendary Iowa gay bar, **Blazing Saddle**, and the history of the local gay community dating back to the 1960s. *Q&A session after the screening with filmmaker Kristian Day plus local cast and crew!*



Polyester

Thursday, June 20 | 10:00 PM
1981 | 86 minutes

Blessed with a keen sense of smell and cursed with a philandering pornographer husband, a parasitic mother, and a pair of delinquent children, the long-suffering Francine Fishpaw turns to the bottle as her life falls apart — until deliverance appears in the form of a hunk named Todd Tomorrow.

Pride Month at the Fleur

JUN 5 To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar with a performance by Domita Sanchez

JUN 12-14 Queer Futures with a virtual Q&A on June 12

JUN 14-16 Break the Game with a virtual Q&A and live speed-run on June 14

JUN 22 The Craft & The Covenant Double Feature

JUN 26 But I'm a Cheerleader FREE showing presented by the Fleur & Archive Iowa

Fleurcinema.com



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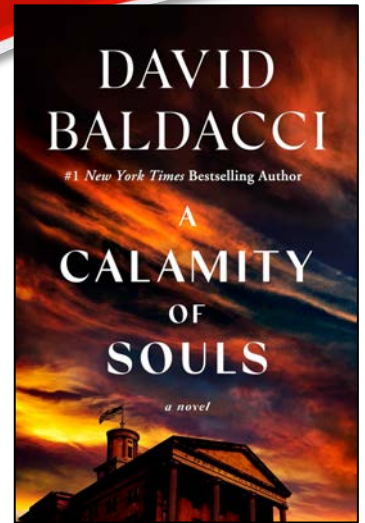
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A Calamity of Souls

by David Baldacci

Book Review

by Steve Person



1968. A memorable year in American history. In April, Martin Luther King Jr. is gunned down in Memphis, Tennessee. In June, Robert F. Kennedy is murdered in a hotel kitchen in Los Angeles, California. In August, the Democratic National Convention convenes in Chicago, Illinois. Bedlam ensues when antiwar protestors are attacked on the orders of then Mayor Daley. Eleven deaths result with hundreds of rioters injured as well as nearly 200 police officers. The November general election sees Republican Richard Nixon elected as the thirty-seventh President of the United States. It is from this tumultuous year that Baldacci sets his latest book.

According to the Author's Note at the beginning of this volume, he spent ten years preparing this manuscript. It is a story of racial unrest in the American South. One concern Baldacci addressed was the use of the "N word." He said, "I cannot think of another term that even approaches the heinous connotations of hatred and evil that stand next to it." He solved this problem when a character spouts it, he simply used the letter "n" followed by a --. The reader knows precisely what that means without having to read the disgraceful epithet.

The story is set in Freeman County, Virginia. Jack Lee, the main character, "knew that Freeman County was roughly divided into halves, with two quadrants in each half. Northwest and southwest were the white side and northeast and southeast the Black side."

In the beginning, Jack is about to celebrate his thirty-third birthday with his parents (Frank and Hilly) and his older, mentally challenged sister (Lucy) in their home in the white southwestern portion of the county. This quadrant mainly was home to blue collar whites. The northwest quadrant was reserved for the so-called "elite" whites of Freeman County. Jack is an attorney who mostly goes along with the distinctions of the black and white cultures without dehumanizing his black neighbors.

The opening chapter describes the grisly stabbing murders of an elderly white couple from the northwest. Their black handyman, Jerome Washington, is found crouched over the bodies by two county deputies who beat him dreadfully before taking him to jail. Jack is approached by an elderly and well-respected member of the black community—Miss Jessup—to represent Jerome in his murder trial. At first reluctant to do so—he had never had a black client, let alone one charged with double murders—he agrees to because of his respect for Miss Jessup.

Once the trial begins, an all-male, all-white jury is seated. The Virginia Attorney General takes the case for the prosecution in hopes of making Jerome a scapegoat for the re-introduction of the death penalty in that state. While every motion that Jack presents to a white judge is dismissed, he eventually becomes co-attorney with Desiree DeBose. Ms. DeBose is a nationally recognized black attorney who has won numerous cases for her defendants throughout the South.

The story includes vile behaviors by white racists who resort to threats of violence against Jack and Desiree including murders of those who are not involved in the case but against any white associated with them.

I have read many thrillers by Baldacci, and this is one of his best. One of the characters in the story is an actual person and not fictionalized. I had never run across that in any of his books.

