



# First Friday

# News & Views



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

November 2024 | Volume 29 | Issue 11

Next Meeting  
**Friday,**  
**November 1**  
**7:00 a.m.**



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



Speaker  
**John & Terri**  
**Hale**

The Hale  
Group

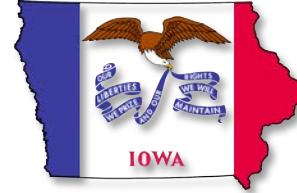


Website  
**ffbc Iowa.org**



## The State of Iowa's Nursing Homes

by Byron Huff, Board President



Elder care, particularly in nursing homes, should be top of mind for so many with aging family members as well as our own care. Gay families in particular may not have children or younger family members who could provide some sort of care as we age.

My father was admitted to a nursing home this past February; my mother is at the home nearly every day making sure he is cared for properly. Winterset is a small town with one nursing home remaining where once several were around when I was growing up. Knowing the staff helps, but that only goes so far when there is a staff shortage and many younger employees with little experience.

A 2021 report from Iowa's Department of Inspections and Appeals found that more than half of the state's nursing homes were cited for serious health and safety violations. Common issues included failure to prevent falls, mishandling of medications, and improper care of residents with bedsores. These deficiencies, combined with high staff turnover, have raised alarms among advocates and policymakers alike.

Earlier this year, the [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#) reported that Iowa nursing homes have the sixth-worst record in the nation for staffing-level violations. Data from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) show that 14% of the state's 422 nursing facilities were cited for insufficient staffing in fiscal year 2023. That was more than double the national average, which was 5.9%.



In Iowa, nursing home operators and healthcare associations have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to state legislators and candidates, particularly those on key committees overseeing health and human services. These donations are often aimed at influencing regulations that affect the industry, such as staffing requirements, Medicaid reimbursement rates, and liability laws related to resident care.

In 2021, the Iowa Legislature passed a bill that reduced the frequency of state inspections for nursing homes with a "good" compliance history. While the law was praised by industry leaders as a way to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, critics argued that it weakened protections for residents. The bill's passage followed significant contributions from nursing home operators to key lawmakers, raising concerns about the role political donations played in shaping the law.

[continued on page 2]



## ["State of Iowa's Nursing Homes" continued from page 1]

The state of Iowa, where nursing homes have compiled one of the nation's worst records for staffing-level violations, has joined 19 other states in suing the Biden administration to block the implementation of new staffing requirements. The lawsuit is in response to CMS' decision in April to finalize new minimum staffing standards that will require homes to conduct assessments of their residents' needs and provide 3.48 hours of direct nursing care per resident, per day. The rule also requires the homes to have a registered nurse available 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

The political action committee that represents Iowa's nursing home industry donated \$30,000 to Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds' 2022 reelection effort. In September 2022, Reynolds was at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Des Moines, delivering a speech to a group of nursing home executives gathered for their annual convention. Reynolds reminded industry officials of her efforts to loosen "regulatory barriers" and shield the companies from legal liability resulting from wrongful death claims and other lawsuits. She also spoke of her successful efforts to increase Medicaid funding for the industry by \$23 million in 2019, and again by \$19 million in 2021.

The connection between nursing home problems and political donations highlights the need for reform in both the care industry and the political process. Nursing homes in Iowa and across the country face genuine challenges that require thoughtful, well-funded solutions, including increased staffing, better worker training, and stricter enforcement of care standards. **However, when the industry uses political donations to shape policy in its favor, there is a risk that the needs of vulnerable residents are overshadowed by profit motives.**

Transparency in political donations is critical. Iowa lawmakers should consider reforms that limit the influence of special interest groups on healthcare legislation, particularly in sectors like nursing home care, where the stakes are so high for residents and their families. Additionally, stronger federal oversight of the nursing home industry could help balance the interests of operators and the needs of patients, ensuring that political contributions do not result in lax regulations that endanger resident well-being.

The nursing home industry in Iowa is at a crossroads. On one hand, it provides essential care for a growing elderly population; on the other, it faces significant challenges related to quality and funding. Political donations from nursing home operators and trade groups have played a significant role in shaping the state's legislative landscape, often to the detriment of resident care. As the population ages and the demand for long-term care increases, the relationship between political power and



nursing home oversight will continue to be an issue of critical importance. Reforms aimed at limiting the influence of political donations and improving care standards must be a priority to protect Iowa's most vulnerable citizens.

## Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **David Cotton** for organizing our October "Coming Out" panel speakers: **Aria Huizenga, Jennifer Kathryn King, and Chelsea Lepley**. 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 the contributors to our newsletter!*

The **deadline** for the **December newsletter** will be **November 25**.

If you have something that you would like to share, type it up and email it to Wade ([wadepetersen@gmail.com](mailto:wadepetersen@gmail.com)) by the deadline.

**Fundraising efforts** are ongoing to fund our scholarship program. To date we have awarded over **\$495,000** for **203** 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.



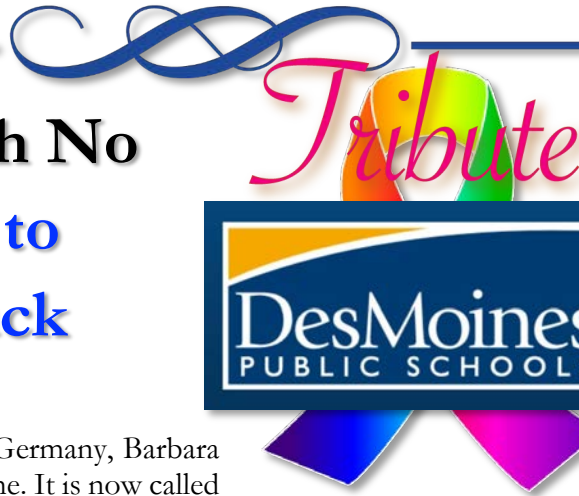
A special **thank-you** to those FFBC members and friends who have chosen to designate FFBC through the **Donor Direct** program of **United Way**. Contributions through United Way are tax deductible. Those who have chosen this means of supporting FFBC have gone to the trouble of completing their United Way campaign worksheet by designating FFBC as the beneficiary of their generosity. FFBC is an eligible recipient of such funding designations.



**United Way**







First Friday Breakfast Club  
Founder **Jonathan Wilson**

## From a Town with No Name: A Tribute to Barbara (Lily) Buck

by Jonathan Wilson

Shortly before World War II in Germany, Barbara Buck was born in a town that had no name. It is now called Wallburg, still a tiny town, located south of Strasbourg and a stone's throw from Switzerland and France.

She lived in a farmhouse with her parents and six siblings. In the front of the house, there was assorted livestock and in the back were the family's living quarters. Their toilet, such as it was, was located above the manure pit. Pretty efficient, if you ask me, but also it meant a permanent less-than-pleasing aroma in the living quarters.

The outbreak of World War II stopped her formal education at the eighth grade. After the war ended, her family emigrated to the United States. That move required a United States "sponsor" and, by happenstance, the sponsor was a Mr. Treadway in Des Moines, Iowa. He told Barbara that an eighth-grade education would not be sufficient for her future, so she enrolled in the Des Moines public schools and graduated from high school.

She went on to college and received her degree from (then) Northeast Missouri State Teachers College, with a double major. She then taught for a while in Des Moines.

She was married to John Buck and together they had four daughters that she referred to as daughter #1, #2, #3, and #4 – rarely by their given names. When she was pregnant with their first child, she had to quit teaching. At that time, women who were "showing" were routinely terminated from employment.

At the age of 40, she pursued and received her Master's Degree in Education Administration from Drake University.

She was active in the La Leche League and for 40 years was a childbirth education instructor. Eventually, she ran for, and was elected to, the Board of Directors of the Des Moines Independent Community School District. She lost her bid for reelection, but, not being a quitter, she ran again a year later and was reelected. I was privileged to serve on that board with her for both terms.

At one point during her tenure, she and I served with board member Mark Smith on a district policy review committee. That committee was charged with the task of

reviewing a third of all district policies that might need updating, and recommending possible changes to the full board. Barbara had been to a conference of some kind that was recommending that LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination policies be considered in public schools. Barbara thought that sounded like a good idea for Des Moines. Mark agreed.

You don't have to be all that smart to be an effective school board member; on a seven-member board, you have to be able to count to four. I was still a VERY closeted gay man, unknown to Barbara or Mark. I said that I'd vote for it ONLY if there were a fourth vote. Barbara immediately placed a call to board member Sue Luthens and told her what I'd said. Sue replied, "Tell Wilson he's going to be voting for it." I was committed.

At that point, I met with the school Superintendent to let him know what the committee would be recommending, that I had four votes, and that I wanted his recommendation for adoption. The Superintendent's recommendation gets two votes almost automatically, or at least predictably. He asked who my four votes were; I told him; and he said, "Okay, I'll recommend it." The nondiscrimination policy was adopted unanimously.

Barbara Buck was a force to be reckoned with -- fearless and tenacious (a powerful combination). Her attitude was, "What's right, is right." Period, drop mic.

From a town with no name in pre-war Germany, she obtained a Master's degree in Education Administration in the United States, was elected and reelected to the Des Moines School Board, and was the impetus for an enlightened nondiscrimination policy that survives to this day.

She died in November of 2023, and Barbara Buck should be an inspiration for all who know something about her lifetime of courage and achievement.





# IOWA LGBTQ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Iowa LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce is working together to advance the common business interests, economic growth, and equality in the workplace for Iowa's LGBTQ+ business community and its allies.



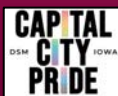
[iowalgbtqchamber.org](http://iowalgbtqchamber.org)

## LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY EVENTS



### CALENDAR

Sponsored by:



[calendar.capitalcitypride.org](http://calendar.capitalcitypride.org)

## FFBC Membership

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

We welcome EVERYONE, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

Meetings are held the first Friday of every month at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines.

### Membership Rates

The following rates help us to cover food and facility costs:

**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



We accept cash, checks, or **credit cards** at the meeting.

### Meeting Schedule

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



24/25 SEASON:

CAPITAL CITY PRIDE

PRIDE BOOK CLUB

November:

OUR WIVES UNDER THE SEA  
JULIA ARMFIELD

BEAVERDALE BOOKS  
2629 BEAVER AVE # 51, DES MOINES

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13, 6-7 P.M.







This year, our annual **LGBTQ Workplace Culture Summit** is more important than ever. As anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and legislation continue to grow, we must ensure our workplaces remain safe, inclusive spaces for all. We spend so much of our lives at work— let's ensure those environments are affirming and supportive.

**New this year:** Our final session on December 11 will be in person! This is an incredible chance to connect face-to-face with experts and peers committed to LGBTQ= workplace equality!

The event takes place in four sessions throughout November and December.

Explore sessions and buy tickets at [oneiowa.org](http://oneiowa.org).

**Session #1:** November 6 / 2-4 p.m.  
**LGBTQ Allyship & Legislative Advocacy (Virtual)**

**Session #2:** November 13 / 2-4 p.m.  
**Combating LGBTQ Workplace Discrimination (Virtual)**

**Session #3:** December 4 / 2-4 p.m.  
**Corporate Equality Index (Virtual)**

**Session #4:** December 11 / 2-4 p.m.  
**In-Person Networking & LGBTQ+ ERG Panel**



"One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors."

- Plato



## Travels with Ken & Wade

by Wade Petersen

*Ken Hanson and Wade Petersen recently spent 2 ½ weeks in Europe, making stops in several countries, to celebrate their 15<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (22 years together) and Wade's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Articles in the next six newsletters will feature their experiences.*



### First Stop: Annecy, France



When Ken and I began planning our anniversary/birthday vacation, we originally scheduled a three-week vacation. Little did we know that I would have to have my gallbladder removed a couple weeks before we took off. To give me a few more days of recovery, we dropped our planned first four days in London and rescheduled to pick up with our itinerary by flying to Geneva, Switzerland. From there, we took a short 50-minute bus ride south to the beautiful city of **Annecy** in the French Alps.

Why Annecy? I was a high school French and English teacher in Iowa for 33 years before retiring in 2020 (yes, my final year of teaching coincided with the COVID pandemic). During my years of teaching, I led six different groups of students on 18-day trips to France (I also studied abroad for a semester in Paris while in college). On two of these trips, we were lucky enough to visit and stay in Annecy, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. I wanted Ken to experience it.

Annecy has the nickname, “The Venice of the Alps,” thanks to its canal that flows through the lovely city. There is even a monument (*Palais de l'Île*) in the middle of the canal which was the residence for the lord of Annecy in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This spot has to be the most photographed spot in the city!



Annecy includes a beautiful blue lake with mountains rising to form a majestic background. Due to its proximity to the lake and mountains, the town is a popular destination for all sorts of water and winter sports.



This was a relaxing first stop for our trip. We spent time wandering through the old town (*la Vieille Ville*). Restaurants line the canal and gave us a chance to try some great food. My personal favorite of the region is known as *tartiflette*. This is a baked dish of potatoes, bacon, onion, and amazing French cheese. It comes out all hot and gooey...and delicious! We also made several stops at various gelato stores and sampled amazing and unique flavors!

We toured the *Château d'Annecy*, an older castle in the town which now serves as a museum that sums up the history of Annecy. Both Ken and I were beginning to feel old as our legs and hips navigated the climb to the chateau and the many steps inside. Ken was intrigued by the architecture and how you could really sense the history and structure of this castle as a means of defense. The Queen's Tower dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

We also loved taking our time to stroll along the lake. One special feature is the *Pont des Amours* (Bridge of Lovers). This was a cute bridge where local legend says that lovers who kiss on the bridge will stay together for life (and keep them united for all eternity). Of course Ken and I took our time to kiss on the bridge!



I should also tell you one of my favorite memories with students in Annecy. On a night when students had free time to explore the city and eat on their own, the other French teachers and I later stumbled upon one of my French students who had borrowed a local musician's guitar and was playing to a crowd who had gathered by one of the bridges. What an amazing experience!

Aside from the canal, I think it is the baskets of flowers that drape the windows, restaurants, and the walkways along the canal that really transform this city into a jewel. In fact, France used to have a contest to name its most beautiful city; I was told that Annecy won the competition seven years in a row until France kicked them out of the competition to give other cities a fair chance!

**Our travel stories and photos will continue in the coming months' newsletters with our visits to: Lucerne, Switzerland; Munich, Germany; Salzburg, Austria; and Venice, Florence, and Rome Italy. Bon Voyage!**







# PICKLEBALL LEAGUE

**DATE AND TIME:**  
Monday Nights  
11/4 - 12/9 | 7 - 10pm

**AT MIDAMERICAN ENERGY RECPLEX**  
6500 Grand Ave,  
West Des Moines

**MORE INFORMATION:**  
See the post! DM with questions




# Future Speakers

**December 6:**  
**Kennetha Bingham-Tsai**  
Iowa UMC Conference Bishop


**February 7:**  
**Mike & Sally Merritt**  
Fraud Fighters: Avoiding Scams

**March 7:**  
**Susan Woody**  
Director, Des Moines Public Library



**"I want people to walk around delusional about how great they can be — and then to fight so hard for it every day that the lie becomes the truth."**

— Lady Gaga



**IOWA TRANS MUTUAL AID FUND**

**DONATE**

**www.iowatransmutualaidfund.org/**

We believe that every **Trans**, **Nonbinary**, and **Gender Diverse** Iowan should have access to gender-affirming care.

**HAPPY**



**THANKSGAYVING**



## November Speakers

# John & Terri Hale



Terri and John Hale are co-owners of The Hale Group, an Ankeny-based consulting and advocacy firm focused on enhancing the lives of older Iowans, and their caregivers, by ensuring high quality and affordable long-term care services in the setting of their choice.

Terri and John are also known as visible allies of the LGBTQ+ community. They have spoken out, in the media and at the Iowa Capitol, for equal rights for all. Terri is a past member of the One Iowa Board of Directors, and in 2020, she was awarded the inaugural LGBTQ Ally Legacy Leaders Award.

Did you miss the chance to enjoy your Prom as your truest self? Do you just enjoy a chance to do something special with your someone special? Then come on out and dance with pride at the 2024 Adult LGBTQ+ and Allies Prom! This year's theme is "Enchanted Forest," which is sure to make for a spectacular night to remember. Expect twinkling lights, beautiful foliage, some good photo ops, and a great time!

PRESENTED BY CAPITAL CITY PRIDE AND DOWNTOWN DISCIPLES

*lgbtq+ and allies* **ADULT PROM**

— SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 7PM —

BASH DSM | 18+  
1312 LOCUST ST #101, DES MOINES

SPONSORED BY SIMONSON B Lincoln SOLD

This event is for anyone 18 years of age and up (photo ID required), and your ticket includes entry to the dance, unlimited non-alcoholic beverages, and a meal-sized delicious assortment of heavy hors d'oeuvres. For attendees over 21, admission also includes two adult beverages (wine/beer). This event is presented by Capital City Pride, Downtown Disciples, Bash DSM, and our generous sponsors. Don't miss this enchanted second-chance prom!

**PRIDE'S  
TO THE RESCUE**

The 2024 election is critical for LGBTQ+ rights. We need to use our collective power to protect our progress and keep fighting for **EQUALITY.**

Your vote matters now more than ever!



# FFBC Celebrates October “Coming Out” Day

by Gary Moore

The First Friday Breakfast Club celebrated **National Coming Out Day** a bit early for the second year, with David Cotton, FFBC Vice-President, hosting a panel presentation. He, along with three others, shared their stories about “coming out” and their journeys in pursuing their authentic selves. National Coming Out Day started in 1988 to raise awareness of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community and its civil rights movement and to celebrate the Second March on Washington that brought over 750,000 activists to D.C., on October 11, 1987.

David Cotton started out the panel by introducing himself and asking each panel member to do the same. David noted that he is a retired Brigadier General of the Armed Forces, has two adult children, and came out later after a 28-year marriage. He feels sharing one’s story is about connection and is a celebration of courage reflecting the struggle of internal discussion that each of us experiences. Quoting from Dr. Loren Olson, noted author and FFBC member, it is about “letting in rather than coming out.”

**Jennifer Kathryn King** noted that she grew up as a soccer-playing military kid. She went to Stanford University on a soccer scholarship. While there, she started to work at NIKETOWN (to make ends meet). After graduating, she got offered a job at NIKE Headquarters and went on to become Senior Director for Global Brand – Team Sports. In 2018, Jen founded her own digital marketing agency called Invictus Media where they create high-quality digital marketing assets for businesses of all shapes and sizes. She grew up as a military kid on bases where “don’t ask don’t tell” meant one’s understanding of diversity was limited. All she knew is that you didn’t want to “mess up” and endanger your father’s and family members’ careers. She didn’t know she was gay, just different, since there were no role models on a military base. Winning a full soccer scholarship to Stanford University would open her eyes to the gay and lesbian world.

**“CL” Chelsea Lepley** stated that she is not sure she ever came out; she was just always who she was, queer. She was always an activist, acting upon her feelings of right or wrong from a very young age starting with the Young Women’s Resource Center and helping to establish the Gay Straight Alliance at Urbandale High School. She is the product of a single-dad family with brothers. She has always encouraged others to become involved in various community groups and most recently ran for Des Moines City Council in Ward 2. During her time as a student, Chelsea embraced causes and issues close to her heart. She actively supported initiatives related to voter turnout, economic fairness, gender equality, LGBTQ+ civil rights, criminal justice reform, environmental sustainability, and campaign finance reform. She holds degrees in education (BA) and public policy (MPA).

**Aria Huizenga** started out by noting that she did not want her pronouns to become a distraction saying that gender identity can be messy. When he was a very young child, he was “very girly, girly” and would throw tantrums to get his way and clothes selection, but by the time he was a teenager, he identified as a gay man which turned into exploring transition once that vocabulary became familiar to him. Being involved with Des Moines Gay Men’s Chorus and helping create the small ensemble group Transcendent has been a major part of her now transitioning, and now would prefer to be perceived as a woman. “I spent so many years in boxes that didn’t fit, and now that I am feeling comfortable with who I am presenting as, please don’t put me back in a box.”

One grows as their vocabulary and ability to tell their story grows. Being seen and having one’s story heard begins the healing and lends itself to becoming your authentic self.



Speakers

## October “Coming Out” Panel

Jennifer Kathryn King, Chelsea Lepley, Aria Huizenga, David Cotton





# October Meeting Photo Gallery



**Jennifer Kathryn King, Chelsea Lepley, and Aria Huizenga,** shared their personal backgrounds and coming out journeys with October's FFBC members.



**David Cotton,** FFBC Vice President, organized and moderated the October "Coming Out" Panel Discussion





# Joker: Folie à Deux

A Movie Review by Mark Turnage



“Excruciating to watch.” “Hates moviegoers.” “A bad joke.” These are some of the repeated yet fascinating critical pans of director Todd Phillips’ sequel “Joker: Folie à Deux,” featuring high-budget production and A-list star power, but negative premiere reception and disproportionate box office returns. “Folie à Deux” is Phillips’ personal thesis statement on fame and filmmaking that also serves to refute its problematic prequel. Its star power provides a fresh and unique take towards its source material’s central romance and an unwavering commitment to Phillips’ own creative vision, but “Folie à Deux’s” lack of dramatic urgency, languid musical numbers, and slim plot make its ruminations on fame and broken social systems a difficult watch.

“Folie à Deux” picks up two years after the events of the first “Joker” movie, with Arthur Fleck (Joaquin Phoenix) institutionalized within the Shawshank-esque Arkham State Hospital for his crimes. The crux of the narrative is dedicated to distancing Arthur from the Joker persona he adopted, including his criminal defense of dissociative identity disorder and his love interest Harleen “Lee” Quinzel (Lady Gaga): a fellow inmate as broken and brazen as Arthur who professes her love for Joker. Their relationship sparks musical numbers in Arthur’s mind, but also a media frenzy that spills into Arthur’s public trial. Outside the asylum and the courtroom, the public clamors for more Joker, but does anyone value Arthur’s life, including himself?

Arthur Fleck belongs in the same cinematic category as his antiheroic powder keg inspiration Travis Bickle (“Taxi Driver”)—in “Folie à Deux,” we see Arthur reduced to deeper misery and a hell of his own making: any time Joker is glorified, there might be a musical number, but horrific violence rapidly results. Like Bickle, Arthur’s motivations and identity are scattered and

nebulous: Joker’s fame is both desirable and shameful to him, and there’s both pride and guilt when Arthur reflects on his crimes. The intent to deconstruct the film’s protagonist is there and has complexity, but lacks depth. This is less so with Gaga’s Lee Quinzel, who invests her own character contradictions to bring a fresh new approach to the character in agency, appearance, and a quiet volatility that convinces us she’s just as dangerous—if not more—as Arthur is. Her scenes and duets carry the film’s weight and themes best.

As a Batman/DC fan, I respect Phillips’ intent to tell a story using the motifs of Gotham City; where I take issue is when places like Arkham Asylum and Gotham City aren’t characters themselves. In “Joker,” we see the analogue of Gotham as a decaying, crumbling city drowning in trash. But unfortunately, in “Folie à Deux’s” courtroom and asylum, neither are aesthetically memorable or even thematically imposing. The most attention is given to the musical sets, which themselves are liminal and stripped-down with only Phoenix and Gaga to occupy them. Thematically, this tracks, but is still visually underwhelming and not the tonal contrast it needs to be.

Phillips has stated in post-release interviews his intent with “Folie à Deux” was to examine “what happens to a person who has a title thrust upon them they never truly wanted and isn’t who they are.” Phillips’ filmography has ranged from fraternal comedies “Old School,” “Road Trip,” and “The Hangover” trilogy to “Joker” (2019) and most intriguingly, his first film school project, “Hated” (1993), a faux-guerilla documentary about a spiraling fictional punk-rock frontman that Phillips financed himself through maxing out his own credit cards.

“Folie à Deux” also includes an extended musical reference to “The Band Wagon” (1953). In the latter film, Tony Hunter, a forgotten musical star, hopes his

friends’ Broadway show will revive his stalled career. Central to the plot of “The Band Wagon” is Hunter’s play: a bright musical comedy reworked and reinterpreted by producers into a dark, serious drama, to the disappointment of the play’s writers and stars. Hunter ultimately sells his own art collection to refinance the revised film when its investors back out. Like “Folie à Deux,” “The Band Wagon” was also a box office disappointment on release, but it makes you wonder if the parallels stop there.

“Folie à Deux” takes its title from the French phrase “madness of two”: when symptoms of a delusional belief are “transmitted” from one person to another. The most forward way Phillips illustrates this theme is that the only characters “in” on the musical numbers (i.e. singing) are Lee and Joker. Yet in musicals, EVERYONE is in on it—even if there’s no singing being done, there’s most certainly mass choreography. Even Arthur’s indecision on what role Joker should play in his life, if any, could manifest as improbable (and comedic) choreography. Camp and dark humor could balance out the slower-paced musical numbers, satirically underscore the systemic issues that made Arthur “Joker,” and provide comic relief that meshes with both Phoenix’s interpretation and the source material. But with this thesis, Phillips, like Arthur, has no interest in being funny, and maybe that’s the joke. But is it a good joke if you have to explain it?

“Joker: Folie à Deux” hits streaming on MAX 10/25/24.



## 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@ffbcia.org](mailto:info@ffbcia.org)

# Trump Spends Millions In Anti-Trans Ads



by Supervisor **Matt McCoy**  
Polk County, 1<sup>st</sup> District

Former President Trump and Republican groups have spent more than \$21 million on anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ TV ads. This amount is roughly a third of all TV ad spending through October 9 for these Republican groups, even when transgender issues are among the least important issues motivating voters this election cycle.

Trump and his allies are continually using false claims about gender-affirming care in prisons as well as unfounded scenarios about children getting an “operation” at school without parental permission. This only further alienates a vulnerable population that represents only 0.5% of Americans. This is not a presidential election issue that is driving tens of millions of dollars in ad spending in male audiences with these ads primarily airing during collegiate and professional football games. The fact is that the Biden-Harris Administration has abided by the same laws and court rulings mandating lifesaving, gender-affirming care for a very small percentage of trans inmates in our penitentiary system. Incidentally, the Trump Administration adhered to these same guidelines as directed by the federal courts.

This is indicative of a deeper and darker effort which began under Karl Rove to divide Americans on marriage equality. This is a continuation of the “divide and conquer” strategy to try to villainize the LGBTQ+ community and to attract low information voters who are unaware of the data and information that illustrate what a small percentage of the population are impacted by trans rights issues. One thing’s for sure—if you’re a trans kid living in rural America today, and you see these commercials and these vitriol attacks on your personhood, you’re less safe, more susceptible to mental health crises, including suicide, and for that reason alone, the Republican party should reject the Trump policies of hate.

## Officers

**Byron Huff**  
President

**David Cotton**  
Vice President

**Joe Raetz**  
Secretary

**David Wilfahrt**  
Treasurer



## Newsletter Editor

**WP** Wade Petersen

## Webmaster

**David Cotton**



## Publication



©2024

**FFBC Board of Directors**

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

