



First Friday News & Views



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

June 2026 | Volume 31 | Issue 6

Next Meeting

Friday, June 5
7:00 a.m.



Location

Hoyt Sherman
15th & Woodland
Des Moines



Speaker

Zach Rus

Executive Director

**Iowa Safe
Schools**



Website

ffbc Iowa.org



Beaming with Pride

by Byron Huff, Board President

Happy Pride! I hope you plan to celebrate Pride in some way to help bring visibility to our community, much as our scholarship winners have done. We will celebrate the courage of our scholarship winners on Friday, June 5. I hope all of you can join us in person or via [Zoom](#); please note that an [RSVP](#) is **required** due to limited seating. Everyone will have an assigned seat which is necessary to make sure our scholarship winners and their families can be seated together.

Zach Rus, Executive Director of [Iowa Safe Schools](#) (ISS), will offer some brief remarks. The mission of ISS is to provide safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environments and communities for LGBTQ+ and allied youth through education, outreach, advocacy, and direct services. ISS provides comprehensive support, victim services, resources, and events for LGBTQ+ and Allied youth. Serving over 10,000 youth annually, ISS is the largest LGBTQ+ youth-serving organization in the Midwest.

Every June, cities across the United States fill with rainbow flags, parades, concerts, and community gatherings to celebrate LGBTQ+ identity and visibility. Pride celebrations are now a major part of American civic life, but their origins lie in protest, resistance, and the struggle for equal rights. In Des Moines, the annual [Capital City Pride](#) (CCP) festival reflects both the national history of the LGBTQ+ rights movement and the unique story of queer life in Iowa's capital city.

Pride celebrations serve multiple purposes. They are both commemorations of struggle and celebrations of identity and community. For many LGBTQ+ people, Pride provides visibility and affirmation in societies where discrimination and stigma have historically been common.

Pride events also remain political. Even as LGBTQ+ rights expanded in the United States (through milestones such as the legalization of same-sex marriage in the Obergefell v. Hodges), the debates over civil rights protections, transgender rights, education policy, and healthcare continue. Pride celebrations often include advocacy organizations, voter outreach, and memorials for victims of violence and discrimination.

Iowa occupies an important place in LGBTQ+ legal history. In 2009, the Varnum v. Brien decision made Iowa one of the first states in the nation to legalize same-sex marriage. The ruling by the Iowa Supreme Court drew national attention and highlighted Iowa's occasionally overlooked progressive traditions.

[continued on page 2]



Don't Miss the Record-Breaking

21 Scholarship Awards

To Be Given Out This Month at the FFBC Ceremony!

**RSVP
Required**

["Beaming with Pride" continued from page 1]

LGBTQ+ Iowans also experienced decades of discrimination and invisibility before those advances. Earlier generations relied on informal social networks and a small number of bars and gathering spaces in cities such as Des Moines, Iowa City, and Cedar Rapids. Activists worked through university groups, churches, and community organizations to build support and advocate for anti-discrimination protections.

Capital City Pride emerged from this broader movement for visibility and inclusion in central Iowa. Pride events in Des Moines began modestly during the late twentieth century, when public LGBTQ+ gatherings still carried social and political risk. Early organizers focused on creating safe spaces where LGBTQ+ residents and allies could gather openly and celebrate community.

Over time, the event grew dramatically. What began as a relatively small local gathering developed into one of Iowa's largest annual festivals. Downtown Des Moines became the center of the celebration, with parades, concerts, food vendors, nonprofit booths, and political organizations participating.

CCP has often reflected the changing visibility of LGBTQ+ people in Iowa society. In earlier decades, many participants feared public exposure because of possible professional or personal consequences. By the 2000s and 2010s, openly LGBTQ+ elected officials, clergy members, business leaders, and families became increasingly visible participants.

The festival also became an important economic and cultural event for downtown Des Moines. Businesses began sponsoring Pride activities, and attendance expanded to include visitors from across Iowa and neighboring states. The growth mirrored broader national changes in public attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people.

At the same time, organizers continued emphasizing Pride's roots in activism and inclusion. Events frequently included remembrance ceremonies for victims of hate crimes, tributes to LGBTQ+ elders and activists, and outreach to marginalized communities within the broader LGBTQ+ population.

Today, Pride represents both **celebration** and **civic identity**. The city's annual festivities include parades, live entertainment, educational programming and family-oriented events. Community organizations use the occasion to connect people with health services, advocacy networks, and social support systems.

For many participants, CCP is also deeply personal. It provides a public affirmation that LGBTQ+ people belong in Iowa communities and civic life. In a state often stereotyped as culturally conservative, the visibility of Pride in Des Moines demonstrates the diversity and complexity of Iowa's social history.

The story of Pride, both nationally and locally, is ultimately about visibility, resilience, and the continuing pursuit of equality. From the protests outside the Stonewall Inn to the crowded streets of downtown Des Moines during CCP weekend, the movement reflects decades of activism that transformed American society while continuing to push for broader inclusion and acceptance.



Happy
PRIDE
Month

Briefs & Shorts



We are grateful to First Friday Breakfast Club member, **Bill Jackson**, for introducing our May speaker, **Dave Busiek**. Busiek was the news director at KCCI for over 30 years and currently has a Substack column "Dave Busiek on Media."

Thanks to **John Schmacker** for assisting with FFBC's finances during our time of transition. We are also grateful to **Nicholas Williams** for overseeing FFBC's Microsoft IT infrastructure. Finally, thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter and website editor. *Thank you to all our newsletter contributors!*

The **deadline** for the **July newsletter** will be **June 22**.



If you have something of interest that you would like to share, just 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 2026, we will have awarded over **\$621,000** for **245** 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.



**THANK
YOU**



to the **2026**
Scholarship Committee
for the excellent work to
choose our **21** scholars!

Ken Hanson (chair)
Jim Flansburg
Aria Huizenga

Max Mowitz
Jonathan Pogge-Weaver
Chris Russell



June Speaker



Zach Rus



Zach Rus (*He/Him/His*) is the **Executive Director** at Iowa Safe Schools. He has devoted his entire career to higher education and philanthropy and is excited to be guiding Iowa Safe Schools during this critical time. His extensive background in nonprofit management, leadership development, and fundraising equips him to implement innovative programs that promote respect and inclusion across Iowa. Growing up in northwest Iowa, Zach understands the unique challenges faced by students and families in rural communities. As a first-generation college student, he graduated from Simpson College, igniting his passion for educational equity and advocacy. Most recently, at Ellipsis, Zach led strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing organizational visibility, fundraising, and fostering community partnerships. His philanthropic philosophy emphasized the importance of dignity for all kids and families, further preparing him to lead Iowa Safe Schools. Now, he is committed to advancing the Iowa Safe School's mission through collaborative partnerships with educators, community organizations, parents, and policymakers.



Now Accepting Applications

The One Iowa LGBTQ Leadership Institute's goal is to uplift and support resilient, authentic LGBTQ+ leaders in Iowa.

Apply Today!

Scan the QR Code or apply online at www.oneiowa.org/our-work/Leadership

Applications are due June 30th at 11:55 pm CT.



What to Expect

Classes will run from August-November with a mix of in-person and virtual sessions.

- ✦ In the Leadership Institute Cohort, you will:
- ✦ Learn Authentic and Resilient Leadership Skills
- ✦ Explore Iowa's LGBTQ History and foundations
- ✦ Build queer community and connections
- ✦ Gain a mentor who shares your passions
- ✦ Further your goals with a Capstone Project

Should I apply?

Are you an LGBTQ+ person living in the state of Iowa? Are you working toward long term personal, professional, or community centered goals? You should apply! No matter your leadership experience, whatever your current role, this program is for you.

Email Program Coordinator Paden Sheemaker at Paden@oneiowa.org for support!

Save the Date for Ankeny Pride

SATURDAY
JUNE 20
4-9PM

SOUTHVIEW
MIDDLE
SCHOOL

celebrate **5** years!
Ankeny PRIDE

AnkenyPride.org



"Love takes off masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within."

- James Baldwin



Scholarship Awards Breakfast

Friday, June 5
6:45 a.m.

Hoyt Sherman Place

Des Moines

This year we will award **\$3,000 scholarships** to **21** 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 6:45 a.m. Come acquaint yourself with these **21** 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.



Lavender Legal Center



Join the Des Moines Art Center's June Social Saturday event: **Pride and Seek!** During Des Moines' annual Capitol City Pride PrideFest, stop by the Art Center for a couple hours of fun, art making, and educational engagement. Enjoy crafts in the Art School studios, a free screening of the "Last American Gay Bar," a free guided tour, drag king story time, treats in the Café, and so much more!





First Friday Breakfast Club

THANK YOU!



2026 Scholarship Donors

Underwriter (\$3000+)

- Phil Brawner & Ted Johnson
- Bruce Carr & Robert Thelen
- John Carstensen & Scott Valbert
- John Charles & David Nelson
- Tom Coppess & Mike Koch
- Michael & Barbara Gartner
- Dave & Trudy Holman Hurd
- Brad Holland & Joe Raetz
- Gary Moore
- Polk County Board of Supervisors,
Community Betterment Grant
- Jim Sterba
- Walnut Hills United Methodist Church
Scholarship in honor of
Miles Phipps

Host (\$1000 - \$2999)

- Jim Anderson & Byron Huff
- Mark Bienhoff & Troy Zwart
- Ken Hanson & Wade Petersen
- Matt Hiatt & Paul Pettinger
- Chelsea Lepley
- Plus1 Bright Eyes Tour
- Christopher Russell
- Larry & Storm Saw
- Jerry Vroegh

Advocate (\$500 - \$999)

- Mark Anderson & Ben Veach
- Anonymous
- Margo Altman Blumenthal
- James Benda & Louis Van Daele
- Kevin Chorniak
- Nathan Coombes & Keith Wirtz
- Christopher Correy
- Paul E. Dark, Jr.
- MJ Dolan
- Jim Flansburg
- Michael & Debbie Hubbell
- Larry & Sharon Huff
- Donna MacNeir
- Misty Sold Team at Better
Homes & Gardens Real
Estate Innovations
- Michel & Jonathon Pogge-Weaver
- Gary Roberts
- James Tatro & Dan Venker
- David Wilfahrt



Supporter (\$250 - \$499)

- Peg Armstrong-Gustafson
- Larry Barnett & Bill Jackson
- Chris Bern
- Roger Bishop & David Lauritzen
- Jack Claussen & Alex Wells
- David & Alicia Claypool
- Kurtis Denison & Robert Warren
- Ron Hankins & James Pech
- Jeff Jensen & Tim Lumadue
- Randall Kramer
- John L'Estrange
- William Moody
- Eric Nemmers
- Matthew Paul
- Patti Pierce
- George W. & Mary A. Richardson
- Tim Schreck
- Beverly Smith
- David & Denise Swartz
- Carl & Susan Voss
- Ivan & Anne Webber

Honors (\$100 - \$249)

- Michael D. Baldwin
- Venancio Batista-Pedro
- Kelly Baum
- Jackie Blount
- Andrew Brouwer
- Tim Burgess & Bryan Noble
- Frank & Marilyn Carroll
- Tom Chase & Dan Palmer
- Bryan Crowder
- CVS Health
- David Feinberg
- Diane Ford & Chris Rinner
- Jeff Hartman
- Harold Hinkhouse
- Steve Karlin & Dr. Lynn Rankin
- Fred Lewis
- Gregory Link
- John & Cyril Ann Mandelbaum
- Matt McCoy
- Brian & Susan Moorhead
- Hannah Navin
- Progressive Insurance
- David Remund
- Steve Roehling
- Steve Sanda
- John Selk
- Craig Weltha
- David Yurdin & Elaine Lundstrom

Donors (Up to \$99)

- John Brentnall
- Margaret Chase
- Christopher Correy
- Lynn Dennis
- Michael Egel
- Kevin Gilchrist
- Rachel Gulick
- John & Terri Hale
- Chuck Jordan
- Mark & Mary Kacere
- Robin Kline &
William Summers
- Hannah Mitchell
- Zachary Rus
- David Richard Ross
- Cody Smith
- Drew Stensland
- Steve Thury
- Tom Vilsack
- Jim Young

In-Kind Services

- PC Print Center
- John Schmacker
- Nicholas Williams

Bequests Funding FFBC Endowment

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



**Fundraising
Period:
May 2025
to April 2026**

Visibility Counts!

As we prepare for this month's **Scholarship Awards Breakfast**, it is important to remember that the Scholarship Committee members also make efforts to attend and/or present at the **senior awards ceremonies** at the Iowa high schools of our scholars. 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 Member, Chris Russell, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Georgia Steeples** at Bondurant-Farrar High School.



Scholarship Committee Chair, Ken Hanson, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Brynn Almond** at Roland-Story High School.



FFBC Board Member, Rachel Gulick, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Serenity Frantz** at Ottumwa High School.



Scholarship Committee Chair, Ken Hanson, presents a scholarship to **Greta Gromacki** at Iowa City West High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, Max Mowitz, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Claire Coffey** at Carlisle School.



Scholarship Committee Chair, Ken Hanson, presents a scholarship to **Rylan Grebin** at Stanton High School.





Scholarship Committee Member, Chris Russell, presents an FFBC scholarship to **June Piepel** at Des Moines Roosevelt High School.



Scholarship Committee Chair, Ken Hanson, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Annabelle Baggett** at Exira-EHK High School.



FFBC Board Member, Rachel Gulick, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Ashton Robinson** at Colfax-Mingo High School.



Scholarship Committee Chair, Ken Hanson, presents a scholarship to **Brooklyn Neddermeyer** at Webster City High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, Max Mowitz, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Zachary Jones** at Carlisle High School.



Scholarship Committee Chair, Ken Hanson, presents a scholarship to **Alex McClure** at Center Point Urbana High School.



Scholarship Committee Member, Chris Russell, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Ferdinand Hyatt** at West Des Moines Valley High School.



Scholarship Committee Chair, Ken Hanson, presents a scholarship to **Kolbie Kriegel** at Center Point Urbana High School.



FFBC Board Member, Rachel Gulick, presents an FFBC scholarship to **Remy Holladay** at Louisa-Muscatine High School.

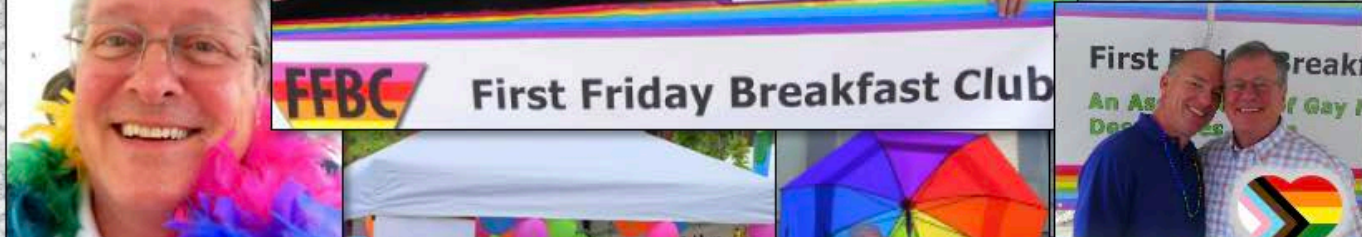
CONGRATULATIONS

1996-2026 FFBC's 30th ANNIVERSARY

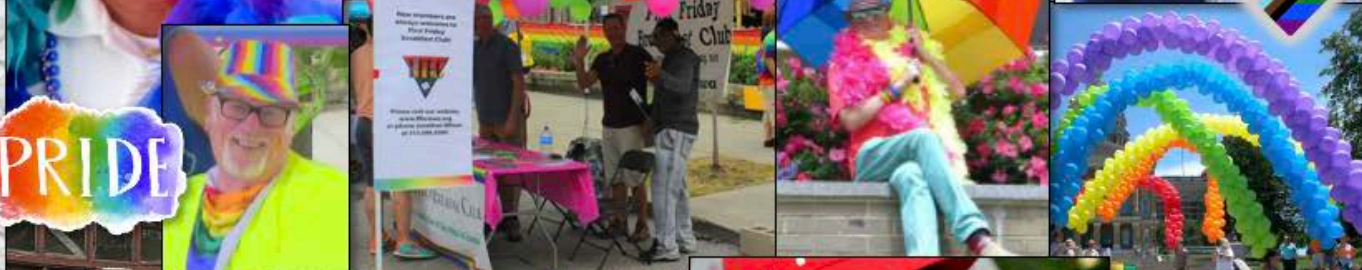
FFBC Shows

Pride

Photo Credits: Gary Moore



PRIDE





The Law of Unintended and Intended Consequences

by Jonathan Wilson

I practiced law in Iowa for over 50 years; I taught in law schools in the United States and abroad; and I clerked on the federal Circuit Court of Appeals for the 8th circuit. I was admitted to practice in the northern and southern federal district courts in Iowa, and admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court. That information is not intended to toot my own horn; it's to provide context for the following observations. The observations from someone without those credentials might not be as impactful, even though equally valid.

I am embarrassed by the current Supreme Court.

At one level, it really isn't the fault of the partisan, recently-appointed members of the United States Supreme Court. They were partisan nominees in the first place.

To remove any of them requires a super-majority of the United States Senate by impeachment proceedings (*see* U.S. Constitution). That has never happened in the 250 years of our history. The Constitution does not spell out what is required for appointment to the life-time position except for Senate confirmation.

Thanks to the "leadership" of Senators Charles Grassley and Mitch McConnell, the rules of the Senate were changed to require a mere majority for Senate confirmation (they couldn't change the Constitution). The disconnect between what's required for Senate confirmation and what's



First Friday Breakfast Club Founder **Jonathan Wilson**

required for removal from office violates the law against unintended consequences. (I'm cynical enough to suspect that the consequences were not unintended).

Under the former Senate rule, no matter the political party of the President, the nominee would have to be able to garner a Senate super-majority for confirmation. That wouldn't eliminate the potential for a partisan nominee, but it would dramatically reduce the potential that such a candidate would be confirmed. It would mean that the President would be forced to nominate centrist jurists if the President had any hope of accomplishing Senate confirmation.

The Constitution is not partisan. It's to be interpreted and applied. I can understand differences in philosophy about how it should be interpreted, but those differences should have nothing to do with current partisan politics.

Sarcastically, thank you Senators Grassley and McConnell for your support for the Constitution, the rule of law, and our democracy. You should be ashamed.

**Exist.
Resist.
Have the
Audacity.**

Washington D.C.
Pride Theme 2026

— INTRODUCING —
SUMMER GYM CLASS
[AKA OPEN GYM]

1st AND 3rd THURSDAYS, MAY-AUGUST
6-7:30^{PM} • WILLKIE HOUSE

CAPTURE THE FLAG • SPEED SURVIVOR • BASKETBALL
KNOCKOUT • YOGA • CHAOS DODGEBALL • BAGS/CORNHOLE

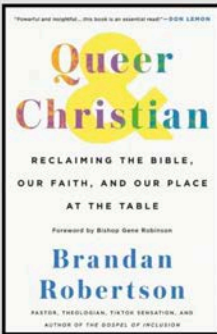
Free to participate // RSVP for updates // Drop-in format. Come to one, come to all
No teams. No pressure. Just come out and play.



BOOK CLUB EVENT

A 4 WEEK SERIES


- June 17th: Kick off the discussion at SingleSpeed Brewing (303 Scott Ave) at 6 PM
- June 24th, July 1st & 8th: Continue the discussion at 525 SW 5th Street, Suite D at 6 PM



What does it mean to be Queer & Christian?

Reclaim the bible and your faith!

Written by an LGBTQ+ author, activist, and public theologian



LGBTQ+ Affirming & Safe Space Discussion
Hosted by Downtown Disciples and Progressive Christian Pastor, Debbie Griffin

National LGBTQ+ Calendar

glad 

- **June:** LGBTQ+ Pride Month
- **June 1:** LGBTQ+ Families Day
- **June 12:** Pulse Remembrance
- **June 26:** Anniversary of U.S. Supreme Court legalizing marriage equality
- **June 27:** National HIV Testing Day
- **June 28:** Stonewall Day
- **June 27:** Queer Youth of Faith Day

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 gender 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





For Pride Month updates, go to:

capitalcitypride.org/pridefest/

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

2026 Event Calendar

- **Saturday, May 30: Let Love Serve Volleyball Tournament** (10:00 AM - 6:00 PM | Sands Volleyball Club)
- **Wednesday, June 3: Coins for a Cause** (6:00 PM - 10:00 PM | Up Down Arcade Bard)
- **Thursday, June 4: Pride (Bike) Ride** (6:15 PM - 9:00 PM | Registration Required***)
- **Saturday, June 6: Mr./Ms./Mx. Pride Pageant** (5:00 - 8:00 PM | The Garden)
- **Sunday, June 7: Pride Kickoff Drag Brunch** (10:00 AM and 1:00 PM) Tonic Bar Court Avenue / \$35
- **Sunday, June 11: Pride Night at the Dog Bar** (5:30 - 7:30 PM) Paws & Pints | 6218 Willowmere Drive

PrideFest Weekend

- **Friday, June 12: Festival Opens** (5:00 PM - 11:45 PM)
 - **Saturday, June 13: Festival** (9:00 AM - 12:00 AM)
 - **Capital City Pride Stride 5K (run/walk/strut)** (8:00 - 9:30 AM | PrideFest Main Stage) / \$\$\$
 - **Capital City Pride Pet Pageant** (9:30 - 11:00 AM | Community Stage)
 - **Teen Zone Active** (10:00 - 5:00 PM)
 - **Sunday, June 14: 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 | Main Stage)
 - **Pride Parade** (12:00 - 1:30 PM | East Grand Avenue)
-
- **Friday, June 19: I-Cubs Pride Night 7:00 & Tailgate 5:00** (5:00 - 9:30 PM | Principal Park, DSM)
 - **Thursday, June 25: Pride Night at the Museum** (5:30 - 8:30 PM) | Science Center of Iowa
 - **Saturday, June 27: Iowa Menace Pride Night** (7:00 - 9:30 PM) | Mediacom Stadium



Study ID: HUM00288367 IRB: Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Date Approved: 4/8/2025

OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANS AND NONBINARY YOUNG PEOPLE!

Do you want to discuss your high school experience in Iowa? Participate in a study about gender, education, and public policy.

\$50 for 1-2 hour research interview
Zoom and in-person options available

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Transgender, nonbinary, or another marginalized gender identity
- Young adults or current high school students (age 15+)
- Attended at least one year of high school in Iowa since the 2023-2024 school year



SCAN HERE TO SIGN UP

or email principal investigator Xavier Fields: xfields@umich.edu

This work is an independent academic study intended to inform practice and policy. The oversight for this study is provided by the University of Michigan IRB HUM00288367.

AND THE CATEGORY IS

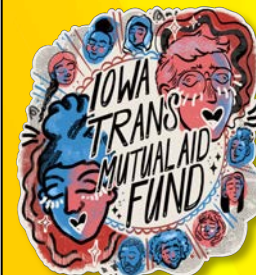
DRAG!

PRIZES!




QUEERCORE + Des Moines PEOPLE'S PAWS

SATURDAY JUNE 20TH | 9-11PM
XBK LIVE | 1159 24th st DSM 50311



The Iowa Trans Mutual Aid Fund financially supports Trans, Nonbinary, and Gender Diverse Iowans as they access gender-affirming care.

iowatransmutualaidfund.org



**EXTRA!
EXTRA!**

ONEIOWA INVITES YOU TO THE

17TH ANNUAL GALA

DES MOINES IA THE FRENCH WY (BUTTED) WY IN HIGHLAND PARK FRI JUNE 26 2026

TICKETS **AT** ONEIOWA.ORG



Pridefest Worship
Sunday, June 14, 10 am

RAINBOW FAITH COALITION OF GREATER DES MOINES

ALL AGES

**Pride Craftopia +
Decorate Your
Mini Pride Float!**

Wednesday, June 3 | 5:00 – 7:00 PM | Central Library
Join Central Iowa Rainbow Families and the Des Moines Library to kick off Pride Month. Decorate colorful floats with art supplies, then create your own Rainbow Loom designs, friendship bracelets, shrinky dinks, and perler beads. All ages welcome to celebrate creativity and community during Pride Month.




Saturday, July 11:
**Member/Donor
Summer Party**

August 7:
Julia Franklin
Mainframe Studios

September 4:
Jackie Blount
Iowa Schools:
Sexuality & Gender

October 1:
Mazie Stillwell
Exec. Director Progress Iowa

November 6:
Deidre DeJear
President/CEO Oakridge
Neighborhood

December 4:
Nate Nims
Pastor, Walnut Hills
United Methodist Church

Dave Busiek: 40 Years of Media Experience

by Gary Moore

“Busiek delivered a sobering state of the decline of mainstream media” is how Matt McCoy described the FFBC May speaker. I could not agree more.

Dave Busiek was introduced by Bill Jackson, a long-time FFBC member who has known Dave since the start of his career. Bill himself has a distinguished background in television, as Governor Bob Ray’s administrative assistant, and 21 years as Associate Director of Keep Iowa Beautiful. Busiek is a retired radio and TV news journalist, spending 43 years in Iowa radio and TV newsrooms and almost 30 years as KCCI News Director.

Dave shared how to be a more informed news consumer and how to understand why journalists do what they do behind most newsroom walls, the competition in the media, the financial situation it finds itself in today, and how trust in the media has plummeted.

At one time, the *Des Moines Register’s* Sunday circulation was 535,000. With their advertising, they could support the largest newsroom in Iowa to keep up on local happenings. With the internet, advertising support started to evaporate, and newsrooms were cut, giving rise to news coverage going further up the chain, to state and national bent stories. Local jobs declined. The print media could not keep up with the new pace.

On the other hand, broadcast news jobs have held steady, but that is about to change. Everybody likes video, and politicians have stuck with advertising on television. So every even-numbered year, broadcast news gets an infusion of funds. That is about to change as more and more politicians take advantage of social media.

Years ago, the major networks paid local stations to be part of their network to have access to their audience. About 20 years ago that changed, and that significant revenue source changed. Someone came up with the idea of reverse compensation. So now local stations have a big bill. That means if you want to watch, say, NBC, or enjoy NFL football, Jimmy Fallon, or *NBC Nightly News*, stations will have to pay for it. In local television, there is going to be a consolidation of ownership. For decades, the Federal Communications Commission had a cap that said that no owner of television stations, like Hearst (which owns stations all over the country), could reach more than 39% of the households in America, because they didn’t want somebody monopolizing the business. They also could not own more than one of the top four-rated stations in a market. “Well, that cap apparently is gone, because Trump’s FCC and the FCC commissioner have just approved a merger between two giant companies, Nexstar and Tegna, which will reach 80% of households.” Busiek explained that several Des Moines stations will now be owned by the same company and that means probably the loss of jobs as they combine newsrooms, broadcast personnel, camera people, and those associated positions.

Trust in the media has plummeted. According to Gallup in October, just 28% of Americans expressed a great deal or fair amount of trust in newspapers, radio, and television to report the news fairly and accurately. When Gallup first started asking this question back in the 1970s, about 70% of Americans had trust in the media. How did we get here? Conservative media came to the fore sometime in the 1990s. Rush Limbaugh was on every station and market in the country combined with Fox News preaching a message against the mainstream media, or as Rush called them, the “lame stream” media. Thus, conservative audiences have just been hit over and over with how bad the media is, and that the main media leans left. Is it no wonder that 8% of Republicans lack confidence in the media?

Busiek said that his talk was not meant to be political, but that we have a leader of the free world who has been beating up the media as a part of his regular persona and campaign stands. Trump files lawsuits against media companies. He calls reporters the “enemy of the people,” (a phrase that really has its roots in Nazism). He berates reporters regularly to their face. **“It’s just not easy to overcome this, the firehose of hate that is coming from some of our leaders.”**

Dave shared some samples of hope that lend support to literacy about the media. A pilot program in Indianapolis where a public editor through a non-profit writes an analysis of how the media are doing concerning various referred stories. There are also several digital startups around the country like *Axios* and *Iowa Capital Dispatch* in Iowa. Another option is paid media on things like Substack. Dave mentioned that he can be followed on his Substack, “Dave Busiek on Media.” Although parts can be free, you can also subscribe. Dave noted he donates all of his Substack proceeds to the Iowa Freedom of Information Council. Some legacy media types, such as Jim Acosta at CNN, have left their legacy media organizations and now have hundreds of thousands of people reading them on Substack.

Dave Busiek encouraged us, as the American public, to grow up and take more responsibility for where and how we get our information. I know for this writer, it means becoming more aware of where to go for my information. I thought I was doing well with a few digital local inputs from *Axios*, etc. Substack is a new, unfamiliar world to this septuagenarian, and I need to get better. *Do you?*



Dave Busiek



May Meeting Photo Gallery



62 Wonderful People in Attendance!



Michael Egel,

from the Des Moines Metro Opera, encourages guests to attend *King Roger*.

The storyline includes themes of self-knowledge, spirituality, and identity.



Rick Miller

reminds FFBC members about the Pride Center's GLOW event on May 3. This will be a Drag Brunch with several LGBTQ+ awards given out.



Max Mowitz

from One Iowa promotes applications for the LGBTQ Leadership Institute and also previews their upcoming June Gala.



Wes Mullins

of Capital City Pride encourages everyone to participate in all the magnificent Pride events coming in June (check their website).



Bill Jackson,

longtime FFBC member, shares some personal and humorous connections as he introduces the FFBC May speaker, Dave Busiek.



Central Iowa
TRANS LIVES FESTIVAL
 An All-Ages Event
featuring
TRANSGENDER, GENDERQUEER & NON-BINARY CREATIVES & THEIR ARTISTRY

**SATURDAY
 JUNE 6, 2026
 10:00 am - 5:00 pm**

First Unitarian Church
 1800 Bell Avenue
 Des Moines, IA


- Facility is ADA Accessible
- Security provided so everyone can enjoy a safe & fun event.

FREE ADMISSION

- Art & Crafts for Sale
- Live Music
- Poetry & Literature
- Film
- Drag Performances
- Food Trucks & Booths
- Community Resources

Find out more at www.ucdsm.org/trans-lives-festival/
 Questions? Email translivesfestival@ucdsm.org


What is the Trans Lives Fest?
 The annual Central Iowa Trans Lives Festival provides an affirming space for trans adults and youth to celebrate & present their creative work to the LGBTQIA community and allied members of the public. Sponsored by the Queer & Transgender Action Group (QTAG) of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, an LGBTQIA Welcoming Congregation & member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the Iowa Unitarian Universalist Witness & Advocacy Network (IUUWAN).



**UAW Local
 450 2026
 Juneteenth
 & Pride
 Celebration**

UAW Local 450 invites you to join them for a special **Juneteenth & Pride Celebration** on **Friday, June 19, 2026**, from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM at Labor Union Park in Des Moines, Iowa.

This event will bring together union members, community organizations, and allies to celebrate freedom, solidarity, and the ongoing fight for civil and human rights. They would be honored to have your presence at this meaningful gathering.



**Pride Month
 At the Movies**

Clue
June 6 (8:30 PM) & June 11 (7:30 PM)

Clue finds six colorful dinner guests gathered at the mansion of their host, Mr. Boddy -- who turns up dead after his secret is exposed: he was blackmailing all of them. With the killer among them, the guests and Boddy's chatty butler must suss out the culprit before the body count rises. *June 6 show has a "rowdy" screening with costumes encouraged!*

The Birdcage
June 7 (3:00 PM) & June 10 (6:00 PM)

A gay nightclub owner and his drag queen companion pretend to be a straight couple to impress the parents of their son's fiancée. The film follows their attempts with the deception while managing their nightclub and dealing with the conservative family they are trying to impress. *30th Anniversary Showing*

Serial Mom
**June 19 (8:30 PM – Rowdy Screening!)
 June 20 (8:30 PM) June 24 (7:30 PM)**

Beverly is the perfect happy homemaker, along with her doting husband and two children, but this nuclear family just might explode when her fascination with serial killers collides with her ever-so-proper code of ethics.

Waiting for Guffman
**June 27 (8:30 PM – Rowdy Screening!)
 July 1 (7:30 PM)**

Aspiring director Corky St. Clair and the marginally talented amateur cast of his hokey small-town musical production go overboard when they learn that Broadway theater agent Mort Guffman will be in attendance. *June 27 show has a "rowdy" screening with costumes encouraged!*



Did you know we are
OPEN every Sunday?

Check out books, view archival materials of our community's history, and enjoy a welcoming, inclusive space for the LGBTQIA+ community

Every Sunday
from 2:00-5:00PM!

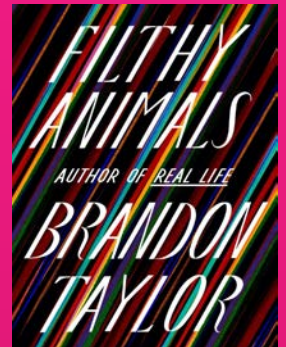
find us at 1620 Pleasant ST
Des Moines, IA 50314



The Des Moines Pride Center houses the Rick Miller LGBTQ Library. The Pride Center is fighting to maintain a vibrant Queer future by connecting people to LGBTQ+ literature, information, and creativity.

Book of the Month

Filthy Animals
by Brandon Taylor



In the series of linked stories at the heart of *Filthy Animals*, set among young creatives in the American Midwest, a young man treads delicate emotional waters as he navigates a series of sexually fraught encounters with two dancers in an open relationship, forcing him to weigh his vulnerabilities against his loneliness. In other stories, a young woman battles with the cancers draining her body and her family; menacing undercurrents among a group of teenagers explode in violence on a winter night; a little girl tears through a house like a tornado, driving her babysitter to the brink; and couples feel out the jagged edges of connection, comfort, and cruelty.

1620 Pleasant Street, Des Moines
(515) 518-0530
www.desmoinespridecenter.org

Full Searchable Catalog:
www.librarycat.org/lib/DSMPC



The Rick Miller LGBTQ Library is constantly changing, if you would like to donate material or provide support, they are always looking for community connections and support.



GLOW Awards 2026

- Zach Rus - Leadership Award
- Van Burgo Collective (Lorenzo Triburgo & Sarah Van Dyck) – O's Community Service Award
- Wade Petersen – John Schmacker Volunteer Award
- Annie's Foundation (Sara Hayden Parris) –
- LGBTQIA+ Allies Award
- Terianne Marsh – Generation Q Award



Iowa Pride

Celebrating Pride across the state



PrideFest: Capital City Pride
East Village | Des Moines
Friday - Sunday, June 12-14
Other Events Throughout June
www.capitalcitypride.org



Iowa City Pride
Saturday, June 20: 12:00 - 9:00
Downtown Iowa City
www.iowacitypride.org



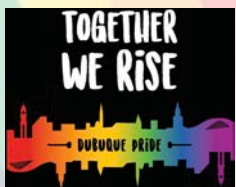
Cedar Valley Pridefest (Cedar Falls & Waterloo)
Friday, August 28: 5:30 - 12:00
Saturday, August 29: 12:00 - 12:00
West 4th Street | Downtown Waterloo
www.cedarvalleypride.com



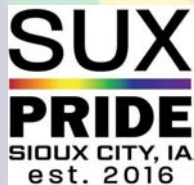
Quad Cities Pride
Festival: Friday, June 5: 5:00-11:00
Saturday, June 6: 12:00 - 11:00
Unity Parade 11:00
Schwiebert Riverfront Park
qcunitypride.org



CR Pride (Cedar Rapids)
Saturday, June 27: 11:00 - 6:00
Parade and Festival
@ NewBo City Market
crprideia.com



Dubuque Pride Festival
Saturday, June 6: 12:00 - 5:00
Town Clock Plaza
dbqpride.org



Sioux City Pride Festival
Thursday, June 4: Parade 6:00 PM
Saturday, June 6: Festival 11:00
4th St. by museum; Rally at 3:00
Sunday, June 7: Interfaith Service 11:00
Saturday, June 13: Pride Prom 7-11 PM
Facebook: Sioux City Pride



Ankeny Pride...Inside!
Saturday, June 20; 4:00 - 9:00
Southview Middle School
[Facebook Page](#)



ames pride

Ames Pride Fest
Saturday, October 10
5th & Douglas
www.amespride.org



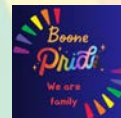
Mason City Pride
Saturday, July 18
Central Park / All Day
[Facebook Page](#)



Ottumwa Pride Market
Saturday, June 6
10:00 - 2:00
210 W Main St; Ballingall Park
[Facebook Page](#)



Pride in the Junction | WDM
Sunday, June 28
Valley Junction / 10:00 - 4:00
[Instagram Page](#)



Boone Pride
April 18: 11:00 - 4:00
[Facebook Page](#)



Heartland Pride Festival
Council Bluffs/Omaha
July 17: Youth Pride 5:00 - 10:00
July 18: Parade 9:30 to 12:00
July 18: Festival 12:30 PM - 10:00
<https://heartlandpride.org>

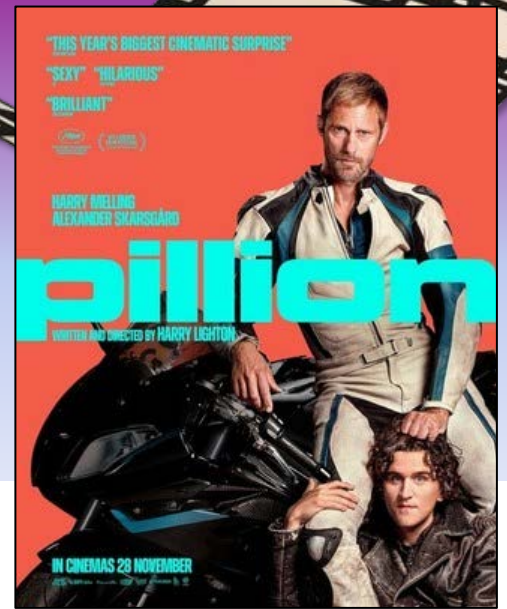
- **Decorah:** [Pride Festival](#) (October 10)
- **Davenport:** Bi-State Unity Pride Parade (June 6)
- **Fort Madison:** [Lee County Pride Festival](#) (June 5; 4 - 9)
- **Fort Dodge:** [Pride Festival](#) (June 27; 10:00 - 5:00)
- **Burlington:** [Pride in the Park](#) (June 13; 10:00 - 4:00)
- **Marshalltown:** [Pride in the Park](#) (July 11; 12:00 - 4:00)
- **Oskaloosa:** [Oskey Pride](#) (June 6; 1:00 - 8:00)





Pillion

A HBO Max Movie Review by Mark Turnage



On the surface, director Harry Lighton’s “Pillion” is a queer love story dressed in form-fitting biker gear: a shy, unfulfilled gay man’s initiation into a passionate power exchange relationship with an enigmatic Adonis manifests his inner self-confidence. Yet “Pillion” is a far cry from anything “50 Shades.” An adaptation of the 2020 Adam Mars-Jones novel “Box Hill,” the film takes its title from the passenger seat behind a motorcycle driver. Yet “Pillion” is also a queer meditation on the transformational force of attraction, and how that intense desire can displace deeper emotional needs (and consequently, other relationships) to the backseat. While “Pillion” allows some details to pass by in the rearview mirror, its performances are driven by emotional intelligence, comedic and cathartic timing, and a sincere desire to humanize its lovers’ relationship.

Colin (Harry Melling) is a quiet, bumbling, introverted barbershop quartet member at his local pub, and leads an “out” but ordinary life—including going on less-than-enthusiastic dates his parents (a fantastic Douglas Hodge and Lesley Sharp) set up for him out of love. A chance encounter with masculine, taciturn, no-nonsense biker Ray (Alexander Skarsgard) and his rowdy biker clan leads to a clandestine alleyway rendezvous; in time, over months of fastidious attention to Ray’s often benign tasks, and some sexier “training” mined for laughs, Colin and

Ray enter a power exchange relationship: Colin the submissive to Ray’s Dominant. Yet both men have needs beyond the obvious that challenge the stability of their relationship—be it Ray’s obstinate inflexibility and emotional stonewalling, or Colin’s jealousy and “brattiness.”

The film’s second act marks a more serious emotional shift that flows neatly into the story’s pacing, provides context for both characters to change, and avoids melodrama in favor of first-person camera shots that linger longingly, and editing that establishes depth and mood. Lighton mines his characters’ mutual inexperience—Colin’s, physical; Ray’s, emotional—for comedy but also for contrast. There are moments of palpable sexual and social tension, particularly with Skarsgard’s embodiment of Ray and what the audience is shown of him, a sense of fierce unpredictability as to what his next move will be compared to the compliant and cheery Colin. But Lighton’s adaption matches the audience’s questioning with Colin’s own uncertainties—the director favors subtext between scenes and fleshed out



interactions over any character lore dives. It’s also smart enough to let the audience consistently keep emotional pace with Colin.

Some purists may fret over the unseen, mundane, yet essential power exchange functionality that isn’t covered in “Pillion”: negotiation of limits, for example. Perhaps these “protocol” scenes were atonal to the director’s narrative vision. From a film critic’s perspective, Leighton dotes far more screen time towards the vulnerabilities and attractions of Colin and Ray that push and pull them together.

“Pillion” hits HBOMax this June 5, both with the theatrical release and a special unrated version.



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Publication



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DES MOINES
GAY MEN'S
CHORUS

25TH SEASON
ANNIVERSARY

THE SILVER PARTY

YOU'VE BEEN PART OF OUR STORY.
NOW COME CELEBRATE IT WITH US.
A CONCERT 25 YEARS IN THE MAKING.

JUNE 26 & 27

RAINBOW Run

FREE ENTRY PRIZES FOR BEST COSTUME

RUN, WALK, ROLL, BIKE, STRUT, OR STROLL

Saturday, June 6
8:30am Check-In
at 4th & Walnut
9:00am Event Begins

Choose your own distance!

Ankeny PRIDE

