



First Friday News & Views

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

September 2026 | Volume 31 | Issue 9

Next Meeting
**Friday,
September 4
7:00 AM**



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



Speaker
Jackie Blount
**Sexuality &
Gender in
Education**



Website
ffbc Iowa.org

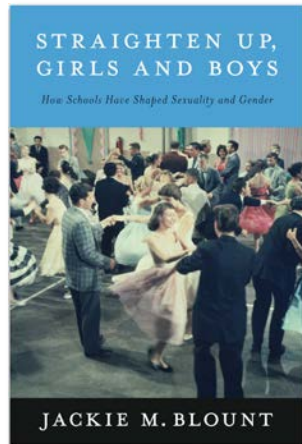


How Schools Have Shaped Sexuality and Gender

by Byron Huff, Board President

Please join us Friday, September 4, to hear **Jackie Blount** speak about how schools have shaped sexuality and gender. Jackie's 2026 book *Straighten Up, Girls and Boys: How Schools Have Shaped Sexuality and Gender*, examines the largely hidden history of how American schools have constructed, reinforced, and policed ideas about gender and sexuality.

Her central argument is that schools have never been as sexually or gender neutral as they often appear. Jackie argues that ordinary features of education, including school architecture, bathrooms, teacher hiring, classroom roles, textbooks, curriculum, and rules governing student behavior, have historically communicated expectations about what it means to be a boy, a girl, a man, or a woman, as well as what kinds of sexuality are considered acceptable.



Jackie points out that today's fights over LGBTQ+ inclusion, transgender students, curriculum, and bathrooms aren't entirely new. They are contemporary versions of much older struggles over who gets to define appropriate gender and sexuality within schools. In that sense, the book challenges the idea that today's LGBTQ+ controversies represent something that has suddenly been "introduced" into schools. Jackie's historical approach suggests that schools have always been places where society's ideas about gender and sexuality are negotiated and enforced.

Schools don't simply educate children; they also teach children and adults how society expects gender and sexuality to work. Understanding history makes it easier to see why seemingly ordinary policies have profound consequences for LGBTQ+ people and why today's debates are connected to much older patterns. The book ultimately moves beyond historical criticism. Jackie argues that educators can recognize these inherited practices, question them, and deliberately create school environments that are more equitable and supportive of all students and educators.

Iowa's fight over LGBTQ students isn't a fight over whether schools should teach about gender and sexuality; schools have always done that. The real fight is over which understanding of gender and sexuality Iowa schools are allowed to teach and which students are allowed to see themselves reflected in the institution. Jackie's historical argument gives a way to look at Iowa's policies: the question isn't simply whether Iowa schools are "teaching about gender." It's who gets to define gender, sexuality and acceptable behavior within the school environment.

Iowa has increasingly used state law to make those definitions explicit:

- **Iowa has legislated a particular definition of sex and gender.**

A 2025 Iowa law defines sex in terms of biological male or female and distinguishes that concept from gender identity. It also prohibits schools from providing programs, curriculum, surveys, promotion or instruction relating to gender-identity theory or sexual orientation to students in kindergarten through sixth grade.



[continued on page 2]



■ **The debate has moved beyond elementary school.**

In 2026, Iowa legislators introduced SF 2003/HF 2338, which would prohibit public schools, charter schools, and innovation-zone schools from providing programs, curriculum, tests, surveys, promotion or instruction relating to "gender theory or sexual orientation" to students in grades 7–12. The House bill was reported out of committee and placed on the calendar. That's important in the context of Jackie's argument because it demonstrates that curriculum itself has become a battleground over what kinds of identities and relationships schools are permitted to acknowledge.

■ **Bathrooms are another direct connection.**

Iowa legislation has also sought to regulate school bathrooms according to biological sex. For example, SF 2025 proposed requiring school multiple-occupancy bathrooms to be designated and used according to a person's biological sex as defined in the legislation. This is a textbook example of Jackie's larger historical point: something as seemingly mundane as a bathroom becomes a mechanism through which schools define and enforce gender categories.

The most interesting Iowa connection is that these policies aren't just about individual transgender students; they affect the entire institutional culture of a school. Consider the things a student encounters during an ordinary school day:

- which bathrooms they can use
- what names and pronouns teachers may use
- what books can be discussed
- whether LGBTQ+ people can be discussed in class
- what health education can include
- whether a teacher can acknowledge having a same-sex spouse
- whether a school can recognize LGBTQ+ students or organizations
- how administrators respond when a student's gender identity conflicts with expectations



During consideration of the 2026 legislation, Iowa lawmakers received public comments arguing that broad restrictions on discussion of sexual orientation could have unintended consequences for ordinary school life including health education, literature, and counseling. One commenter pointed out the potential irony that schools routinely have activities such as dances, Valentine's Day events, and homecoming traditions that implicitly communicate heterosexual and gender norms.

Schools don't operate in a vacuum. They have always communicated ideas about what boys and girls should be like, what relationships are considered normal, and what kinds of families and identities are visible. The question is therefore not whether schools will communicate messages about gender and sexuality; they inevitably do. The question is which messages are permitted, which are prohibited, and who has the authority to decide.

Iowa's current debate can be presented as an attempt to keep gender and sexuality out of schools. Jackie's historical perspective suggests that this is impossible: schools have been teaching gender norms for generations; a boy seeing men's and women's bathrooms is learning something about gender; a textbook showing a mother, father and children is teaching something about family; a prom with "king" and "queen" is teaching something about gender; a teacher referring to a student's "mom and dad" rather than "parents" is communicating an assumption about family.

A law telling schools that gender is exclusively male or female is also teaching a lesson about gender, even if the law's supporters describe it as keeping "gender theory" out of the classroom. That is arguably the most useful insight from Jackie's book for understanding Iowa.

Briefs & Shorts



We are grateful to FFBC Board Member **Rachel Gulick** for introducing our August speaker, **Julia Franklin**. Franklin is the Executive Director of Mainframe Studios in Des Moines. As always, we appreciate **Robert Warren** and his helpful staff at Hoyt Sherman Place, along with our excellent caterer, **Gateway Market**.

For FFBC's normal business, we thank **John Schmacker** for managing all of our finances, **Nicholas Williams** for managing our Microsoft IT infrastructure, and **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter and website editor. *Thank you to all our newsletter contributors!*

The **deadline** for the **October newsletter** will be **September 21**. If you have something that you would like to share, type it up and email to Wade (wadecpetersen@gmail.com) by the deadline.



Fundraising efforts are ongoing to fund our 2027 scholarship program. Since 1997, we have awarded **\$618,000** for **244** scholarships to Iowa high school seniors who have done remarkable, courageous things to reduce homophobia and teach about LGBTQ+ issues in their schools and local communities. Please consider a tax-deductible **contribution** online or by sending a check.



A **special thank-you** to FFBC members and donors who have generously chosen to designate First Friday Breakfast Club as a beneficiary through the **Donor Direct** program of **United Way**. Contributions made through the United Way are tax deductible since FFBC is an eligible 501(c)(3) nonprofit recipient of such funding designations.



United Way



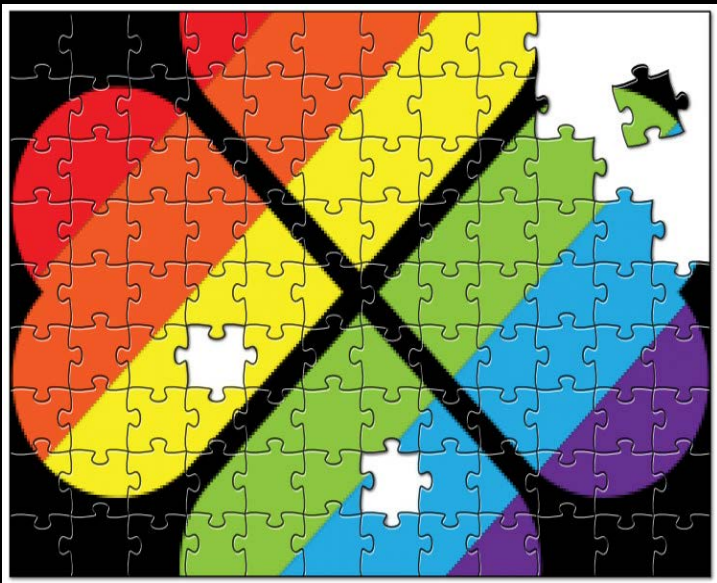
September Speaker



Jackie Blount



Jackie Blount, long ago a high school physics teacher, is now professor emeritus in the Department of Educational Studies at Ohio State University (OSU). There, she taught a variety of history of education courses. She has written several books as well as numerous articles and chapters. She has been awarded the American Educational Research Association's Distinguished Contributions to Gender Equity in Education Research Award (2023), teaching awards including OSU's Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching (2019) and Iowa State University's Early Achievement in Teaching Award (1997), and the Faculty Impact Award for the OSU College of Education and Human Ecology (2023). She also has served as senior associate dean of OSU's College of Education and Human Ecology and President of the History of Education Society (2017).



**YOU are the missing piece
in our FFBC puzzle!**

**We hope to see you at the
September meeting.**

CAP TAL C TY PR DE

RAINBOW

Scavenger Hunt

PRESENTED BY IOWA total care SUPPORTED BY GreenState Bankers Trust

COLLECT BUTTERFLIES IN NATURE AND BE ENTERED TO WIN A PRIZE!
SATURDAY, SEPT. 12, 10:30AM - NOON
CLARE AND MILES MILLS ROSE GARDEN | 4500 GRAND AVE.

HIT HARD. RUN FAST.
TURN LEFT.

PRIDE
SPORTS LEAGUE
OF CENTRAL IOWA

FALL SOFTBALL

WEDNESDAYS 6-10 PM [SEPT 9 through OCT 21]
CAMPBELL RECREATION AREA
12385 WOODLANDS PARKWAY
CLIVE, IA 50325

\$35 per person [FREE AGENTS AND TEAMS WELCOME]
SOCIAL, INTERMEDIATE, & ADVANCED DIVISIONS
REGISTER AT LINK IN BIO | SWIPE FOR SIGNUP DETAILS >>>



Iowa safe schools

Friday
October 9
6-9 PM

The Tea Room
713 Walnut, Unit 600
Des Moines, IA

Spirit Awards Gala

Get your tickets today!



Future Speakers



October 2:

Mazie Stillwell

Executive Director
Progress Iowa

November 6:

Deidre DeJear

President/CEO Oakridge
Neighborhood

December 4:

Nate Nims

Pastor, Walnut Hills
United Methodist Church



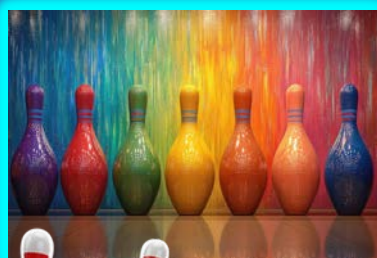
LGBTQ+ Bowling League bowls on Wednesdays at 7 PM, Gameday Lanes, in the lower level of Merle Hay Mall.

First night of league play is **Wednesday, September 2**, for 28 weeks. New bowlers are welcome!

Check them out on Facebook.

Details:

3-player teams
\$14 per person/week
\$12 lineage
\$2 prize fund



GRAB YOUR PADDLES FOR

PICKLEBALL

REGISTRATION OPEN NOW

MONDAYS

6-10 PM

\$30
per person

[**SEPT 14** through **OCT 19**]

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30 Years of Speakers



1996
Dennis Ryerson: Editor, *Des Moines Register*
G. David Hurd: Board Chairman, Principal Financial
Michael Reagan: DSM Chamber of Commerce
Joy Corning: Iowa Lt. Governor
Jack Hatch: Iowa Representative candidate
Gary Wegenke: Superintendent DSM Public Schools
William Moulder: DSM Chief of Police
Elaine Szymoniak and Ron Langston:
candidates for Iowa State Senate
Eric Anderson: Des Moines City Manager
Mary Louise Smith: Republican party activist
Rabbi Steven M. Fink: Rabbi, Temple B'nai Jeshurun

1997
Arthur Davis: Mayor of Des Moines
Marcia Hanson: CEO, AmerUS Bank
Mary Kramer: President, Iowa State Senate
Donald C. Young: Reproductive Endocrinologist
Tammy Baldwin: Wisconsin State Representative
Christine Hensley & James Cownie: mayoral candidates
Robert D. Ray: Mayor and former Iowa Governor
Charles Wesley Jordan: Bishop of UMC
Michael Gartner: former President of NBC News
Jeff Chesley: Manager, Civic Center of Greater DSM
Jill June: Director of Planned Parenthood

1998
Rich Joens: FFBC Member
Scott Raeker: Legacy 150 Institute
Preston Daniels: Mayor of Des Moines
Connie Wimer: President, Iowa Title Company
Laura Sands: Des Moines School Board President
John Sarneck: Polk County Attorney
Don Grove: Iowa Civil Rights Commission
Eric Witherspoon: Superintendent, DSM Public Schools
Tom Vilsack: Candidate for Iowa Governor
David Yepsen: Political Reporter, *DSM Register*
Joseph Charron: Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Des Moines

1999
Cynthia Eisenhauer: Dir. Iowa Workforce Development
Dr. Nick Tormey: Counselor/psychotherapist
Rich Eychaner: Owner, Radio Station 107.5
Donna Red Wing: HRC National Field Director
Terece Caldwell Johnson: Polk County Manager
Bishop Philip Hougren: Evangelical Lutheran Church
Elvin McDonald: Editor *Traditional Home Magazine*
Alicia Claypool: Director, Interfaith Alliance
Ted Townsend: Townsend Engineering
Sally Pederson: Iowa Lt. Governor
Reverend Mel White: Author of *Stranger at the Gate*
Julian Potter: White House Lesbian/Gay Outreach for Public Policy

2000
Rich Tafel: Log Cabin Republicans
Rob Borsellino: Columnist, *Des Moines Register*
Martin Jischke: President, Iowa State University
Corlis Moody: Director, Iowa Civil Rights Commission
Robin Kniech/Nikki Miras: Family Violence Center
Tom Vilsack: Governor of Iowa
Michael Blouin: President, Greater DSM Partnership
Susan Lubowsky Talbot: Director, DSM Art Center
Barry Griswell: CEO, Principal Financial
Deirdre McCloskey: gender change
Kevin Jennings: Executive Director, Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network
Chet Culver: Iowa Secretary of State

2001
Martha Willits: President, United Way of Central Iowa
Mary Brubaker: KCCI Television Personality
Joel Wulf: Department of Elder Affairs
David Maxwell: President, Drake University
Dr. Matthew Roberts: Lambda Legal
Christie Vilsack: Iowa First Lady
Chet Culver: Iowa Secretary of State
Gordon Echtenkamp: CEO, Greater DSM YMCA
Rhea Juliano: AIDS Project of Central Iowa
Daryl Lewis: Prairie Meadows Community Relations
Jim Autry: retired CEO, Meredith Corporation
Louis Lavarato: Chief Justice, Iowa Supreme Court

2002
Suz Welch: Campfire USA
Gregory Geoffrey: President, Iowa State University
Bishop Gregory Palmer: Iowa United Methodist Church
Leonard Boswell: United States Iowa Representative
Lois Fringeman: Executive Director, Mentor Iowa
Judy Shepard: mother of slain Matthew Shepard
Dave Bueks: News Director, KCCI Television
George Belitsos: CEO, Youth & Shelter Services
David Krudner: *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*
C. Gregory Buntz: President, Iowa Peace Institute
Dr. Alan Koslow: Solidarity Mission to Israel

2003
Bill Angrick: Iowa Ombudsman
Reka Basu: Columnist, *Des Moines Register*
Howard Dean: Governor, State of Vermont
Adrien Wing: Palestinian Perspective on Mideast
Bob Schanke: professor and author
James Hormel: former Ambassador to Luxembourg
Jennifer Eaton Bertagnoli: daughter of slain gay teacher Ken Eaton
Dr. Michael Luick-Trans: Historian (Nazi Germany)
Rev. Alan Scarfe: Bishop of the Iowa Diocese
Episcopal Church
Bill McCarthy: Des Moines Police Chief
George Giesler: President, Iowa Genealogical Society

2004
Ron Fournier: AP Chief and White House Reporter
Mike Glover: AP writer, Iowa statehouse correspondent
Panel: Senator Matt McCoy, and attorneys Eric Burmeister and Jonathan Wilson
Robert Denston: President, DMAACC
Don Pierce & Debra Burke: Aids in 21st Century
Rev. Steven Baines: People for the American Way
Kay Rung: PLDM Director
Ed Fallon: Iowa State Representative
Dick Dearden: Iowa State Senator
Lisa Pierce and Larry Pierce: Central Iowa Gambling Treatment Agency
Leisha Barcus: Director of Hoyt Sherman Foundation

2005
Paul Anger: Editor-in-Chief, *Des Moines Register*
Kevin Conannon: Director, Iowa DHS
Brenda Krumel: Pres., Polk County Chapter MADD
Judi Jeffrey: Director, Iowa Department of Education
John Brentnall: Former FFBC Board Member
Winnie Stachelberg: V.P., HRC Foundation
Ira Lacher: Voice in the Wilderness
John Pettit: President, Iowa Stars
Michele Soria: Executive Director, Iowa Council for International Understanding
Ben Stoner: Exec. Director, Iowa Civil Liberties Union
Sheila Hanke: Iowa Civil War Battle Flags Preservation Project
Rev. Mark Stringer: Interfaith Alliance of Iowa

2006
Carolyn Washburn: Editor, *Des Moines Register*
Chet Culver: Iowa Secretary of State
Tom Kane: Exec. Director, DSM Metropolitan Planning
Bill McCarthy: DSM Chief of Police
Chuck Wolfe: Victory Fund
Christie Vilsack: Iowa First Lady
Rick Clark: Des Moines City Manager
Terry Rich: Director of Blank Park Zoo
Dr. Nancy Sebring: Superintendent DSM Public Schools
Martha Willits: Greater Des Moines Partnership
Althea Holcomb: CEO of Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Central IA
Rabbi Beryl Padore: Tifereth Israel Synagogue

2007
Charlie Wittmack: 1st Iowan to climb Mt. Everest
Craig Smith: Aviation Director of DSM Airport
Mike Gronstal: Democratic Leader Iowa Senate
Richard Leopold: Director, Iowa DNR
Jimmy Creech: Faith in America, INC.
Myke Sel: LGBT Community Center
Dr. David Frankel: ISU Economist
Ivan Webber: Amnesty International
Jonathan Wilson
Reverend Mark Stringer: Pastor who married Iowa's first legally wed gay couple
Dennis Goldford: Political Science Drake Professor

2008
Judy Bradshaw: DSM Chief of Police
Neil Giuliano: President, GLADD
Matt McCoy: Iowa State Senator
Mike Colwell: Business Innovation Zone
Loraine Barr: lesbian who came out at age 88 in a letter published by *Newsweek* magazine
Jody Hucksby: PFLAG Executive Director
Kyle Carson: Attorney, Planned Parenthood
Libby Nelson: Attorney, Kemlin Industries
Fred Hubbell: Iowa Power Fund
Nate Monson: LGBT Youth in Iowa Schools
David Miles: Chair, Iowa Board of Regents

2009
Susan Voss: Director, Iowa Insurance Division
Alice Hoagland: mother of Mark Bingham
Bishop Julius Trimble: United Methodist Church
Dr. Neil Sullivan: Hy-Line International
Brad Clark: One Iowa
Iowa Representative Pat Murphy & Iowa Senator Michael Gronstal
Honorable Robert B. Hanson: District Court Judge
Justice Mark Cady: Justice, Iowa Supreme Court
David Adelman & Leisha Barcus: candidates for City Council
Ronald Gottl II: Met Life
Peter Pintus: Holocaust survivor

2010
Warren Blumenfeld: Iowa State University
Patrick McAlvey: Repatriate Therapy survivor
Mayor Frank Cownie: Mayor of Des Moines
Roxanne Conlin: Candidate for Senator
Ryan Roemer: Exec. Director Iowa Pride Network
Dr. Robert Minor: Founder, The Fairness Project
Mark Vukovich: CEO, Blank Park Zoo
Dan Johnston: Counsel in "Black Arm-Band Case"
Kathie Obradovich: Columnist, *Des Moines Register*
Cyndi Pederson: Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
Reverend David Ruhe: Pastor at Plymouth UCC

2011
Elizabeth Dilley: Red Oak 1st Cong. United Church
Wayne Besen: Truth Wins Out
Frederique Fethi Boudouani & Brian Bruening
Schera: Gay-owned Restaurant in Elkader
Zach Wahls: Testified about his two-mom family
Martha Willits: Greater Des Moines Partnership
Dr. Raynard Kingdon: Grinnell College
Nick Renkoski: DSM Metro Opera and
Arthur Breur: AccessLine Publisher
Suku Radia: CEO and President, Bankers Trust
Dr. Dwight Watson: Dean, University of Northern Iowa
Rebecca Gruber: Director, DSM Gay Men's Chorus
Senator Jeff Angelo: Iowa State Senator
Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy: President, Interfaith Alliance

2012
Liz Mathis: Iowa State Senator
John Berry: Office of Personnel Management in Obama Administration (openly gay)
Ellen Krug: Transgender
Dr. Steven Leathe: President, Iowa State University
Scott Schoettes: Lambda Legal
Rabbi David Horowitz: National President, PFLAG
Matthew Russell: Agronomy Professor, Drake
Donna Red Wing: Executive Director, One Iowa
Michael Streir: Iowa Supreme Court Justice
Carol Greta: Attorney, Iowa Department of Education
Bill McCarthy: Polk County Sheriff
Jonathan Page: Reverend, Ames UCC

2013
Mike Gronstal: Majority Leader, Iowa State Senate
Sean Strub: Founder, *POZ Magazine*
Greg Gross: AIDS Project of Central Iowa
Daniel Lundby: Iowa State Representative
Chuck Wolfe: Richard Dawkins Foundation
Dr. Jason Glass: Director, Iowa Dept. of Education
Kenneth Quinn: World Food Prize Foundation
Zachary Mannheimer: Exec. Dir. DSM Social Club
Brad Anderson: Campaign for Secretary of State
Jody Jenner: Exec. Director, Broadlawn Hospital
Rabbi Edelman-Blank: Tifereth Israel Synagogue, DSM

2014
Ann Starr: CEO, Orchard Place
Brad Buck: Director, Iowa Department of Education
Donna Red Wing: One Iowa
Senator Jack Hatch: Iowa State Senator
Zack Bunkers: Restoration Specialist, Iowa State Capitol
Michael Gartner: CEO, Iowa Cubs
Steve Pilchen: the "Round Guy" local personality
Michael Keegan: People for the American Way
Bruce Braley: Democratic Political Candidate
Kathie Obradovich: *Des Moines Register*
Bishop Richard Pates: Roman Catholic Diocese DSM

2015
Iman Ako Abdul-Samad: Iowa State Representative
Dr. Frank Filippelli: United Community Services
Dr. Richard Deming: DSM Radiation Oncologist
Paul Koehniguer and Bill LaHay: Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests
Jennifer Harvey: Professor of Religion at Drake
Rev. Larry Sonner: United Methodist Church
Dana Vining: Des Moines Chief of Police
Earl (Marty) Martin: President, Drake University
Mike Draper: Owner, RAYGUN business
Robby Mook: Campaign Manager for Hillary Clinton
Jeremy Rosen: Executive Director, ACLU of Iowa
John Clayton: Lecturer on Climate Change

2016
Martin O'Malley: Former Governor of Maryland
Suzanna deBaca: CEO of PPGI of the Heartland
Dr. Andy McGuire: Chair Iowa Democratic Party
Tyler McCubbins: Former teacher/coach at Dowling
Joshua Barr: DSM Director of Civil and Human Rights
David Young: Iowa Republican Congressman
Shadley Grei: Actor, Director, Singer, Songwriter
Jack Schuler-Cruz: Trans Male Teacher at Lincoln HS
Jim Mowrer: candidate U.S. House of Representatives
Maria Filippone: Medical Delegation to Gaza Strip
Mel Duncan: International Nonviolent Peaceforce

2017
William Moulder: former Chief of DSM Police Force
Dennis Goldford: Political Science Professor, Drake
Robert Warren: Executive Director Hoyt Sherman Place
Daniel Hoffman Zinnel: Executive Director One Iowa
Bob Hopper: CEO Boys Scouts of America (Iowa Ch.)
Ana Blaeled: United Methodist lesbian minister
Dr. Loren Olson: Author/psychiatrist *Finally Out*
Ryan Berg: Author, *No House to Call my Own* (which explores problem of homeless trans youth)
Michelle Book: President and CEO, Food Bank of Iowa
Rev. Mark Stringer: Executive Director, ACLU of Iowa
Dean Lerner: Attorney and retired Iowa Assistant Attorney General for the State of Iowa
Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy: Senior Pastor, Plymouth UCC

2018
Matt McCoy: Iowa State Senator
Carol Hunter: Executive Director *DSM Register*
Ann Selzer: Founder, Selzer & Associates, polling data
Paul Parizek: Public Info Officer DSM Police
Keith Snow: President/Diagnostic Scientist - B2E
Nate Monson: Iowa Safe Schools
Tom Vilsack: former Gov. of Iowa & Secretary of Ag.
Terece Caldwell-Johnson: President DMPS School Board
Brad Clark: Executive Director, Gill Foundation
Samuel Brinton: The Trevor Project
Debbie Griffin: Pastor of DSM Downtown Disciples

2019
Randy Mayer: Dir. Office of Medical Cannabis
Brad Anderson: AARP Iowa State Director
John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas: fired as head of Iowa 4H because of his support for trans youth
Justin Mandebaum: Des Moines City Councilman
Zach Wahls: Iowa State Senator
Chasten Buttigieg: former teacher; spouse of Pete Buttigieg, openly gay candidate for U.S. President
Bruce Koff: International Rainbow Railroad
Suzanna de Baca: Business Publications Corporation
Jerry Foshoven: Director, Iowa DHS
Dr. John Carstensen: Healthcare Provider, UnityPoint
Matt Unger: CEO of DMARC

2020
Claire Celsi: Iowa State Senator
Courtney Reyes: Exec. Director One Iowa
Troy Price: Chair of Iowa Democratic Party
Ted Corrigan: CEO of DSM Water Works
Judge Mark W. Bennett: retired federal judge; director of Drake's Institute for Justice Reform & Innovation
Dr. Ryan Wise: Drake University
Tim Thompson: New Warrior Training/ManKind Pride
Ambassador Luis de Baca: Senior Fellow in contemporary forms of slavery at Yale University
Rob Sand: Iowa State Auditor
Jane Clementi: Tyler Clementi Foundation
Romen Borsellino: son of Rob Borsellino/Rekha Basu

2021
Eric Marcus: *Making Gay History* author/podcaster
Brian Bond: Executive Director, PFLAG
Dr. Virginia Campbell: *Graying Rainbows* podcast
Chris Godfrey: former Iowa Workers' Compensation Commissioner
Peter Montgomery: People for the American Way
Reverend James A. Conrad: Towne View Baptist
Kevin Newbury: developed *Fellow Travelers* opera
Ian Lawrence-Tourhine: Am Institute of Bisexuality
Collen English: Alzheimer's Association of Iowa and
Edith C. Crawford: Alzheimer's Association
Jeffrey Rufus Byrd: performance and video artist
Steve Karlin: KCCI Anchor on depression
Rev. William Joensen: bishop Diocese of DSM

2022
Dr. Loren A. Olson: author of *Finally Out*
Edward Kelly: anti-gay activist to LGBTQ ally
Mark A. Babcock: carillon player DSM St Paul's
Dave Miglin: Broadlawn's Medical Center Board
Eric Shepard: Artistic Dir. DSM Gay Men's Chorus
Mark Turnage: Iowa Safe Schools
Dr. Jerry Hatfield: agricultural climatology
Jamie Fitzgerald: Polk County Auditor
Dana Card: former KCCI Assistant News Director
Vice Admiral Michael Franken: U.S. Senate candidate
Reverend Rushing Kimball: Pastor, Plymouth UCC

2023
Matt Sinovic: Exec. Director of Progress Iowa
Rick Wagaman: owner of HW CBD
Mark Stringer: Am. Civil Liberties Union of Iowa
Sheriff Kevin Schneider: Polk County Sheriff
Kathie Obradovich: Iowa Capital Dispatch
Senator Zach Wahls: Iowa State Senate
Kendra Weston: Lavender Legal Center
CJ Petersen: assistant to Rob Sand
Coming out panel: David Cotton, Hillary Gardner, Max Mowitz, David Naert, Mike Triggs
Adam Equality Peters: Clock, Inc. Quad Cities
Reverend Dr. Gregory S. Neal and Kade Rogers: Grace Methodist Church

2024
Jennifer Konrath: Iowa State Representative
Ben Page: Director Des Moines Parks and Recreation
Rob Sand: Iowa State Auditor
Melissa O'Neil: Central Iowa Shelter and Services
Keenan Crow: One Iowa
Sarah Brown-Wessling: Teacher of the Year
Daniel Zinnel: Proteus
Connie Boesen: Mayor of Des Moines
Coming Out Panel: Jennifer Kathryn King, Chelsea Lepley, Ana Huizenga, David Cotton
John & Terri Hale: The Hale Group
Kenneth Bingham-Tsa: Iowa UMC Conference Bishop

2025
Jason Clayworth: AXIOS Iowa
Mike & Sally Merritt: Fraud Fighters
Susan Woody: Director of DSM Public Library
Brook Conrad: Catch Des Moines
Ryan Crane: NAMI/Iowa (mental health)
Dr. Ian Roberts: Superintendent DSM Public Schools
Brent Johnson: President Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
Carl Voss: Des Moines City Council
Ryan Smith: Iowa Wildlife Federation
Matt Blake: Iowa State Senator
Sarah Trone Garriott: Iowa State Senator



Follow the Money, Honey

by Jonathan Wilson

To say that I was disappointed in the outcome of the last presidential election would be an understatement. At the time, I chalked it up to how little time Kamala Harris had as the official Democratic candidate. She did an outstanding job, but there just wasn't enough time, or so I thought.

Aside from tRump's win, I was also distressed that he won all of the states identified as "swing states." I simply didn't understand that.

After his election, I was mystified by how effectively he was, and continues to be, able to control the former Republican party, and cow the Republican members of Congress. Tariffs against allies, changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico, demolishing the East Wing of the White House, initiating a war-of-choice against Iran, threatening to take over Greenland, eroding the U.S. commitment to NATO, or threatening an invasion of Cuba. The list goes on and on. The number of Republican members of Congress who have pushed back after one or another of his Administration's missteps you can count on one hand. Literally.

Initially, I chalked it up to tRump's MAGA cult-following; he was just a Charles Manson, David Koresh, or Jim Jones – with a political agenda and MONEY. It does not flatter me that it took so long for me to figure out the common denominator – MONEY.

In the election he raised an incredible amount of money (thanks to Elon Musk and other billionaire acquaintances). Elon Musk alone accounted for \$170,000,000 or more. It was unneces-



First Friday Breakfast Club
Founder **Jonathan Wilson**

sary to invest any of that in reliably "red states." It would have been a total waste to invest it in reliably "blue states." The election would be decided by the outcome in the "swing states," and it was.

Beyond that, he essentially had plenty of money to set up a social media platform to get his "messages" out, however illiterate and nonsensical they were (other than when Natalie Harp composed them).

Beyond that, he could credibly threaten Republican members of Congress with a well-funded primary opponent. That access to money buys a lot of deferential loyalty. In the current Administration, it can also buy (and has) a pardon for federal criminal convictions.

Texas Senate candidate, James Talarico, has it correct when he says that the great divide in the United States is not between left and right, black and white, or north and south. It's between the hyper-rich and the rest of us.

The Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United vs REC* violated the law on unintended consequences, by opening the door to unlimited donations to political campaigns. We are now paying the price for that decision, and the price may end up being our 250-year-old experiment in democracy.

oneiowa
+ **LGBTQ**
HEALTH AND
WELLNESS
CONFERENCE
September 26th | Hybrid Event
Des Moines University Campus

Register at onecau.se/healthandwellness



One Iowa hosts the **LGBTQ Health & Wellness Conference** to bring healthcare providers and LGBTQ community members together to connect and learn.

Healthcare providers gain valuable knowledge about best practices for serving LGBTQ folks and have the chance to meet and build trust with LGBTQ individuals. LGBTQ community members can learn more about LGBTQ-inclusive healthcare resources in their area, gain system navigation knowledge, and develop relationships with healthcare providers.

SUBMISSIONS OPEN!

SHARE YOUR STORY AT

STORYTELLERS

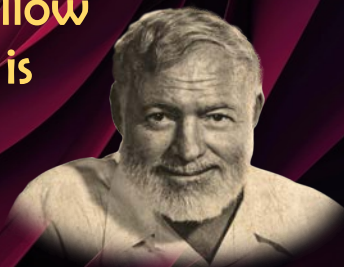
- Submissions open now through Sept. 15
- Stories: ~1,000 words / 8 minutes spoken
- Open to all members of the LGBTQ+ community
- Send entries to education@capitalcitypride.org

CAPITAL
CITY
PRIDE

Storytellers Event:
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

"There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self."

* Ernest Hemingway



CAP TAL C TY PR DE

PRIDE BOOK CLUB

september

A Psalm For The Wild Built
by Becky Chambers

September 9, 6 p.m.
Storyhouse Bookpub



PRIDE BOOK CLUB

SUPPORTING SPONSOR  HOLMES MURPHY.

TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP

MEETING HELD EVERY TUESDAY
6:00 - 7:30 P.M.
UCS HEALTHCARE
1300 WOODLAND AVENUE
WEST DES MOINES, IA 50265
AGES 18+ ARE WELCOME!

Hybrid session - join in-person or online



National LGBTQ+ Calendar



- **September 18:** National HIV/AIDS & Aging Awareness Day
- **Week of September 23:** Bisexual+ Awareness Week, culminates in Celebrate Bisexuality Day on September 23
- **September 27:** National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness 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)

Individual Meeting: \$18

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

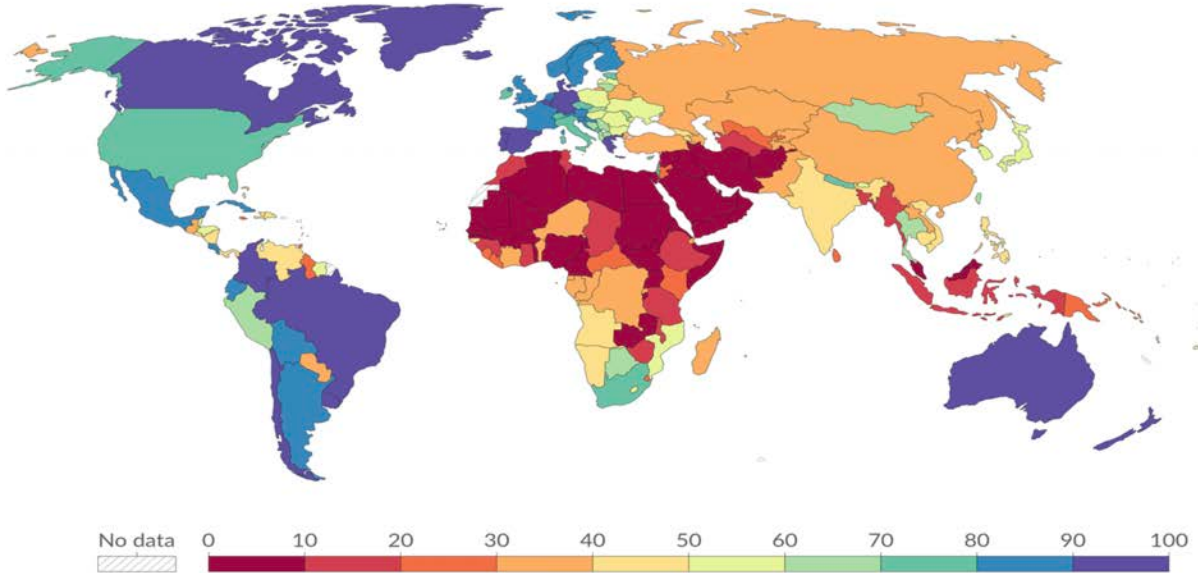
6:45 a.m. - Breakfast service begins

7:00 a.m. - Meeting begins



LGBT+ Legal Equality Index, 2026

The index captures to which extent LGBT+ people have the same rights as straight and cisgender people. It combines 15 individual policies, such as the legality of same-sex relationships, marriage, and gender marker changes. It ranges from 0 to 100 (most equal).



Data source: Equaldex (2026); Population based on various sources (2024)

OurWorldinData.org/lgbt-rights

Saturday, September 12 | Easter Lake Shelter #4

PRIDE
SPORTS LEAGUE
OF CENTRAL IOWA

PANCAKE BRUNCH



11-12: Food & Socializing | 12-2: Fun & Games

LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY ART GATHERINGS



2ND THURSDAYS OF THE MONTH

6 - 8 PM
MEET IN THE MAIN LOBBY

ALL CLASSES HELD AT THE DES MOINES ART CENTER
4700 GRAND AVENUE | DES MOINES, IOWA |
DESMOINESARTCENTER.ORG
FREE: NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Contact Community Access Program Manager, Kelsey Burr
for questions | kburr@desmoinesartcenter.org

ARTIST
DES MOINES
ART CENTER



iowatransmutualaidfund.org

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

**"HAPPILY WE BASK
IN THE WARM
SEPTEMBER SUN,
WHICH
ILLUMINATES ALL
CREATURES."**



Henry
David
Thoreau



Building Places for Art and Healing

by Gary Moore

The First Friday Breakfast Club was treated to an introduction that showcased Julia Franklin's inspiring journey as an artist and leader. Julia Franklin is Executive Director of Mainframe, the nation's largest nonprofit building for creative workspaces, located in the heart of downtown Des Moines. She stepped into the role in December 2003 (taking over from founding director Siobhan Spain), bringing over two decades of experience in nonprofit management and community arts programming.

Julia was introduced by FFBC Board Member Rachel Gulick, who has known Julia for over 20 years and met her through Rob Stevens, a former Des Moines artist (of whose work I just happen to have four pieces in my collection). Rachel's introduction set a tone of appreciation, warmth, and respect, framing Julia as both a talented artist and a valued community advocate. Rachel recognized Julia for her mentorship, kindness, and ability to support others' growth.

Julia shared her life story, including her adoption, family challenges, and the impact of her father's death. She connected these experiences to her artistic practice, which centers on themes of space, place, memory, and belonging. Julia described her evolution from creating traditional art objects to immersive installations and community-based projects.

Julia noted that she has used found objects and personal artifacts to explore loss, memory, and healing.

To truly understand, one must understand her life story from being abandoned at a hospital; being adopted; growing up in Wichita Falls, Texas; experiencing loss; and experiencing dramatic changes caused by family secrets. Space and place have huge impacts on us. Moving to the rolling green hills of rural Iowa really changed her perspective and gave her time for reflection. Having a daughter reminded her that the world is full of wonder if you slow down enough to see it.

Julia noted that she has spent most of her life trying to understand what makes a place feel safe--where you don't have to perform a version of yourself for other people, and that place where you can simply **be**. She stopped thinking about art as objects on a wall, and started thinking about art as experiences, as places, as environments, and as ways of bringing people together. She said, "I came to the profound understanding that I collect found objects to remember and relive the past."

When her mother passed ten years ago, she realized that her mother had been the gatekeeper of their family, and when she was gone, all of their family secrets came to light. She received a box of her father's belongings, his letters, his ties, and handkerchiefs. He had died of suicide when Julia was 16, and this box contained fragments of a life she barely remembered. A life no one talked about. "While trying to reconstruct what 'home' meant in that process, I learned that my dad was gay, and that he could never be with his partner. Beyond that, he was a witness in an arsenic murder trial and had received death threats. Wild! He felt trapped."



"I've spent my life building spaces." Julia emphasized the importance of creating safe, inclusive spaces—both through art and her leadership at Mainframe Studios. She described Mainframe as a creative hub for over 220 artists, offering affordable workspaces, public programs, and exhibitions. Julia discussed how sharing personal stories through art can break stigmas, foster connection, and encourage others to be vulnerable and authentic.

She invited attendees to engage and participate in Mainframe's First Friday events that occur in the late afternoon of each first Friday of the month, and highlighted upcoming themed exhibitions and opportunities for artists and the public.



August Speaker

Executive Director
Mainframe Studios

Julia Franklin

What might have been different if he had lived in a world where he felt like he truly belonged? For most of Julia's life, she lived with her father's absence, and this project made his presence undeniable. It was through different art installations and set designs that performance art installations prompted her to break the stigmas of shame and silence, and invited visitors to fully participate.

"By being vulnerable, I watch shame loosen its grip. Art made room for what's difficult. People are not looking for perfection; they're looking for permission, permission to be seen. Permission to celebrate, and ask questions. Art creates those opportunities. Not because it solves all of our problems, but because art gives us a place to bring them."





August Meeting Photo Gallery



56 Wonderful People Joined Us in August



Board Members **Beverly Smith** and **Scott Kuknyo** were in charge of check-in at the registration table for the August meeting.



Board Member **Rachel Gulick** introduced her mentor, Julia Franklin, the August speaker.





substack **Locals on**



Socials

WHAT KEEPS ME AWAKE

Exploring life's questions that have no simple answers.



LOREN A. OLSON MD



lorenaolsonmdauthor.substack.com

**TRANS
TEA**



WITH
TESSA & TRISTAN



tristanmiedema.substack.com



**COYOTE RUN
FARM**

mattrussellcrf.substack.com



www.theinclusivefaith.com/podcast

MAINFRAME
STUDIOS

**FIRST
FRIDAY**

**SEPT 4
2026
5-8PM**

900 KEO
DSM IA 50309

Fashion Forward
Juried by:
Nekia Whitfield
On view Sept 4-23

MAINFRAME'S
MONTHLY FIRST FRIDAY
5 FLOORS OF OPEN STUDIOS &
SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS
FOOD, DRINKS & ENTERTAINMENT
ALWAYS FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



Rehearsals start September 14.



**kinda chic
to sing in the
DMGMC**

DMGMC welcomes all singers, non-auditioned.

DES MOINES GAY MEN'S CHORUS



Iowa Pride Ensembles: Concert Season

REGISTRATION

OPEN NOW



dsm Magazine 2026 LGBTQ+ Legacy Leader Awards



Photo from dsm Magazine

Now more than ever, it is important to honor central Iowa's LGBTQ+ community. Representing a wide range of vocations, they lead with vigor and compassion, solving problems and helping build a community that we can be proud to call home. To honor Iowa's LGBTQ leaders, *dsm magazine* has collaborated with Capital City Pride for their eighth annual LGBTQ Legacy Leader Awards. They also will recognize an emerging LGBTQ leader, as well as an ally of the LGBTQ community.

Honorees will be recognized September 10

4:30 – 7:00

at The Krause Gateway Center.

2026



Marlú Abarca

author, advocate, artist, and nonprofit consultant

Keenan Crow

Director of Policy and Advocacy at One Iowa

Gregory Neal

Pastor at Grace United Methodist Church

Matthea Little Smith

Retired Director of African American Outreach
for the National Alliance on Mental Illness

Jordan Mix

Emerging Leader Award
Education Director for Iowa Safe Schools

Jill Bjorklund

Ally Award

Choir teacher at Ankeny Southview Middle School
and co-founder of Ankeny Pride

Tickets: dsmmagazine.com/lgbtq-legacyawards-2026/



Wipe Back!

LGBTQ+ Library Cataloging Day
Sunday, September 27

Help preserve queer history
Connect with community
Enjoy snacks with friends

RSVP on our website desmoinespridecenter.org or email us at desmoinespridecenter.board@gmail.com to join the fun!

PRIDE CENTER
Des Moines

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

PRIDE CENTER
Des Moines

Book of the Month

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.

Felix Ever After

by Karen Callender



From Stonewall and Lambda Award-winning author Kacen Callender comes a revelatory YA novel about a transgender teen grappling with identity and self-discovery while falling in love for the first time.



Felix Love has never been in love—and, yes, he's painfully aware of the irony. He desperately wants to know what it's like and why it seems so easy for everyone but him to find someone. What's worse is that, even though he is proud of his identity, Felix also secretly fears that he's one marginalization too many—Black, queer, and transgender—to ever get his own happily-ever-after.

1620 Pleasant Street, Des Moines
(515) 518-0530

www.desmoinespridecenter.org

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

September 20
5:00 – 10:00
\$5.00

PRISM TABLETOP CLUB
LGBTQ+ GAME NIGHT

Play with Pride & Celebrate Diversity in Gaming

CAPITAL CITY PRIDE
ROOK ROOM

PRESENTED BY CAPITAL CITY PRIDE AND DOWNTOWN DISCIPLES

LGBTQ+ AND ALLY
DIAMOND DISCO
ADULT PROM

SATURDAY, NOV. 14, 7-10PM
BASH DSM | 1312 LOCUST ST #101 | DES MOINES

SUPPORTING SPONSORS: **BASH** **IMT INSURANCE**

"Every leaf speaks bliss to me, fluttering from the autumn tree."

Emily Brontë

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.



Teenage Sex & Death at Camp Miasma

A Movie Review by Mark Turnage

When someone describes a movie as “meta,” it means the film is self-referential—owing its impact to audience knowledge of the source material or culture the movie is inspired by. Both satire and film franchises abound with examples of “metacinema”—movies that reference other movies. Metacinema exists in singular references, sequels, remakes, reboots, etc., but is also the cultural composite of everything that makes a movie or film series what it is.

Metacinema is a favorite subject of director Jane Schoenbrun, whose sophomore film, 2024’s psychological horror “I Saw the TV Glow,” unpacked queer attachments to nostalgic TV shows and their influence in our own coming out stories. Schoenbrun’s third feature, “Teenage Sex & Death at Camp Miasma,” is a campy, sensual, and surreal queer reclamation of early slasher franchises through the lens of feminist and sapphic empowerment. While the movie’s satire and metaphors play fast, especially as its pacing accelerates, Schoenbrun’s investment in the film’s intimate humor, its dreamlike set design, and the smoldering chemistry between its lead actresses make “Camp Miasma” worth visiting.

Hired by a Hollywood studio to reboot the transphobic cult slasher film ‘Camp Miasma’ following her surprise success as an independent queer movie director, introverted and bookish Kris Williams (Hannah Einbinder) travels to the remote Pacific Northwest to meet

‘Camp Miasma’s’ original “final girl” Billy Presley (Gillian Anderson) for a potential role in Williams’ film. Since declining to return for the ‘Camp Miasma’ sequels, Presley has lived reclusively in the old campgrounds used to film the series—supposedly alone. Though warm and friendly, Presley is incisive and a prankster. Both women are obsessed with the fictional movie’s transphobic lore of ‘Camp Miasma’s’ spear-wielding villain, “Little Death.” As their mutual interest and tension intensify, buried horrors and secrets begin to surface, and what was once shared interest for a fictional monster movie becomes something liberating, bloody, and transformational for them both.

“Miasma” itself is an oppressive cloud or feeling over a place or circumstance, but the film works overtime with its whimsically bright lighting and set design to make sure that its themes pull a more contrasting focus. It’s easy to see some self-insertion and satirical Hollywood commentary on the part of Schoenbrun with the role of Kris, but to her credit, she doesn’t need to be egotistical when the camp is this campy. One gets the sense that Schoenbrun believes sincerity sells better. “Camp Miasma’s” nesting doll narrative—the film both characters are obsessed with is fully screened in-film without breaking pacing—is punctuated by especially silly sequences like sensual ASMR of fried chicken, slasher effects as goofy as they are gory, and relatable commentary



on queer realities like body dysmorphia and sexual sublimation. The satire and sensuality play well here, especially for trans, nonbinary, and lesbian horror fans of “Friday the 13th” and “Sleepaway Camp,” or simply queer creatives who bend too often to compromise instead of listening to their muse.

But what makes “Camp Miasma” more than just commentary on other movies is its perceptive insight into queer tropes (both good and grimacing) in slasher horror both in front of and behind the camera, like the intersectionality between monster and victim, and the movie’s tone has an eagerness to share those film mechanics and symbology with its audience. But it’s also smart enough to acknowledge how a work is adopted and interpreted by its audience may differ from the intent of its creators. If you’re worried about this film being too “meta” to be accessible, the chemistry and camp at its center makes “Camp Miasma” a treat to watch.

See “Teenage Sex & Death at Camp Miasma” in theaters now.



The McCoy Report



by
Supervisor Matt McCoy
Polk County
1st District

With Taylor Van De Krol



Tiny Village, JOPPA, Now A Reality



What began as a concept that began in Austin, Texas, creating a tiny village of affordable homes for individuals who are classified as chronically homeless, is now going to become a reality in Des Moines. About five years ago, I had the opportunity to travel to Austin to see the village firsthand. Since then, Polk County has been helping to plan and to implement a similar concept in Des Moines. With major assistance from the City of Des Moines, land was identified around the former Chesterfield school site in southeast Des Moines.

While the Joppa village will be a smaller version than what Austin did, we anticipate about 50 permanent homes where rent will be about \$300 monthly, depending upon participants' ability to pay. The village will also provide amenities that support public transportation, healthcare, community dining, and more. The homes will range in size from 192-384 sq/ft and will be connected to water and sewer and have self-contained heating and cooling.

On September 3, JOPPA will break ground on the first phase of the project with the hope that the first home will be completed within this calendar year. Polk County was proud to be able to support this initiative with one-time funding that we received from the Biden Administration using Emergency Rental Assistance 2 funding which allowed for permanent supportive housing. Our funds were primarily used for site grading and improvements and allowed this concept to move forward quickly. The total contribution from Polk County was \$1.28 million.



Rendering from www.joppa.org/event/joppa-village-groundbreaking/



QUEER WRITING WORKSHOP

MONTHLY WRITING GROUP
LAST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH
FROM 2:00-4:00 PM



All are welcome.
Come as you are.

**"Dwell on the beauty of life.
Watch the stars, and see yourself
running with them."**

Marcus Aurelius



**"I have a huge gay and lesbian
following and I'm proud of 'em, I
love 'em. I think everybody
should be allowed to be
themselves, whoever they are."**

-DOLLY PARTON, 2016



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Contact Us: info@ffbciova.org

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Publication



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**FFBC Board
of Directors**

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

Across the Board

News & Views from FFBC Board Members



Embracing Change in Downtown DSM

by Deb Madison-Levi

Downtown Des Moines has evolved during so many of my experiences there. I began working at the Davis, Hockenberg, Wine, Brown, Koehn & Shors law firm in June 1981 (before the skywalk system was even developed), which is where I first met FFBC's founder, Jonathan Wilson. While at the law firm, I remember the Hub Tower building's grand opening, complete with a burst of balloons. Meanwhile, its nearby sister building was later raised, and the new 515 Walnut Tower is making steady progress. Fond memories of Younkers remain as I stroll by the Pocket Park and watch a lively game of pickleball. Babe's Restaurant on 6th Avenue is now a parking ramp.

Fast forward 4.5 decades, and I have now lived downtown since 2015 and love it! In fact, my home is the former headquarters of *LOOK* magazine (1937-1971), and I learned that my mother worked here in the 1950s! The year-long search for my downtown home brought moments of discovery and reflection of what I'd hope my next journey ahead would bring: connection and vitality in community.

I love being able to do business locally and particularly in my downtown neighborhood. Here are just a few activities that I enjoy on a somewhat regular basis:

- walking on nearby trails to [Gray's Lake Park](#)
- [Des Moines Farmers' Market](#) on Saturday mornings and the two "winter" Farmers' Markets that typically occur inside (around Thanksgiving and Christmas)
- [Des Moines Central Public Library](#) is such a beautiful building with so much to offer
- a visit to the [Lauridsen Skate Park](#) to watch talent of all ages
- [Mainframe Studios](#) for a variety of art experiences (I often find myself there on their "First Friday" events or at any moment I feel inspired to discover something new)
- the BEST restaurants around! [Proudfoot & Bird](#), [Hobnob Coffee & Wine Bar](#), [In Confidence Speakeasy](#), (all located within the beautifully restored Hotel Ft. Des Moines), [Centro](#), [Bubba](#), [Fresco](#), [Malo](#), [Akebono](#), [Alba](#), [The Purveyor](#), and [Lucca](#). The teams that work hard to serve such great cuisine are, truly, my extended family.
- [West End Architectural Salvage](#): love to explore floors of vintage finds (the team is so helpful and often have the history of where many of the pieces originated; they also arrange for events there)
- historic [East Village](#) for shopping/dining/spa and exploration experiences: [West Elm](#), [Open Sesame](#), [Scenic Route Bakery](#), [East Village Spa](#), and [Storyhouse Bookpub](#), for starters
- [Iowa's State Capitol](#) to spend time in the beautiful [West Capitol Terrace Park](#) (full of history, beauty and oftentimes cultural events such as the Des Moines Symphony Pops Concert around the July 4th holiday).



I truly appreciate Iowa history and am happily surrounded with its compelling elements. To ensure that I'm able to capture it all, I joined the Des Moines Historical Society in order to experience its many learnings and tours. I previously served on the board of the Des Moines Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA) and remain an active member. Through their various sessions and events, I'm fulfilled by the culture of community connection. I also serve on the board of Central Iowa Shelter and Services, an amazing orchestration of so many levels of governance, service, and care.

When my calendar allows and the weather is perfect, I venture out on my restored vintage ice cream bicycle and give away free popsicles and ice cream treats. It's a fond memory of my childhood, growing up in the 60s. What better way to create connection in my community? Indeed, I may be retired now, but, as you may guess, I'm actually "*redesigned!*"

