



First Friday

News & Views

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



April 2026 | Volume 31 | Issue 4

Next Meeting

Friday,
April 3
7:00 a.m.



Location

Hoyt Sherman
15th & Woodland
Des Moines



Speaker

Kimberly
Graham

Polk County
Attorney



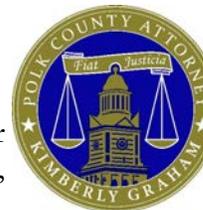
Website

ffbc
iowa.org



In the Interest of Justice

by Byron Huff, Board President



I hope all of you can join us in-person or via Zoom to hear from Polk County Attorney, **Kimberly Graham**, on Friday, April 3.

The Polk County Attorney's Office in Des Moines is one of the most influential local prosecutorial agencies in Iowa, responsible for prosecuting criminal cases, advising county officials, and representing the county in civil matters. Over time, it has played a central role not only in law enforcement but also in some of the region's most contentious legal and political disputes.

The office of county attorney in Iowa dates back to the nineteenth century, when counties began formalizing legal representation for the state at the local level. In Polk County, the state's most populous county and home to the capital, the office quickly became one of the busiest and most prominent in Iowa.

The Polk County Attorney's Office carries three primary responsibilities:

- **Criminal prosecution on behalf of the State of Iowa**
- **Legal counsel for county government and elected officials**
- **Civil representation in lawsuits involving the county**

Because Des Moines is both a population center and the seat of state government, the office has historically handled a high volume of serious felony cases and complex civil litigation.

One of the most defining periods in the office's history was the tenure of longtime County Attorney, John Sarcone, who served for more than three decades. Sarcone's tenure was marked by a reputation for being a tough-on-crime prosecutor with close ties to local law enforcement. By the end of his career, his legacy had become deeply polarizing. Even the decision to rename the county's justice center in his honor sparked backlash, reflecting divisions over his record.

In 2022, Kimberly Graham defeated Sarcone, signaling a major shift in prosecutorial philosophy.

[continued on page 2]



FFBC Named Organization of the Year by Capital City Pride



["In the Interest of Justice" continued from page 1]

Kimberly Graham's approach has emphasized criminal justice reform, reduced prosecution of low-level offenses (especially marijuana cases), and addressed racial disparities in the justice system.

The County Attorney's Office is also responsible for reviewing police shootings which is a role that frequently generates public scrutiny. A notable example occurred in 2024 when Graham cleared three officers in a fatal shooting after determining their actions were legally justified following a suspect firing at police. Her administration also introduced diversion programs allowing some offenders to avoid prosecution entirely.

The Polk County Attorney's Office illustrates the evolving role of local prosecutors in the United States:

- From traditional "tough-on-crime" models to reform-oriented approaches
- Increasing scrutiny over civil rights, policing, and transparency
- Growing political visibility of county attorneys as elected officials

In Des Moines, these dynamics have been especially pronounced due to the county's size and political importance.

The history of the Polk County Attorney's Office is a story of transformation and controversy. From the long tenure of John Sarcone to the reform-focused leadership of Kimberly Graham, the office has mirrored national debates about justice, accountability, and prosecutorial power.

Its involvement in protest prosecutions, police shooting reviews, and politically charged civil litigation underscores a central reality: county attorneys are not just legal technicians—they are key actors in shaping public trust in the justice system.



2026 GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE RECEPTION

Support LGBTQ+ Student Scholarships!

**APRIL 2, 2026
5-7 PM
BIG GROVE DES MOINES**

iowa safe schools

Briefs & Shorts



We are grateful to FFBC Board Member **Rachel Gulick** for introducing our March speaker, **Dr. Kelly Baum**. Baum is the John and Mary Pappajohn Director and CEO of the Des Moines Art Center.

As always, thanks to **David Wilfahrt** for doing an incredible job in managing FFBC's finances. 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 **May newsletter** will be **April 20**.



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 2026 scholarship program. Since 1997, we have awarded **\$555,000** for **223** 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

April Speaker



Kimberly Graham

Kimberly Graham is the current Polk County Attorney in Iowa, having assumed office on January 3, 2023, as the first woman elected to the position. A Democrat, she won the 2022 general election by nearly 14 points, succeeding John Sarcone, who had held the office for 32 years.

Born at the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base in California to working-class parents, Graham was a first-generation college student. Before her legal career, she held various jobs starting at age 14, including working as a waitress, housecleaner, and a union flight attendant for 12 years—a role in which she helped organize for better wages.

She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of California-Irvine in 1991 and her Juris Doctor (J.D.) with honors from Drake University Law School in 1999. Prior to her election, Graham spent over 23 years in private practice and public service roles in juvenile justice, public defense, and mediation. As Polk County Attorney, she has been working with a team of dedicated public servants to create a safer, healthier, thriving community – and working to end racial and income disparities in our justice system.

CAP TAL CITY PRIDE
STORYTELLERS
CO-HOSTED BY THE IOWA JUNETEENTH OBSERVANCE
Black LGBTQ+ residents of DSM will share first-person stories about identity, belonging, resilience, joy, and the ongoing journey of carving out space in communities that have not always made room for every part of who they are.
THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 6 PM
TEMPLE THEATRE
PREREISTRATION REQUIRED
BLACK & PROUD
Supported by PRAIRIE MEADOWS

Date: April 19
Time: 5:00 - 10:00 pm
Cost: \$5
PRISM TABLETOP CLUB
LGBTQ+ GAME NIGHT
Play with Pride & Celebrate Diversity in Gaming
CAP TAL CITY PRIDE
ROOK ROOM

BIG GAY TRIVIA
SATURDAY, APRIL 11
Doors Open at 6:30pm
Ankeny Public Library
FUNDRAISER FOR 2026 SENIOR AWARDS
Register your team (up to 6) or as a free agent
Prizes for top 3 teams - BYOB and snacks!
Ankeny PRIDE ankenypride.org/events Ankeny PRIDE
PRIDE Ankeny

Care That Respects Who You Are
Testing • Prevention • Treatment • Support
The Project at Primary Health Care
PHC primary health care the project

WELCOME TO WONDERLAND

2026 PRIDE GALA & AWARDS



**First Friday
Breakfast Club**
is named
**Organization
of the
Year**
at the
**Capital
City
Pride
Annual
Gala**



**FFBC Vice President, Ken Hanson,
accepts the CCP Award**



**Board Members Ken Hanson, Deb
Madison-Levi, Beverly Smith, and
Wade Petersen represent FFBC**





30 Years of Board Members

1996-2026 FFBC's 30th Anniversary

1996
John Brentnall
Gregg Buckley
David Llewelyn
Randy McNeal
Jeffrey Morgan
Scott Ross
John Schmacker
Ton Stam
Curt Stamp
David Teachout
Jonathan Wilson
Thomas Wolff

1997
John Brentnall
Gregg Buckley
Jerry Cunningham
Mark Eckman
Bill Hudson
Jeffrey Morgan
John Schmacker
Troy Senter
Ton Stam
Curt Stamp
David Teachout
Jonathan Wilson

1998
Gregg Buckley
Jerry Cunningham
Mark Eckman
John Groote
Bill Hudson
Jeffrey Morgan
Randall Palmer
John Schmacker
Ton Stam
Curt Stamp
David Teachout
Jonathan Wilson

1999
Gregg Buckley
Jerry Cunningham
Mark Eckman
John Groote
Terry Harris
Bill Hudson
Kasey Kincaid
Randall Palmer
Steve Person
John Schmacker
Curt Stamp
David Teachout
Jonathan Wilson

2000
Gregg Buckley
Jerry Cunningham
John Groote
Terry Harris
Kasey Kincaid
Bruce Lehnertz
Randall Palmer
Steve Person
John Schmacker
Curt Stamp
David Teachout
Jonathan Wilson

2001
Gregg Buckley
Jerry Cunningham
John Groote
Terry Harris
Kasey Kincaid
Bruce Lehnertz
Steve Person
John Schmacker
Bryan Smith
David Teachout
Allen Vander Linden
Jonathan Wilson

2002
Gregg Buckley
D. Steven Carlyle
Jerry Cunningham
Terry Harris
Kasey Kincaid
Bruce Lehnertz
Steve Person
John Schmacker
Bryan Smith
David Teachout
Allen Vander Linden
Jonathan Wilson

2003
Gregg Buckley
D. Steven Carlyle
Jerry Cunningham
Terry Harris
Kasey Kincaid
Scott Klinefelter
Bruce Lehnertz
Steve Person
Bob Schanke
Larry Schlatter
John Schmacker
Bryan Smith
Randy Swarts
David Teachout
Allen Vander Linden
Jonathan Wilson

2004
Friedhelm Brinkhaus
D. Steven Carlyle
Terry Harris
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Michael John Pierce
Bob Schanke
Larry Schlatter
Randy Swarts
David Teachout
Michael Thompson
John Tompkins
Thom Vaccaro
Allen Vander Linden
Jonathan Wilson

2005
Friedhelm Brinkhaus
D. Steven Carlyle
Terry Harris
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Larry Schlatter
Randy Swarts
David Teachout
Michael Thompson
John Tompkins
Allen Vander Linden
Jonathan Wilson

2006
Friedhelm Brinkhaus
D. Steven Carlyle
Terry Harris
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Larry Schlatter
Randy Swarts
David Teachout
Michael Thompson
John Tompkins
Allen Vander Linden
Jonathan Wilson

2007
Friedhelm Brinkhaus
Terry Harris
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Rick Miller
Larry Schlatter
Randy Swarts
David Teachout
Michael Thompson
John Tompkins
Allen Vander Linden
Ryan Weidner
Jonathan Wilson

2008
Terry Harris
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Rick Miller
Larry Schlatter
Randy Swarts
David Teachout
Michael Thompson
John Tompkins
Allen Vander Linden
Ryan Weidner
Jonathan Wilson

2009
Terry Harris
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Rick Miller
Larry Schlatter
David Teachout
Michael Thompson
John Tompkins
Allen Vander Linden
Ryan Weidner
Jonathan Wilson

2010
Chris Griffin
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Rick Miller
Larry Schlatter
David Teachout
Michael Thompson
John Tompkins
Allen Vander Linden
Ryan Weidner
Jonathan Wilson

2011
Chris Correy
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Rick Miller
Gary Moore
Mike Smith
Michael Thompson
John Tompkins
Allen Vander Linden
Ryan Weidner
Jonathan Wilson

2012
Chris Correy
Ryan Crane
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Rick Miller
Gary Moore
Mike Smith
Michael Thompson
Allen Vander Linden
Ryan Weidner
Jonathan Wilson

2013
Chris Correy
Ryan Crane
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Rick Miller
Gary Moore
Mike Smith
Allen Vander Linden
Ryan Weidner
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson

2014
Chris Correy
Ryan Crane
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Rick Miller
Gary Moore
Mike Smith
Allen Vander Linden
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson

2015
Chris Correy
Ryan Crane
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Klinefelter
Scott Kuknyo
Rick Miller
Gary Moore
Tim Shreck
Mike Smith
Allen Vander Linden
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson

2016
Ryan Crane
Kent Donaldson
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Rick Miller
Gary Moore
Tim Schreck
Brian Taylor-Carlson
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson

2017
Ryan Crane
Kent Donaldson
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Rick Miller
Gary Moore
Tim Schreck
Brian Taylor-Carlson
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson

2018
Adrian Accurso
Ryan Crane
Kent Donaldson
Jordan Duesenberg
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Rick Miller
Gary Moore
Brian Taylor-Carlson
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson

2019
Adrian Accurso
Ryan Crane
Kent Donaldson
Jordan Duesenberg
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Gary Moore
Joe Raetz
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson

2020
Ryan Crane
Jordan Duesenberg
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Gary Moore
Joe Raetz
Randy Swarts
David Wilfahrt
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson

2021
David Cotton
Ryan Crane
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Gary Moore
Joe Raetz
Randy Swarts
David Wilfahrt
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson

2022
David Cotton
Ryan Crane
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Wade Petersen
Joe Raetz
David Wilfahrt
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson
(Emeritus)

2023
David Cotton
Jim Flansburg
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Gene Larson
Deb Madison-Levi
Wade Petersen
Joe Raetz
David Wilfahrt
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson
(Emeritus)

2024
David Cotton
Jim Flansburg
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Gene Larson
Deb Madison-Levi
Wade Petersen
Joe Raetz
David Wilfahrt
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson
(Emeritus)

2025
David Cotton
Jim Flansburg
Ken Hanson
Brad Holland
Byron Huff
Scott Kuknyo
Gene Larson
Deb Madison-Levi
Wade Petersen
Joe Raetz
Beverly Smith
David Wilfahrt
Phil Williams
Jonathan Wilson
(Emeritus)



Thank You, Everyone!

On Aging

by Jonathan Wilson

I am 81 years old, going on 82. If you're not at least 81, I've been your age and you haven't been mine. This is a "heads up."

Upon reflection, I've decided that my aging began around the age of 40. Not physically; at that age I was about as fit physically as anytime in my adult life. The beginning was psychological. It took me a couple of years reading career-changing employment ads before it finally soaked in that I was not a candidate for a career change. I was also confident that any prospective employer would see it in much the same way (despite the law supposedly protecting against age discrimination).

It was after that when the physical decline of aging kicked in. Slowly, very gradually, at first. Things that, at the time, I didn't associate with aging. It was just something to talk with the doctor about at my next appointment. It turned out that it was what's called essential tremor; a hereditary condition. Mine was very mild. You couldn't see it, but it felt to me like my hands were trembling. I noticed a pattern of dropping things more often than before. I didn't associate it with aging; it was just something to medicate for. No big deal.



First Friday Breakfast Club
Founder **Jonathan Wilson**

After that, it was just one thing after another. Nothing terminal, just irritating and inconvenient. Arthritis in my thumbs (thanks mom). Peripheral neuropathy (thanks dad). Lower back pain thanks to excess belly weight (thanks vodka).

When I was in my 40s, I heard and even said that age is just a number. I naively calculated that I'd feel like I did at age 40, plus 40 years. That's not the way it works.

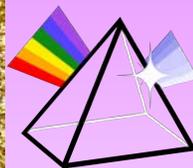
It creeps up on you. Life seems to speed up and living it slows down. Your metabolism changes, your appetite changes, your energy and stamina change, and it requires managing your medications that takes time. On the positive side, your tolerance for stupid diminishes.

Aging is not for the faint at heart. If you keep breathing, there's no escaping it.



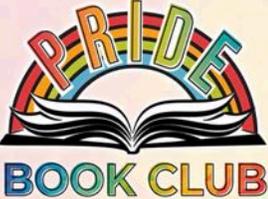
“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

- **Winston Churchill**



Lavender Legal Center

Lavender Legal Center's third annual LGBTQ+ *Adult* Prom is the perfect place for queers and allies to celebrate our beautiful community, all while supporting an organization dedicated to providing LGBTQ+ legal services. This year's theme, Masquerade Ball, vibes magnificently with our venue, the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. You can contribute to the theme's vibe through formal attire and masks, or dress up in whatever makes you feel beautiful! We cannot wait to party in community with you! Admission includes dinner and drinks, music and dancing, a chance to win quintessential prom awards, prom photos, and comradery! Can't make it to Prom, but want to support our work? We have a silent auction this year! Items' details and bidding available in May 2026.



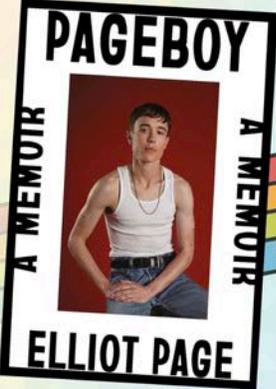
CAPITAL CITY PRIDE

SPRING 2026 SERIES
WEDNESDAYS | 6-7 P.M.

WEDNESDAY, April 15, 6 p.m.
The Little Book

PAGEBOY
A MEMOIR
ELLIOT PAGE

PAGEBOY
by Elliot Page




CAPITAL CITY PRIDE DSM IOWA

THE LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

BLAZING SADDLE

BLAZING SADDLE

416 E 5TH ST
DES MOINES, IA 50309

THE BLAZING SADDLE
SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2-5 P.M.



National LGBTQ+ Calendar

glad

- **April 6:**
International Asexuality Day
- **April 10:**
National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- **Third Friday of April:** Day of Silence
- **April 18:**
National Transgender HIV Testing Day
Nonbinary Parents Day
- **April 26:**
Lesbian Visibility 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



Glossary of Terms

How Well Do You Know LGBTQ+ Vocabulary?

source: thesafezoneproject.com/resources/vocabulary/



PART 3

heterosexual/straight – adj.: experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of a different gender.

homophobia – noun: an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ.

homophobic – adj.: a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people.

homosexual – adj. & noun: a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

intersex – adj.: term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

lesbian – noun & adj.: women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

LGBTQ; GSM; DSG – abbr.: terms for folks who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality. LGBTQ is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people at a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive); GSM is Gender and Sexual Minorities; DSG is Diverse Sexualities and Genders. Other options include the initialism GLBT or LGBT.

lipstick lesbian – noun: usually refers to a lesbian with a feminine gender expression. Can be used in a positive or a derogatory way; sometimes used to refer to a lesbian who is assumed to be or passes for straight.

metrosexual – adj.: a man with a strong aesthetic sense who spends time, energy, or money on appearance and grooming.

MSM / WSW – abbr.: men who have sex with men or women who have sex with women, to distinguish sexual behaviors from sexual identities: because a man is straight, it doesn't mean he's not having sex with men. Often used in the field of HIV/Aids education, prevention, and treatment.

Mx. (“mix” or “schwa”) – noun: an honorific (e.g. Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.) that is gender neutral; often the option of choice for folks who do not identify within the gender binary: Mx. Smith is a great teacher.

outing – verb: involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

pansexual (“pan”) – adj.: a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions.

passing – 1 adj. & verb: trans* people being accepted as, or able to “pass for,” a member of their self-identified gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans*. 2 adj.: an LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

queer – 1 adj.: an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight and/or cisgender. 2 noun: a slur used to refer to someone who isn't straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur by many communities, it is not embraced or used by all LGBTQ people.

The term “queer” can often be use interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., “queer people” instead of “LGBTQ people”).

questioning – verb, adj.: individual who or is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

QPOC / QTPOC – abbr.: initialisms that stand for queer people of color and queer and/or trans people of color.

romantic attraction – noun: a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantic intimate behavior (e.g., dating, relationships, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

same gender loving (SGL) – adj.: sometimes used by some members of the African-American or Black community to express a non-straight sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.

sex assigned at birth (SAAB) – abbr.: a phrase used to intentionally recognize a person's assigned sex (not gender identity). Sometimes called “designated sex at birth” (DSAB) or “sex coercively assigned at birth” (SCAB), or specifically used as “assigned male at birth” (AMAB) or “assigned female at birth” (AFAB).

sexual attraction – noun: a capacity that evokes the want to engage in physically intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees. Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual orientation – noun: the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.





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

April Dates:

- April 5 – 12: Applications Open
- April 13 – 19: Phone Calls
- April 20 – 26: Application Review
- April 27 – May 3: Dispersal



Help make a bigger difference! Donate at:

www.iowatransmutualaidfund.org

Future Speakers



May 1:

Dave Busiek

Retired KCCI News Director

June 5:

Scholarship Ceremony

Zach Rus

Exec. Dir. Iowa Safe Schools

July 11:

Member/Donor

Summer Party

October 1:

Maizie Stillwell

Exec. Director Progress Iowa

SOLIDARITY

**BOONE IA PRIDE
501 C3 NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION IS HOSTING**

**4th Annual
Boone Iowa Pride
Family Celebration**

**April
18,2026
10am-4pm
Downtown
Boone,
Green
Space**

Sponsors:

**Central Iowa Massage, 4Pawd Creations
Ghost Creative, Ema's Elegance
Ames Pride, Lavender Basket
Intesitee, Landon McPherson Photography
Stecker Concrete, Boone Theater**

FOOD TRUCKS:

Weinie Wonderland
Cook SHACK

Plethora of VENDORS

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

PAW PAW PET PRIDE PARADE

FREE FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES



**IOWA LGBTQ
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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

iowalgbtqchamber.org

"Try to be a rainbow in someone else's cloud."

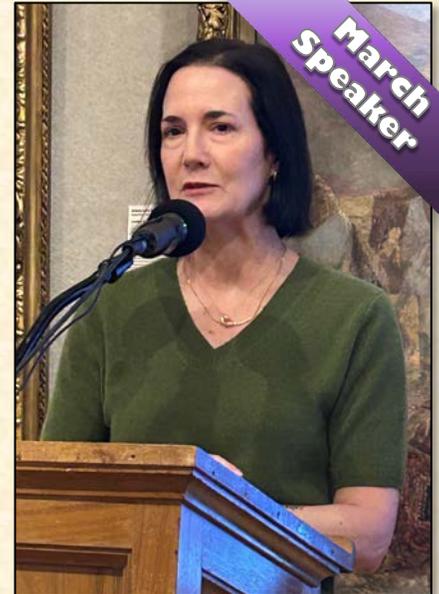


• Maya Angelou



Art Center Director Addresses FFBC

by Gary Moore



March Speaker

Dr. Kelly Baum filled the gallery of Hoyt-Sherman Place with many new faces on the first Friday of March. Tuesday, February 7, 2023, the Des Moines Art Center Board of Trustees announced Dr. Kelly Baum as the museum's next John and Mary Pappajohn and Art Center Director. Dr. Baum comes to Des Moines from The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where she served in multiple roles since 2015.

The search committee ultimately chose Dr. Kelly Baum to lead the Art Center "based on her deep knowledge and experience in the field of modern and contemporary art and her commitment to diversity, equity, transparency, and integrity which align directly with the values that guide the Art Center." She will lead the center forward with the center's 100th Anniversary in mind, taking over from the successful 25-year leadership of Jeff Fleming. Starting with their first Zoom meeting, Dr. Baum was drawn to this new challenge and opportunity.

After reviewing her experience and what brought her to Des Moines, Dr. Baum reviewed the long and distinguished history of the Des Moines Art Center. The origin traces to the Des Moines Association of Fine Arts in 1916 and an endowment by James Edmondson in 1933. He restricted his half million dollar gift that it should not be used until regaining its reduced value from the Great Depression in 1929. Other notable philanthropists (Mandelbaum, Hubbel, Kragner, Coles, Noun, Huttenlacher) also contributed. In 1943, plans were drawn for a museum of art. The Des Moines Art Center was the first museum to open after World War II in 1948.

The Art Center lives in Greenwood Park. James Edmondson, back in 1933, also placed another restriction on his gift: don't put the museum downtown. Too much smoke from coal. It's not safe for the art. And the center and the city pretty quickly identified Greenwood Park as the future home.

The original building, designed by Eliel Saarinen (a Finnish-American architect), was his last major project. The architecture is truly exceptional. He was chosen by founding board members of the Arts Center. Saarinen's vision for the facility always balanced the physical prominence of the site with the cultural status of the building, protecting the integrity of each. Upon its completion in 1948, it represented innovation in American museum design as well as a new type of institution—a blend of museum and education center—an Art Center.

In 1968, I.M. Pei, the Chinese-American architect, was hired to design an addition. It was only his second public commission. Pei went on to design the new entrance to the Louvre and also the addition to the National Museum of Art in Washington, D.C. In 1985 Richard Meyer was just breaking into national attention. He had just finished the Atlanta High Museum of Art and would later go on to design the world-famous Getty. In 1985, the Meyer addition opened. Then 2009 the John and Mary Papajohn sculpture Park would join under the Art Center's umbrella after the Papajohn's generous donation of the worldwide sculpture collection and cooperation with the City of Des Moines.

The physical plant houses over 6,800 objects and contains an exceptional modern art collection, along with objects dating from 3500 BC to the present. The John Singer Sargent, painted in 1881, just returned from a world tour. The Des Moines Fine Arts Association purchased the Henry Osawa Tanner. He became the first African-American painter to gain international acclaim (*The Disciples See Christ Walking on the Water* 1907). Grant Wood, an Iowan, actually advised the art center on the design of its art school, when it was under construction in the 1940s. A painting by Henri Matisse is so important; it is one of his last paintings made before he moved on to cutouts. It is requested for loan by institutions from around world all of the time.

All of this for free. No admission is charged, unlike most major museums in New York, Chicago, L.A., which run \$20 to \$30 easily.

Besides the great collection of artists on display, the Des Moines Art Center is also an art school with many distinguished artists offering classes at reasonable prices. The Art Center has expanded its outreach to many community programs, expanding how it touches and contributes to the value in our community. There are special programs for very specific communities, art spectrums for children living with autism, gallery talks, and art workshops. The Arts Center partners with 35 different nonprofits and social service organizations to offer free art classes to various communities in need, and to communities with very specific needs.

"Art is not just about learning a skill; it's also about feeding your soul. And there is science that connects arts engagement with well-being. Art is not just about joy, although it's also about joy. It is also about physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It is about bridging distances and differences. Art is about our soul."

CEO of the
Des Moines Art Center

Dr. Kelly Baum



March

March Meeting Photo Gallery

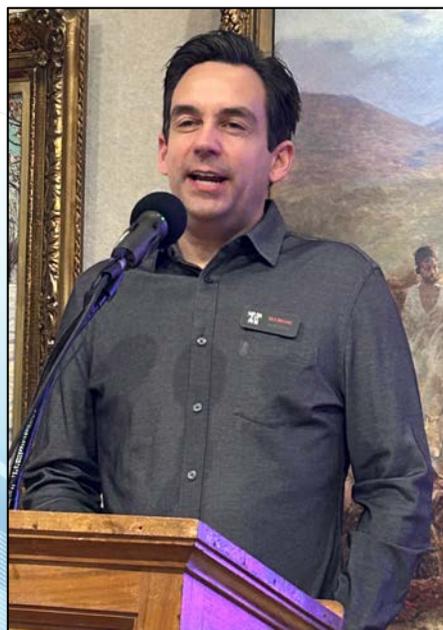


60 Fabulous Friends!



Byron Huff

conducts the March
FFBC meeting.



Wes Mullins

previews events with
Capital City Pride



Rachel Gulick

introduces Dr. Kelly
Baum, the March speaker



FEATURE SERIES

Travels with Ken & Wade

by Wade Petersen

Puerto Rico



It's always nice to get away during cold Iowa winters, and Ken decided that this year, it was time to spend a week visiting **Puerto Rico**, *La Isla del Encanto* ("The Island of Enchantment"). Ken had been to Puerto Rico over 30 years ago, but this was my first time to visit. Most of our stay was centered in its capital, San Juan, located on the island's northeastern coast. Founded in 1521 by Spanish colonists, it is the oldest city under U.S. jurisdiction (and why you do not need a passport to visit). San Juan is beautiful but some parts of the city are still recovering from Hurricane Maria in 2017.

Ken took charge of organizing this trip, and the first thing he decided was that we would stay at **Coqui del Mar**, "a Gay Clothing-Optional Hotel Resort." This is a small B&B, but the vibe was lowkey and relaxing. The only room with a king-size bed was the "Red Room" (or the "kink friendly" room). Not quite our thing, but having a big comfy bed was wonderful. The best part was that we were only a block from the beach, with its lovely white sand and amazingly blue waters.



While in Puerto Rico, you will continually hear the *coqui*, the small native tree frog (only one to two inches). "Coqui" refers to the sound of the call produced by males to attract females and repel other males during mating season. Just imagine a chirping sound. At first, it was a bit annoying, but eventually the sound just blended into the background.



Food in Puerto Rico is fantastic (Ken loves all seafood). You must also try Puerto Rico's most iconic dish, **mofongo**, made mainly from crushed plantains mixed with spices and served with various proteins. We also had the national drink, the **piña colada** (created in San Juan in 1954).

Our first days were spent relaxing and playing tourists, walking around the Old San Juan historic district with its cafés and shops. There, we also toured its two major historic castles: **Castillo San Cristóbal** and **Castillo San Felipe del Morro** (*El Morro*).

Castillo San Cristóbal was built from 1634 until 1765 to guard the city from enemies approaching by land at the eastern gate of Old San Juan. The castle and grounds cover 27+ acres and make history come alive.



El Morro is an inspiring fortification on the west corner of the islet of Old San Juan. During most of its nearly 500-year history, it was an important military outpost for Spain and later the United States. It was fascinating climbing through this iconic landmark's mazelike tunnels and imagining all the old cannons ready to defend the island from sea attacks. Plan for some majestic views but also for a lot of steps and walking!

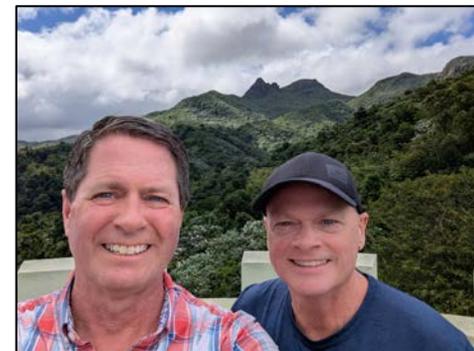


One of the highlights of the trip included an overnight excursion to **Vieques**, a 21-mile long offshore island. We took a small 10-seat "puddle jumper" plane to this tranquil island that has free-roaming horses and pristine beaches. Vieques is most known for its incredible **bioluminescent bay**. While most people join kayak tours to experience the bay, Ken and I opted for a small boat tour (much less work and better views). At night, the microorganisms, when moved, make the water glow with a magical blue light. The night ride to the bay in a van was probably the bumpiest ride I've ever experienced!



We stayed in the little town of Esperanza and enjoyed the food and beaches as well before returning to San Juan the next day.

Another highlight was our hiking tour of the Puerto Rican rainforest. We signed up for a guided tour (the best way to go) that took us to **El Yunque**, the smallest national park forest according to land size (but the one with the greatest number of species of trees and the only one that is a tropical rainforest). Our tour guide took us to an observation tower, a hiking trail, a waterfall, a wading pool, and a river in the rainforest. There were almost no mosquitos since the bats take care of those. Our legs were a bit sore the next day from the steep hiking but it was worth every moment.



We encourage you to visit **Puerto Rico** sometime. Don't worry, most people speak both Spanish and English. We mainly experienced San Juan, but there are so many other areas to travel to. It was great to swim in both the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea and soak up the sun on the amazing beaches (with lots of sunscreen of course). The best part of any trip will always be spending time with the love of my life. And yes, we did break out the Speedos! What will be your next adventure?

Deadline Approaches for FFBC Scholarship Donations



Last June, the FFBC awarded a record **20** scholarships of **\$3,000** each, due to the generosity of our donors. **We cannot do this without your support!** We are nearing the end of our fiscal year for scholarship donations on **April 30**. If you have not yet donated, we hope you will give it serious consideration.

We have received a **record-breaking 58 applications** from Iowa high school seniors for the FFBC scholarships this year (previous record was **36**), showing not only the need for financial assistance, but for the continued work of these students to advocate for inclusion, to fight homophobia, and to educate their schools and communities about LGBTQ+ issues. FFBC contacts **every** high school in the state of Iowa with a letter and brochure about the scholarship. The committee also compiles an email list of every counselor in the state. This allows us to send a follow-up email with a digital version of application materials.



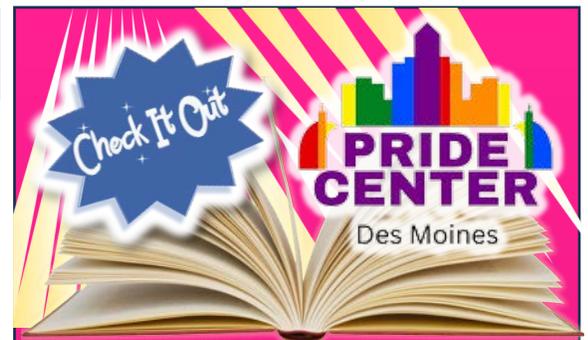
2025 FFBC Scholarship Recipients

These young people have served as an inspiration for their LGBTQ+ peers – standing up to bullies, fighting through adversity, brushing off judgment, and leading by example. Strong student leaders can often make the difference for LGBTQ+ students who might struggle at home, in their churches, and in their schools. Our scholars really do show them a better path.

Scholarship requests go through a rigorous scoring process to select the recipients, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity to award those who have distinguished themselves through courageous efforts. The Board of Directors and Scholarship Committee members put in many hours of work without compensation because we believe in the mission of FFBC. This means that **100%** of your donation goes **directly** to these brave students; not many nonprofits can make that statement.



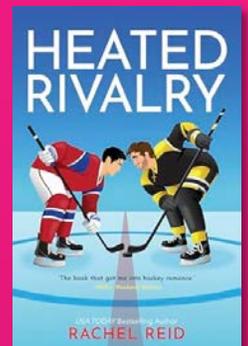
We look forward to the in-person presentation of the scholarships this year on **June 5, 2026**, in the beautiful art gallery of Hoyt Sherman Place. Please consider making a donation (small or large) and join us for this heartwarming event. **We sincerely thank you for your financial consideration!**



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

Check out the epic enemies-to-lovers hockey romance novel from Rachel Reid. Can the book be as steamy as the HBO Max mini-series?



Nothing interferes with pro hockey star Shane Hollander's game. Now that he's captain of the Montreal Voyageurs, he won't let anything jeopardize that—definitely not the sexy rival he loves to hate. Boston Bears captain, Ilya Rozanov, is everything Shane's not. The self-proclaimed king of the ice, he's as cocky as he is talented. No one can beat him—except Shane. Publicly, they're enemies. Privately, they can't stop touching each other. The smart thing to do? Walk away, once a few secret hookups turn into a struggle to keep their relationship out of the press. The truth could ruin them both. But for Shane and Ilya, secrecy is soon no longer an option....

**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.



Spotlight on National LGBTQ+ Organizations

An Online Community for LGBTQ+ Elders

sageSM

Services & Advocacy
for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual
& Transgender Elders

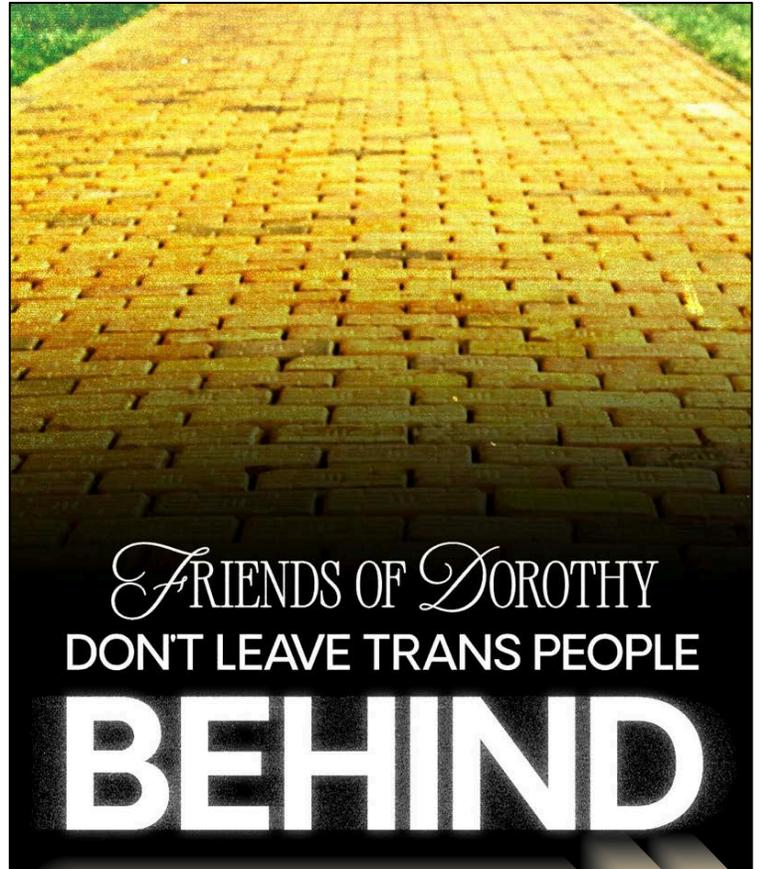
sageusa.org

SAGE leads in addressing issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning and other self-identifying members of the community (LGBTQ+) aging. In partnership with its constituents and allies, SAGE works to achieve a high quality of life for LGBTQ+ older people, supports and advocates for their rights, fosters a greater understanding of aging in all communities, and promotes positive images of LGBTQ+ life in later years.

By 2030, nearly 7 million people in the U.S. aged 50+ will identify as LGBTQ+ - and that number is rising as more people live openly and age into this group. LGBTQ+ elders often face higher rates of social isolation, discrimination, and economic insecurity - but they also embody resilience and strength.

Roughly 40% - 45% of LGBTQ+ young people seriously considered suicide in the past year.

The Trevor Project



FRIENDS OF DOROTHY
DON'T LEAVE TRANS PEOPLE

BEHIND

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.

* Oscar Wilde

Central Iowa

Trans Lives Festival CALL FOR PARTICIPANT SUBMISSIONS

Who can participate?

ALL TRANSGENDER, GENDERQUEER, & NON-BINARY

- *Artists
- *Writers
- *Performers
- And Other Creators
- *Craftpersons
- *Musicians
- *Singers
- *Poets
- *Dancers
- *Food Vendors

How can you participate?

Online applications may be submitted beginning March 1.

Links to online applications are available at:
www.ucdsm.org/trans-lives-festival/

Spaces filled as applications come in, until full.

No registration fee required. Participants may offer their work for sale, and all sale proceeds remain with the participants.

When and Where?

Saturday, June 6, 2026, 10am - 5pm
(set up 8am-10am)

First Unitarian Church, 1800 Bell Avenue, Des Moines, IA
ADA Accessible
Security provided so everyone can enjoy a safe & fun event

What is the Trans Lives Fest?

In honor of the International Transgender Day of Visibility, the Central Iowa Trans Lives Festival will provide a safe space for trans adults and youth to celebrate & present their creative work to the LGBTQIA community and other allied members of the public. Sponsored by the Queer and Transgender Action Group of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, an LGBTQIA Welcoming Congregation & member of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

More info at: www.ucdsm.org/trans-lives-festival/ Questions? Email: translivesfestival@ucdsm.org





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



MAR 11 - APR 15 **SPRING PICKLEBALL**
WEDNESDAYS @ MIDAMERICAN
ENERGY CO. RECPLEX

MAR 18 **MARCH MADNESS BRACKET CHALLENGE** >>>
REGISTRATION DEADLINE
ALL PROCEEDS GO TO COMMON LOVE DES MOINES

MAR 21 **IOWA WILD PRIDE NIGHT** >>>
5TH @ CASEY'S CENTER
DISCOUNTED TIX AT LINK IN BIO!

APR 11 **SPRING SKATE SOCIAL**
SPORTY SKATE PARTY OPEN TO ALL
@ SKATE SOUTH // LINK IN BIO TO REGISTER

APR 29 - JUN 10 **SPRING SOFTBALL**
WEDNESDAYS @ CAMPBELL RECREATION AREA
REGISTRATION OPENS SOON

CURRENT CLUBS **SOCCER** MAR - MAY
// LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
CYCLING APR - SEP >>>
// 2ND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
WALKING APR - NOV
// REGISTER FOR DATES

UPCOMING EVENTS



GLOW

Bigger. Brighter. Bolder.

We are excited to announce
Amelia Bearhardt as our
MC for GLOW!



Get your
tickets NOW!



Join us Sunday, May 3rd
Bigger. Brighter. Bolder.

CURRENT CLUBS



All Pride Sport League Clubs are
free and open to all skill levels.
Registration encouraged for
more information.



SOCCER CLUB

LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
MAR - MAY // 10AM - 11:30AM //
@ COWLES MONTESSORI SCHOOL



CYCLING CLUB

2ND (OR 3RD) SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
APR - SEP // 10AM - 12PM
REGISTER FOR LOCATIONS



[OUTDOOR] WALKING CLUB

APRIL - NOVEMBER
REGISTER FOR DATES AND TIMES

REGISTER AT WWW.PRIDESPORTSLEAGUE.ORG



The 21st Annual
Governor's Conference
ON LOCAL YOUTH

APRIL 3RD, 2026

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:
JAN SPORT
& ZOEY LUNA**

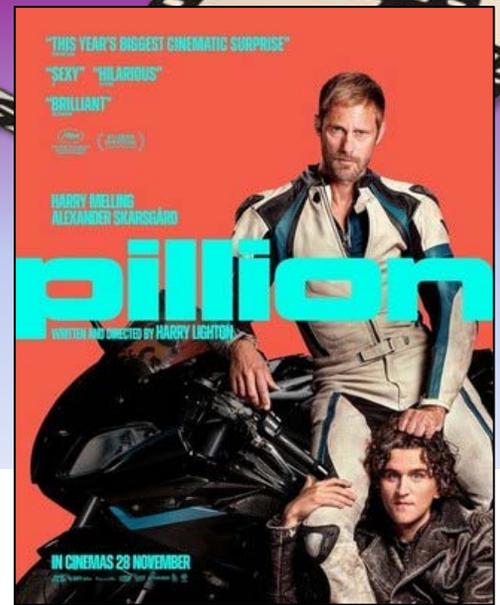
Prairie
Meadows
Events Center
Altoona, IA





Pillion

A 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 streaming apps this June.



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Contact Us: info@ffbciova.org

The McCoy Report

by Supervisor Matt McCoy
Polk County, 1st District

With Taylor Van De Krol



Polk County Reserves \$3.5 Million in Federal Funding for Family Shelter

During the Biden Administration, Polk County received millions in Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) to ensure folks were able to make rent during the COVID-19 pandemic. U.S. Treasury rules allowed the county to set aside up to 25% of its funding for affordable purposes. Polk County distributed more than \$10 million to create or preserve more than 500 affordable housing units using ERA funds and interest from those funds. The county also set aside \$3.5 million for a family shelter.



One of the biggest challenges facing Polk County is family shelters. After a non-profit closed its doors in 2023 that served families that were unhoused, Polk County stepped up to provide temporary hotel stays to ensure no families and no kids were unhoused. At the start, the cost was about \$25,000 per year but only a few years later, Polk County is surpassing \$400,000 annually. The traditional shelters are not a good setting for families, and this is the only option.

Polk County is vigorously looking for a hotel to convert into a family shelter using this one-time \$3.5 million. By converting a hotel, it significantly reduces costs and expedites the opening date. Ideally, this would be a hotel requiring minimal repairs. A few hotels have been identified recently, but have not met the qualifications (such as not being on a DART line and close to other essential resources).

The idea is that the shelter will be somewhere to stay until people can find a more permanent place. Until they're stabilized and can be in a situation where their family has regular employment and regular housing, they're going to continue to be in crisis.

I believe that everyone, no matter who they are, deserves to have a roof over their heads and a place to call home. It's a place for them to live with their children in dignity and to feel safe. That's what we want for all residents of Polk County.

Stay tuned in the coming year as we work to find the most suitable option.

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