



# First Friday News & Views



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

January 2026 | Volume 31 | Issue 1


Next Meeting

**Friday,**  
**January 9**  
**7:00 a.m.**



Location

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



Speaker

**Matt Russell**  
**Executive Director**  
**Iowa Farmer's Union**



Website

**ffbc Iowa.org**



## State of a Union

by Byron Huff, Board President



I hope you can join us **Friday, January 9** (note...this is NOT the first Friday in January) to hear Matt Russell, Executive Director of the **Iowa Farmers Union**. His appearance was requested by some of our membership to highlight the contrast between the Iowa Farmers Union and the Iowa Farm Bureau, whose president spoke to FFBC in August.

The Iowa Farmers Union (IFU) traces its beginnings to 1915, making it one of the oldest general farm organizations in the state dedicated to representing family farmers and rural communities. IFU's mission from the start has focused on strengthening independent family farms through education, legislation, cooperation, and grassroots involvement. Its policy positions and priorities are developed directly by its membership and debated annually at a state convention.

Historically, Farmers Union groups were part of a broader national movement (the National Farmers Union) that emerged in the early twentieth century in reaction to the growing power of agribusiness and concerns about market concentration and price volatility. Iowa Farmers Union emphasizes small and diversified farms, fair markets, and policies that support rural communities. The Iowa chapter serves as a state-level voice for this philosophy, rooted in family-scale agriculture and local food systems.

An interesting episode from IFU's earlier history illustrates some of its challenges: in the post-World War II era, internal disputes and broader political pressures led to changes in its national affiliation and name changes due to a charter dispute. By contrast, the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF) was formed a few years later, in 1918, as a federation of local county Farm Bureaus organized to educate farmers and provide a unified voice in policy and marketing.

While both Iowa Farmers Union and Farm Bureau describe themselves as grassroots organizations advocating for farmers, their policy philosophies and priorities show clear differences. Iowa Farmers Union policy positions emphasize support for diversified, family-scale farms and local and regional food systems. It opposes market concentrations that favor large corporate actors, arguing that consolidation undermines competition and squeezes small farmers. IFU supports policies aimed at curbing consolidation, increasing market transparency, and strengthening fair competition rules in agriculture.

As far as policy priorities and advocacy, Iowa Farmers Union focuses policies that build local and regional supply chains, food hubs, and procurement programs that link farmers directly with consumers. IFU supports a farm bill and other federal/state policies that bolster price discovery, transparency, and protections for small farmers.

[continued on page 2]

**Reminder:**

**The January FFBC Meeting  
will be held on Friday, January 9 .**





Iowa Farmers Union also backs antitrust enforcement and measures to make land more accessible to new and beginning farmers.

**Iowa Farmer's Union** often supports stronger regulation where it sees need (such as fair competition rules in markets and protections for diversified producers) and, in some cases, opposes proposals seen as weakening consumer protections (e.g., narrow health plan regulation that sidesteps broader oversight). **Iowa Farm Bureau** typically advocates for regulatory relief and flexibility, especially if it views regulations as burdensome to farm business operations. It tends to oppose stringent rules perceived as overly restrictive, favoring voluntary or incentive-based approaches for issues like conservation. In broader debates, it has opposed some regulatory measures for water quality funding and has worked for property rights protections at the state level.

Though both the **Iowa Farmers Union** and **Iowa Farm Bureau** champion agriculture and rural communities, they differ significantly in history, structure, and policy emphasis. Iowa Farmers Union's long tradition centers on family-scale farms, fair markets, and local systems, rooted in member-driven policy development. Farm Bureau, with its broader membership and deep institutional influence, focuses on supporting agricultural business success through advocacy, services, and market engagement. Understanding these differences helps clarify the range of voices shaping agricultural policy in Iowa and beyond.



## Briefs & Shorts



We are very grateful to **Charlene Vukovich**, for introducing our December speaker, **Sarah Trone Garriott**. Sarah is a Democratic Iowa State Senator and an ordained minister. She is currently running for Congress in Iowa's 3<sup>rd</sup> District.

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 **February newsletter** will be **January 26**.



If you have something of interest that you would like to share, just type it up and email it to Wade ([wadecpetersen@gmail.com](mailto: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**





# January Speaker



## Matt Russell



Matt Russell became the Executive Director of the Iowa Farmers Union in September. He is a fifth-generation Iowa farmer who grew up on a commodity and livestock farm in Cass County. He now co-owns and operates Coyote Run Farm, near Lacona, Iowa, with his spouse Patrick Standley. Russell is the former State Executive Director of the USDA Farm Service Agency in Iowa for the Biden Administration. In 2018, he became the Executive Director of Iowa Faith and Climate Network, a statewide faith-based climate action organization. Prior to that, he spent 12 years on staff at the Drake University Agricultural Law Center. He's been an active member of Iowa Farmers Union for over 20 years.

## Notice of FFBC Annual Membership Meeting

According to FFBC Bylaws, there will be an **Annual Meeting** of members at the normal January breakfast club meeting (**January 9**). Although primarily informational in nature, members will vote to approve the slate of new and/or returning board members as brought forward by the FFBC President. The Board shall consist of between 9 and 12 members with each board member serving a three-year term.



# Thank you

## GENE LARSON



**For your years of service as an FFBC board member.**

**"We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us. The old skin has to be shed before the new one can come."**

**Joseph Campbell**

## LGBTQ+ Legislative Kickoff 2026

# oneiowa

Join **One Iowa Action** for an in-person legislative kickoff for the 2026 legislative session on **Tuesday, January 13th** from 6-8 PM! We'll cover what to expect at the Iowa Capitol this year and ways to stay engaged during these challenging times. You'll also hear essential details about our annual LGBTQ Day on the Hill. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions. This event is free and open to the public, with donation ticket options available for those who wish to support our work.

Please check for location updates at:  
<https://oneiowa.org/event/lgbtq-legislative-update-2026/>



*Celebrate with Us!*



**First Friday Breakfast Club is an educational forum that embraces the LGBTQ+ community and its allies as members, nourishes meaningful dialogue through monthly speakers, and cultivates young advocates for equity and inclusion by awarding leadership scholarships to graduating Iowa high school seniors.**





# How It All Started

## The Origin of First Friday Breakfast Club

### "Birth of a Breakfast Club"

Reprinted from the May 1996 Newsletter (by Jonathan Wilson)

Anyone in Central Iowa who is unaware of the controversy in which I was embroiled during 1995 would be a rare find. I quickly tired of being perceived as the only gay man in Des Moines. It seemed like folks would think "gay," think Jonathan Wilson, and then stop thinking. I was, and remain, convinced that we are neither as few nor as isolated as even we are led to believe. I decided I wanted to do something about that. I wanted to change public perceptions and even our own perceptions of who, and how many, we are.

It occurred to me that a monthly breakfast club might help by providing mutual support and an excellent opportunity for being further educated on community affairs and further educating community opinion leaders with more positive images. It seemed reasonable to think that, with some assistance, it would be possible to identify perhaps thirty gay men who would participate. If half that number regularly attended, it would serve my original purpose and remain fairly manageable.

To get things started, I contacted **John Schmacker**, a long-time activist. My assumption is that John Schmacker knows everybody. Between us we identified about two dozen people, and we invited them to get together for drinks and talk about the idea. Almost all of them showed up, liked the idea, and suggested additional names. Overnight, our roster grew to 75.

Invitations were extended, and an initial breakfast meeting was organized. Over 50 showed up for that first breakfast. From volunteers at that meeting, a steering committee was formed, which became the Board of Directors when the breakfast club incorporated. With each new member being invited to suggest other names, our roster has now grown to over 225, and we are regularly turning out around 100 for breakfast each month. This is almost certainly the largest breakfast club in Iowa.

It isn't "my" breakfast club. Every man comfortable with being thought of as gay is welcome to participate. I only had the germ of an idea. The leadership ranks are growing and growing more diverse, and new potential and exciting projects, like this newsletter, are being identified almost every month. With this issue of our newsletter is a membership survey form which will help us develop and maintain a focused mission that is supported by our membership. Please complete and return it, and then be active in the group. There should be no free ride to freedom.

If we can do this in Des Moines, Iowa, in the present climate, the model we are creating can be replicated in every city in the U.S.A. If you know people in another city in Iowa or elsewhere who might be interested, have them contact me, and I'll help them do it. We're helping a group of lesbians get one started here. There's no reason why you shouldn't be able to find a friendly breakfast club on the first Friday of the month wherever you travel. Move over Rotary Club International!



**January 11, 1996**  
**First Friday Breakfast Club filed Articles of Incorporation with the Iowa Secretary of State.**







## Problem Solving

by Jonathan Wilson

My sister and I own a little farm at the east edge of Davis County in Southeast Iowa not far from the Missouri border. We inherited it from our parents. The original house, which has grown over the years thanks to additions that have been made, is well over 100 years old. While our parents had it, and not surprisingly, the original house settled and the floors ceased to be level. They hired a contractor who installed a “false floor” above the original which created an incline between the front room and the next. It proved to be a challenge for grandchildren who were just learning to walk. They all survived despite a nose-plant or two.

After we inherited the property, and also not surprisingly, the settling continued. We engaged an Amish contractor to take a look at the situation. He said that the “false floor” was a perfect example of addressing the wrong side of a problem.

That insight came to mind when the United States began murdering occupants of motorboats *allegedly* carrying drugs headed for the United States (which, if true, does not carry a death penalty), as if blowing up a few motorboats would be even a partial solution to the problem of fentanyl killing countless people in the U.S. And, it's not even alleged that the motorboats were carrying fentanyl – more likely cocaine, if they were carrying any kind of contraband.

There are two sides to the problem; they're called supply and demand. If it weren't for demand, there would be no one smuggling drugs into the U.S.; that's why there is no one smuggling mosquitoes into the U.S. No demand.

Now, if you were going to solve that problem, which side of the problem should get your attention, supply or demand? The demand side of the problem, or the theatrics



First Friday Breakfast Club  
Founder **Jonathan Wilson**

of blowing up defenseless motorboats *allegedly* carrying contraband other than fentanyl?

Worse, attacking defenseless motorboats violates the law against unintended consequences. Don't get me wrong; I'm okay with interdiction efforts, but it needs to be recognized that the more success there is with interdiction, the higher the street price of addictive drugs. But they are addictive drugs and a considerable number of burglaries, robberies, and other theft are NOT to get money for groceries; they're to get money for illegal drugs. If you raise the street price of drugs, you're going to get more crimes trying to get money to feed the addiction. Drug addicts are not shopping for sales or great deals for drugs on the street; they are looking for money to pay whatever the market price is.

Back to our Amish contractor. He put in a new foundation and the settling stopped. Problem solved. If you are in search of a real solution to a problem, address the right side of the problem. The demand side of the problem holds more promise than the supply side; but that doesn't offer the same theatrics. The demand side of the problem doesn't offer comparable theatrics. What should we be insisting on, theatrics or an actual solution?



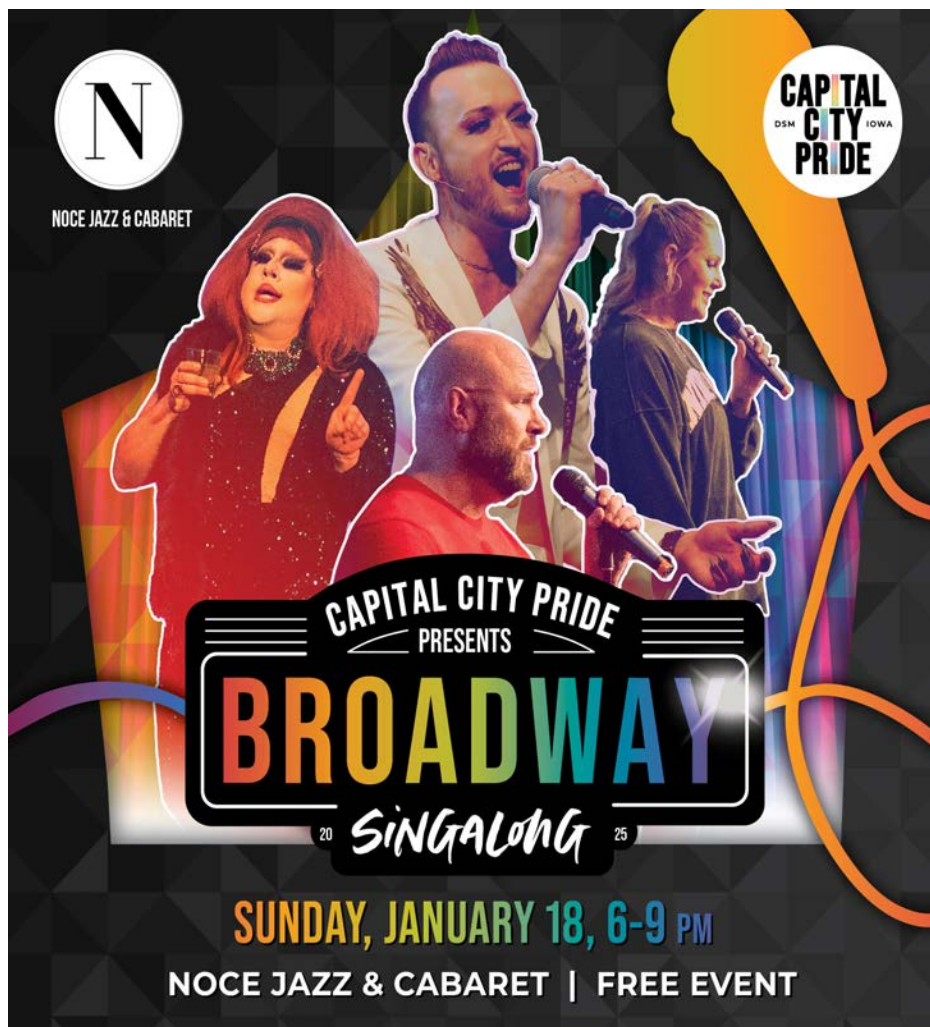
*Prism*  
therapy solutions

**My name is Hilary Johnson and I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, and I own Prism Therapy Solutions in the East Village of Des Moines! We are expanding and have 10 therapists in total! All Queer and Trans identifying therapists. We will do both in person and virtual appointments. In person will start 2/1 when we have our new space open! Check out our website!**

[prismtherapysolutions.com](http://prismtherapysolutions.com)







## 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





## “You’ve Got Cancer”

We Get One Lifetime; It’s Happening Now

by Dr. Loren Olson

For most of my life, dying was something that happened to others, not to me. I’ve dealt with the deaths of several loved ones, but I’d never considered an endless expanse of nothingness without me in it. Although I am a Christian, I struggle to believe that after I die, I’ll be going to “a better place.”

I’m not naïve about my mortality. I have a long list of diagnoses that could end my life, but they all seemed like a thunderstorm prediction of only about 20%. I thought I was prepared. I’ve discussed my last wishes with loved ones, made a will, and chosen a final resting place. But I’d never contemplated the thought that one day, everyone who’s known me will also die, and my existence will be erased.

Everything changed when my doctor called and said that a routine urinalysis contained cancer cells. **The word “cancer” blasted through those fragile defenses, and said, “This is now!”**

### Biology

My doctor referred me to the urologist who told me I needed a cystoscopy to biopsy and stage my bladder cancer. I replied, “I prefer things coming out of my penis rather than going into it.” Nevertheless, he persisted. The biopsy confirmed I had non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer (NMIBC). That it was “non-invasive” didn’t remove my anxiety because “cancer” was the looming monster.

Bladder cancers are about three times more common in men than in women, but in women, they are more aggressive. Smoking, one of many of my youthful indiscretions, had increased my risks for NMIBC. The risk of bladder cancer from smoking comes from tobacco smoke, not nicotine itself. It is one of the most significant, modifiable risk factors.

Aromatic amines (industrial chemicals) are bladder carcinogens. I immediately thought, “Poppers?” I escaped more self-blame when a bit of research told

me they are not an aromatic amine.

The urologist told me that BCG remained the evidence-based, first-line treatment for NMIBC. BCG is a weakened bacterium related to tuberculosis. Tuberculosis! My irrational mind lunged to “Will the treatment be worse than my diagnosis? Whoever thought *that* might work?” Still, in my illogical ruminations, cancer trumped TB.

BCG is an intravesical immunotherapy. Every six weeks, doctors inject a liquid containing the modified bacterium into the bladder where it is held for two hours. BCG triggers an immune response that destroys cancer cells. It reduces progression of NMIBC and lowers recurrence rates *when maintenance is used*. Aha! Things are going to be entering my penis and bladder for the indefinite future.

I smiled when a handsome, young male nurse came in to scrub my penis before my diagnostic cystoscopy. I wasn’t looking forward to it, but at least there was something good about it. Alas, with all follow-up treatments, a matronly, older female nurse washed my “hoodle.”

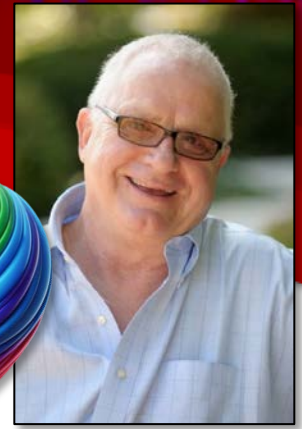
The only side-effect I experienced was extreme urinary urgency; I needed to be at the urinal before I even thought I needed to pee.

In June, 2025, the FDA approved a new drug, Zusduri for NMIBC. It is about 80% effective for higher risk NMIBC. I felt reassured that there was a fallback treatment. (But it intensified my anger about the administration’s cutbacks to cancer research.)

### No More Goodbyes

“Cancer” stimulated morbid thoughts of “When will I say my last goodbyes?”

I had sleepless nights thinking about the last time I would see my husband, my kids, and grandkids. No more weekly coffees with my best friend, Phil. When would be the last time I had sex or petted my dog? Dreams would never be realized.



Places never visited. Books never read. Every possible life never lived.

I had to accept that I could not outrun this truth. Time for me to remove things from my bucket list and check things off my to-do list without doing them. I was never going to get out of my funk until I accepted my life was not under perfect control.

### 4378 weeks

I read *Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals* by Oliver Burkemann. The organizing thesis is that if a man lives to be 80 years old, he will have 4000 weeks. Approaching 83, I’ve already lived 4378 weeks. Time is urgent. I need to experience time rather than measure it.

**I began to realize that the rest of my life would be meaningful, only if I focused on the few things worth doing.** I need to be deliberate about ignoring some things I love, to fixate on the things that matter the most.

Life is finite. Accepting that you won’t get to most things can be strangely liberating. Life becomes make-a-wish. Burkemann wrote, “To embrace finitude is to stop chasing the life you can’t live and start inhabiting the one you can.” It is an invitation to live deeply, not widely.

We had a beautiful family Thanksgiving this year. My kids and all my grandkids, my ex-wife and her husband, and newly introduced partners all came together. Eighteen people in an adult sleep-over. We experienced slow time together. We celebrated our love for each other and our gratitude for having each other in our lives. We lived deeply, not widely.

A few years ago, I congratulated my Uncle Glen on his 72-year marriage. He responded, “It’s still not enough.” **I want to live my final weeks without regret and to believe it still isn’t enough.**







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

**January Dates:**

December 28 – January 4: Applications Open

January 4 – 11: Phone Calls

January 11 – 18: Application Review

January 18 – 25: Dispersal



Help make a bigger difference! Donate at:

[www.iowatransmutualaidfund.org](http://www.iowatransmutualaidfund.org)

**Get Tested.  
Get Care.  
Get Support.**  
No Cost, No Judgment.



CAPITAL CITY PRIDE

**WELCOME TO WONDERLAND**  
PRIDE GALA & AWARDS

don't be late!

THE MEADOWS EVENT CENTER

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 6-9 P.M.

Rainbow

**BOWLING**  
League

**SIGN UP!**

WINTER/SPRING SEASON 2026

Starts Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Sign up new and returning teams at 6:30pm

Practice at 6:50

Bowling starts at 7pm

**THREE  
MEMBER  
TEAMS**

**COST:**

\$14/week/person + one-time admin fee, \$4  
or \$200 for the whole season  
paid on January 7th.

EVERY WEDNESDAY NIGHT

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**GAME DAY LANES  
Merle Hay Mall**

LGBTQ+  
and Allies



**"If  
you're brave  
enough to say  
goodbye, life will  
reward you  
with a new  
hello."**

**Paulo  
Coehlo**

# Future Speakers



**February 6:**

**Tom Vilsack**

Former

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture;

Former Governor of Iowa

**March 6:**

**Dr. Kelly Baum**

Director, Des Moines Art Center

**April 3:**

**Kimberly Graham**

Polk County Attorney

**May 1:**

**Dave Busiek**

Retired KCCI News Director





# Sarah Trone Garriott: An Introduction

by Gary Moore

Generally, it takes a while to get to know a stranger, although sometimes, right off the bat, you get a sense of whether you are going to mix or not. When I was a young man and politically active, I had to drive a U.S. senatorial candidate from Des Moines to Dubuque. I was eager for this opportunity to get to know a man who had gained such prominence. It was a disaster of a trip. The man could not get off his campaign pedestal long enough to just talk to me. Full of himself.

Sarah Trone Garriott was NOT that type of politician. She was not here to hear herself talk but to share who she was. A phrase that caught my attention was, "It is important to know how to be a stranger." Then she spent her time unpacking that statement. "Because it's really important to learn how to be a stranger and show up in a new place." Not everyone has those skills. It takes practice. We need to teach young people those skills: being able to share your story and to listen to others, to show up for everybody's festivals and celebrations and holidays. That is how you develop understanding and trust. There are a lot of ways to separate and divide people. Take advantage of those times meant to unite.

This reminded me of a dinner party I was invited to as a college student many years ago. As I recall, there were 15 or so people invited by Professor Nash and his wife for dinner. They were always entertaining. As I sat next to my dinner partner, I asked how he knew the Nashes. He said he didn't. That he and his wife received the invitation saying the Nashes would like a banker for dinner. The invitation was so interesting they couldn't say no. How to create community. How to be a good stranger.

Sarah Trone Garriott: "So, my journey to being a professional stranger really started a long time ago. And it's been able to help me talk about two issues that many people find difficult and uncomfortable: religion and politics."

I won't go into the specifics of her journey. You can listen to her address on the FFBC website for yourself and draw your own conclusions. For me, it is obvious from a very young age, Sarah wanted to be involved and contribute, having started her working career with AmeriCorps as a Vista volunteer. Each step in her journey led to community action to solve issues dividing people: violence against women, being hospital chaplain on call and trauma, dealing with the division of a small Lutheran Congregational Church around issues of LGBTQ+, and being a minister of a church 10 times that size. And now, "I get to be pastor to the wider community through this role. So sometimes I say I'm a free-range minister in this work." Sarah is now the coordinator of Interfaith Engagement for the Des Moines Area Religious Council.

Her interest in politics was sparked by being at the Iowa State Capitol and being asked to say an opening prayer for the Senate one day. When she realized that her state senator, who was a big anti-abortion voice, did not even know what an ectopic pregnancy was, it was time to step up in a bigger way. Since that decision, she has won two different Iowa senatorial seats in different Republican districts due to redistricting and now is facing a race for the 3rd U.S. Iowa Congressional District.

Sarah Trone Garriott reminded me, I need to be a better stranger. I need to work at it harder. I will be anxious to see what else she teaches us as she continues her journey on hopefully being a United States Congresswoman.



First Friday Breakfast Club

- Breakfast on the First of Every Month
- Scholarship Program for Iowa High School Seniors

[www.ffbcia.org](http://www.ffbcia.org)

Iowa State Senator  
**Sarah Trone Garriott**



December Speaker





# December Meeting Photo Gallery



**Charlene Vukovich**

introduces Sarah Trone Garriott,  
the December speaker.



**Wes Mullins**

highlights Capital  
City Pride events for  
December.



**Rachel Gulick**

promotes the Iowa  
Pride Ensemble  
concert band event.





Join us for a retelling  
and renaming of our library.

February 1, 2026

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The Mickle Center

1620 Pleasant Street, Des Moines, IA 50314

**Connect  
Protect  
Respect**



Sponsored by



**January 22: 6 - 8 pm, Author Talk with Val Gale, a  
local trans author, on his new book *Wild Dandelion***

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**



**REGISTRATION  
NOW OPEN FOR:**

**WINTER DODGEBALL**

**FRIDAYS [JAN 9] 6-8 PM**  
through **[FEB 20] \$35**  
per person

@ WILLKIE HOUSE INC  
900 17TH ST  
DES MOINES, IA 50314

OPEN CLINIC ON RULES AND GAMEPLAY JAN 9TH

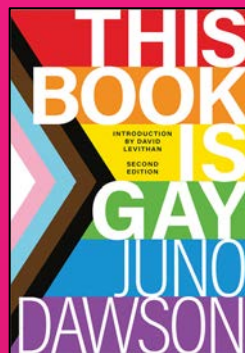
**WINTER [INDOOR]  
VOLLEYBALL**

**SUNDAYS | JAN 11 - MAR 1 | 5-9 PM**  
**\$35** per person  
@ INDIAN HILLS JUNIOR HIGH  
9401 INDIAN HILLS DR  
CLIVE, IA 50325



*The Des Moines Pride Center houses the largest  
Queer-only library in the state. The Pride  
Center is fighting to maintain a vibrant Queer  
future by connecting people to LGBTQIA+  
literature, information, and creativity.*

*Book of the Month*



This candid, funny,  
and uncensored  
exploration of  
sexuality and what  
it's like to grow up  
LGBTQ; also includes  
real stories from  
people across the  
gender and sexual  
spectrums, not to  
mention hilarious  
illustrations.

The bestselling young adult non-fiction book  
on sexuality and gender! Lesbian. Gay.  
Bisexual. Transgender. Queer. Intersex.  
Straight. Curious. This book is for everyone,  
regardless of gender or sexual preference.  
This book is for YOU. "The book every  
LGBT person would have killed for as a  
teenager, told in the voice of a wise best  
friend. Frank, warm, funny, USEFUL."

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

[www.desmoinespridecenter.org](http://www.desmoinespridecenter.org)

**Full Searchable Catalog:**  
[www.librarycat.org/lib/DSMPC](http://www.librarycat.org/lib/DSMPC)



*The  
Pride Center  
Library Collection  
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

### PFLAG



PFLAG is the nation's largest organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for LGBTQ+ people and those who love them.

PFLAG is a national support, education, and advocacy organization for LGBTQ+ people, their families, and allies. Formerly known as "Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays," the organization's name is now simply PFLAG to reflect its inclusive work that supports all sexual orientations and gender identities. It offers resources, support groups, and advocates for equality through its extensive network of local chapters.

#### VISION

An equitable, inclusive world where every LGBTQ+ person is safe, celebrated, empowered, and loved.

### 2025 FFBC

# Scholar Updates



**GYASILYN PURDY**

English Valleys High School

College has been going well for me; I have been keeping myself quite busy between classes and clubs! I recently declared my major, I'm going for a double in psychology and philosophy. I have finally been able to join a GSA now that I'm in college, which has opened so many doors for me. I'm looking forward to the Spring semester and I cannot believe how fast this year is going so far. Again, thank you so much for this scholarship opportunity! I was able to get all of my required books for the first semester as well as pay for my parking pass and a portion of my tuition because of the First Friday Breakfast Club.



**ZACH STRUTH**

Interstate 35 High School

College has been going wonderful so far! I've been enjoying my classes greatly, and I love the campus. I actually have made good friends with Landon Stanley, another recipient of this scholarship; we happen to live right down the hall from each other! Receiving this scholarship has reduced so much stress around paying for this year's tuition, and I am eternally grateful for that and the new friend I have made through it!



**TOBI PINEGAR**

Lynnville-Sully High School

I'm doing really well at school, I have just about wrapped up my first marching band season here at Illinois State University. I've also been able to get involved with the Gamma Phi Circus here on campus as a member of their stage crew. I'm also weighing potential internships for next semester. Lots of exciting stuff.







## Batman: Mask of the Phantasm

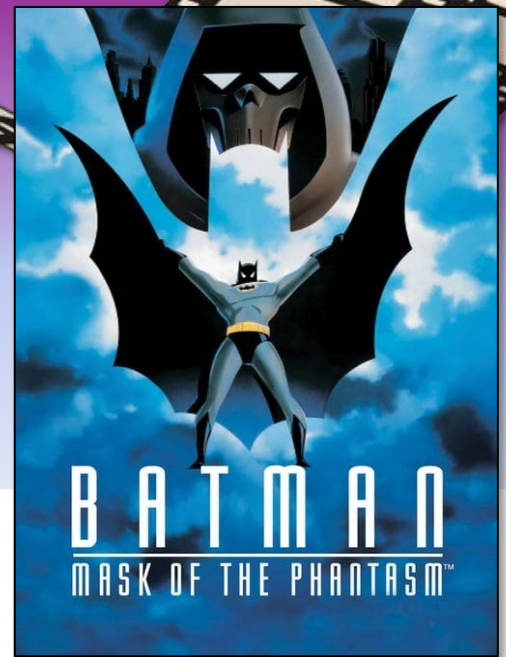
A Retro Movie Review by Mark Turnage

As a fan, friends sometimes ask me, “Mark, what’s your favorite Batman film?” When I point them to Eric Radomski and Bruce Timm’s *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm*, their response is typically a skeptical, “—but why an animated movie?” December 25th marks the 30th anniversary of *Mask of the Phantasm*, originally released in theaters Christmas 1993. Featuring the voice talents of the Emmy-Award winning *Batman: The Animated Series*, the film’s adult themes, multilayered mystery, overt noir tone, and vulnerable portrayal of the Dark Knight distinguish this Batman movie most from its contemporaries.

While Batman (an iconic Kevin Conroy) busts a Gotham City counterfeiting operation, mobster Chuckie Sol is menaced by a suspect dressed like the Grim Reaper -- The Phantasm --culminating in Sol’s vehicle plunging from a parking garage into an adjacent building, and Batman being spotted at the murder scene. After a couple unpleasant social encounters at his own house party that evening, Bruce Wayne is informed that his ex-fiancée Andrea Beaumont (Dana Delaney) is returning to Gotham after a decade -- whose chemistry and contentment nearly caused Bruce to abandon his mission as Batman before it even began. When a second mobster is murdered in Gotham Cemetery, witnesses again mistake the caped figure for Batman, and the GCPD quickly assembles a heavily armed task force to hunt down a vigilante who they believe has turned lethal.

*Phantasm* leans into the Caped Crusader’s film noir roots -- lost loves,

rumination on past choices, and broken dreams are recurring themes in this story, as well as perspectives from both sides of the law. Central to the story is a past relationship of Bruce Wayne’s and how formative it was in his journey to becoming Batman. But rather than coming across as tacked-on history, *Phantasm* invests not only emotional depth in younger Bruce’s desperation for happiness and in his tough, flirty ex-fiancée Andrea Beaumont, but manages to craft a a three-layer mystery involving a mob serial killer, the return of an old flame into Bruce’s life, and the involvement of the Joker (a wicked Mark Hamill), who becomes his own perverse “detective” in one of the most brilliant subversions of the character. The film uses the animated series’ style of “Dark Deco” to illustrate Gotham City with shadowy geometric landscapes, with in-universe technology that’s both present-day yet wildly reminiscent of the 40s era Batman originated from. This can be off-putting to some who are used to the complexity of modern computer animation, and there are a couple hand-drawn action sequences that noticeably suffer from choppy cel animation, but the strength of the film’s storytelling is enough to overlook them. The movie does use flashbacks frequently for narrative exposition, yet it doesn’t slow down the pace -- *Phantasm* is my favorite inversion of the “three hour superhero movie” trend, clocking in at a brisk one hour and fifteen minutes. Shirley Walker’s operatic score elevates this Batman story to epic proportions.



Yet arguably what makes this a definitive Batman portrayal is how it portrays Bruce trying to bargain with “the mission” vs. his own happiness. In one pivotal scene, a distraught Bruce pleads at his parents’ headstone, begging how he “needs it to be different now,” offering to fund the city with his fortune and abandon the mission of Batman because he “never expected to be happy.” It’s a wrenching scene that speaks volumes to how Bruce acknowledges Batman as a dauntingly painful but self-imposed burden. We see how this Batman was born: not just out of grief or vengeance, but also from heartbreak.

*Batman: Mask of the Phantasm* is an ideal film for those who want more depth from their superheroes, nearly two decades before its own genre became mainstream. See it streaming on MAX.





# LGBTQ+ Philanthropy



Which organizations will you financially support in 2026?

<p>First Friday Breakfast Club</p> <p><a href="http://ffbc-iowa.org">ffbc-iowa.org</a></p>	<p>Pride Sports League</p> <p><a href="http://pridesportsleague.org">pridesportsleague.org</a></p>	<p>Human Rights Campaign</p> <p><a href="http://hrc.org">hrc.org</a></p>	<p>Lavender Legal Center</p> <p><a href="http://lavenderlegalcenter.org">lavenderlegalcenter.org</a></p>	<p>Capital Bears</p> <p><a href="http://capitalbears.org">capitalbears.org</a></p>
<p>ACLU of Iowa</p> <p><a href="http://aclu-ia.org">aclu-ia.org</a></p>	<p>Imperial Court of Iowa</p> <p><a href="http://imperialcourtofiowa.org">imperialcourtofiowa.org</a></p>	<p>Rainbow Railroad</p> <p><a href="http://rainbowrailroad.org">rainbowrailroad.org</a></p>	<p>One Iowa</p> <p><a href="http://oneiowa.org">oneiowa.org</a></p>	<p>Q Exchange</p> <p><a href="https://facebook.com/theqexchangedsm">facebook.com/theqexchangedsm</a></p>
<p>The Project</p> <p><a href="http://phctheproject.org">phctheproject.org</a></p>	<p>The Trevor Project</p> <p><a href="http://thetrevorproject.org">thetrevorproject.org</a></p>		<p>Iowa LGBTQ Chamber</p> <p><a href="http://www.iowalgbtqchamber.org">www.iowalgbtqchamber.org</a></p>	<p>Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus</p> <p><a href="http://dmgmc.org">dmgmc.org</a></p>
<p>Clock, Inc.</p> <p><a href="http://clockinc.org">clockinc.org</a></p>	<p>Iowa Safe Schools</p> <p><a href="http://iowasafeschools.org">iowasafeschools.org</a></p>	<p>Iowa Trans Mutual Aid Fund</p> <p><a href="http://iowatransmutualaidfund.org">iowatransmutualaidfund.org</a></p>	<p>Prime Timers of Central Iowa</p> <p>Private Facebook Group</p>	<p>Iowa Pride Ensembles</p> <p><a href="http://www.iowaprideensembles.org">www.iowaprideensembles.org</a></p>
<p>Des Moines Pride Center</p> <p><a href="http://desmoinespridecenter.org">desmoinespridecenter.org</a></p>	<p>Des Moines Diversity Chorus</p> <p><a href="http://desmoinesdiversitychorus.org">desmoinesdiversitychorus.org</a></p>	<p>Transformations Iowa</p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/transformationsiowa">www.facebook.com/transformationsiowa</a></p>	<p>Common Love</p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/monlovedsm">www.facebook.com/monlovedsm</a></p>	<p>Capital City Pride</p> <p><a href="http://capitalcitypride.org">capitalcitypride.org</a></p>





## Board of Directors

Jim Flansburg	Deb Madison-Levi
Rachel Gulick	Wade Petersen
Ken Hanson	Joe Raetz
Brad Holland	Beverly Smith
Byron Huff	David Wilfahrt
Scott Kuknyo	Phil Williams

Jonathan Wilson (Emeritus)

Contact Us: [info@ffbcia.org](mailto:info@ffbcia.org)

## Officers

**Byron Huff**  
President

**Ken Hanson**  
Vice President

**Joe Raetz**  
Secretary

**David Wilfahrt**  
Treasurer



## Newsletter & Website Editor

**Wade Petersen**

[wadepetersen@gmail.com](mailto:wadepetersen@gmail.com)



## Publication



©2026  
FFBC Board  
of Directors

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

# The McCoy Report



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

With Taylor Van De Krol



2025 in Polk County  
Wrapped & Ready for 2026



- ✓ Checked the list twice & reduced your property tax levy by 10 cents for all county residents - the first time in 25 years.
- ✓ Kicked off Polk County's first Strategic Plan in 30+ years - because even counties need New Year's resolutions.
- ✓ Made government transparency easier than finding holiday wrapping paper in July by posting all Board agenda materials online.
- ✓ Designed a Polk County Economic Development Strategy - showcasing why this is a place to live, work, start a business, and raise a family - with a future as bright as a string of holiday lights. 
- ✓ Expanded county grant programs to better serve communities in every direction - north, south, east, and west - not just the North Pole. 



Wishing you and yours a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year! -Polk County Supervisor Matt McCoy (Santa)

**"It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future."**

• Yogi Berra

