



First Friday News & Views

IOWA'S LGBTQ+ NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST FRIDAY BREAKFAST CLUB



October 2026 | Volume 31 | Issue 10

Next Meeting

**Friday,
October 2
7:00 AM**



Location

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



Speaker

**Mazie Stilwell
Executive Director
of Progress
Iowa**



Website

ffbc Iowa.org



Building A Progressive Voice in the Hawkeye State

by Byron Huff, Board President

I hope that you can join us on Friday, October 2, to hear **Mazie Stilwell**, Executive Director of Progress Iowa. In Iowa's often sharply divided political landscape, [Progress Iowa](#) has carved out a role that goes beyond traditional lobbying. Founded in 2012, the Des Moines-based organization describes itself as an advocacy organization and the state's progressive communications hub, combining research, public education, grassroots organizing, and media work to promote progressive policies. Its central idea is relatively straightforward: give Iowans the information, communications tools, and organizing support to speak for themselves on issues affecting their communities. Today, Progress Iowa says its statewide network includes more than 100,000 people, making it one of the largest progressive online communities in the state.

Progress Iowa does not operate primarily as a conventional think tank. Much of its work involves translating policy issues into language that ordinary Iowans can understand and use. The organization conducts polling, social-media analysis, and media tracking to develop what it calls "winning messages." It then distributes research and message guides to activists, community organizations, and other progressive advocates. Progress Iowa's publicly available research library includes materials on issues ranging from reproductive rights and public education to economic policy, health care, and Project 2025.

One of Progress Iowa's recurring strategies has been to make the voices of individual Iowans part of public-policy debates. In 2023, it launched [IowaVoices.org](#), a project designed to help Iowans tell their personal stories about how government policies affect their lives. The organization's approach is deliberate. Rather than having every public statement come from Progress Iowa itself, it seeks to help teachers, workers, retirees, parents, small-business owners, and other residents communicate their own experiences.

Progress Iowa has also invested heavily in organizing outside the Des Moines political establishment. The organization has developed training programs for activists and grassroots groups and has specifically worked to expand organizing in rural Iowa. Rather than relying solely on paid advertising, it tries to make policy debates part of Iowa's broader news conversation. That can include news conferences, letters to the editor, social-media campaigns, public events, research releases, and highly visible demonstrations.

More recently, the organization has used public events and communications campaigns to pressure elected officials over issues including healthcare, nutrition assistance, reproductive rights, and economic policy. For example, in 2025 it helped organize an event outside Congressman Zach Nunn's Des Moines office involving constituents and advocacy organizations concerned about proposed Medicaid and SNAP reductions.

These campaigns are advocacy activities, not independent assessments of whether particular policies succeeded or failed. Progress Iowa openly identifies itself as a progressive organization, and its communications reflect those policy priorities.



[continued on page 2]



Progress Iowa operates in a state whose political environment has changed considerably. Its response has been to build a permanent communications and organizing infrastructure rather than concentrate exclusively on election years. The organization describes its work as year-round advocacy, with campaigns continuing between elections and legislative sessions. That approach has allowed it to remain involved in debates over public schools, workers' rights, reproductive freedom, health care, economic policy, voting, and other issues.

In 2026, Progress Iowa continues to organize digital campaigns, train advocates, conduct research, and use traditional and social media to draw attention to policy disputes. The organization's impact is best understood not simply by counting legislation it helped to pass, but by looking at the infrastructure it has created for progressive advocacy.

Perhaps most significantly, Progress Iowa has helped professionalize progressive communications in a state where political campaigns and advocacy groups increasingly compete for attention across television, newspapers, social media, and digital platforms.

Its success is therefore not limited to any single campaign. Its larger accomplishment has been building a durable statewide network designed to give progressive Iowans a coordinated voice in the state's political conversation. That is the core of Progress Iowa's mission: research the issues, develop the message, train people to communicate it, and give Iowans the tools to advocate for the policies and communities they believe in.

**We are not ruined by our fractures,
only rearranged. Join us at FFBC and
let morning break you into light.**



Briefs & Shorts



We are grateful to FFBC Board Member **Beverly Smith** for introducing our September speaker, **Jackie Blount**. Jackie is an educator/author who talked about the history of sexuality and gender in schools. 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 **November newsletter** will be **October 26**. 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.



October Speaker



Mazie Stilwell



Mazie Stilwell is the Executive Director of Progress Iowa, a progressive advocacy organization and Iowa's communications hub dedicated to advancing progressive values and policies across the state. A proud, lifelong Iowan, she brings nearly 15 years of experience in strategic communications, public affairs, and advocacy.

Prior to her leadership at Progress Iowa, Mazie served as Director of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood in Iowa, where she successfully led advocacy efforts across Iowa, building coalitions, developing public policy strategies, and amplifying the voices of reproductive rights advocates.

Mazie holds a Master of Arts in Communication with a focus in Public Affairs and Advocacy from Drake University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from the University of Iowa. She lives in Des Moines with her husband and two kids.

Thank You

From 2026
FFBC Scholar
Remy Holladay



Thank you so much for awarding me the First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship. Your support for the queer youth of today is admirable, and it is an honor for me to be among those that have been awarded this scholarship.

I went to a rural school in Southeast Iowa, one literally surrounded by cornfields on all sides. I learned very early on the injustices that existed around me. I always found it to be upsetting how some people seemed to matter more than others. Some people got listened to more just because of what they were. I was never one of those people. Instead of going to silence, I made my voice heard whether they wanted to hear me or not. I want to do this very thing for others. This is why I am going to Loras College, majoring in sociology, but I will be participating in the accelerated doctorate of law program. Law has been important to me since fifth grade mock trial, but became integral to me after our middle school team went to state when I was in 8th grade. Since that first time I participated in 5th grade, I have been set on becoming a lawyer. I will not fail in this endeavor. The scholarship that you have awarded me will help lessen the financial strain on me, and will help me focus more on my academics.

As a recipient of the FFBC Scholarship, I promise to be wise in how I spend the funds provided to me. It is such an honor to be chosen by such brilliant and outstanding people in our society in a time where it gets harder and harder to stand up and announce who you are. With your investment in me, I will be able to do what I have always dreamed of and speak up for the little guy. Not just in a classroom or in the grocery store, but in the courts. I want to be a person queer youth can look up to someday, and you have provided me the tools to do so. Thank you for trusting me with our future.



NATIONAL
COMING
OUT DAY

11 OCTOBER

"October is the
treasure of the year,
and all the months pay
bounty to her store."



- Paul Laurence Dunbar



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



November 6:

Deidre DeJear

President/CEO Oakridge
Neighborhood

December 4:

Nate Nims

Pastor, Walnut Hills
United Methodist Church

PRIDE STORYTELLERS

TRUE STORIES, TRUE SELVES

Join Capital City Pride for an evening of authentic LGBTQ+ storytelling, featuring local voices sharing personal stories of identity, resilience, connection, and living openly.

Thursday, Oct. 15, 6:30 p.m. | The Temple Theatre

CAPITAL
CITY PRIDE

SUPPORTED BY

PAIRIE MEADOWS



**"Once you choose
hope, anything
is possible."**

* Christopher Reeve

PRIDE NIGHT

PRESENTING SPONSORS



IT'S TIME TO GET... HEATED

SATURDAY, OCT. 24
CASEY'S CENTER
GAME 6 PM



Join us at Iowa Wild's annual **Pride Night** game! The puck will drop at 6:00 p.m. at the Casey Center, where we'll be celebrating diversity, inclusion, and the LGBTQ+ community!

CCP will be hosting a Pride meet-up between the first and second periods in The Fort, located on the south side of the Suite Level of Casey's Center. Please come and enjoy craft cocktails, local beer, and get a free Capital City Pride "GO WILD" beanie.

FFBC has a special discount ticket rate of just \$20! Use the link below to buy your tickets, and as a bonus, *the Iowa Wild will donate \$5 of your ticket purchase to First Friday Breakfast Club.*

PURCHASE TICKETS

30 Years of Feature Writers

**Jonathan Wilson**

Jonathan is the founding father of FFBC. He has written articles in every FFBC newsletter for over 30 years. Many of Jonathan's articles have focused on the political aspects of our state and country (with a lens toward gay rights). He fearlessly takes on any issue to share his insights, making the local LGBTQ+ community so thankful.

**Steve Person**

Steve contributed to the newsletter from the very beginning. He is most known for his book reviews that he wrote until August of 2024. Over the other 28 years of writing for FFBC, he has shared commentaries, opinion pieces, and provided content ("My M.O." Monthly Observations) that have been essential to the success of our organization.

Other Significant Newsletter Contributors Over the Years

John Schmacker
Randy Jadele
Brian Looker
Paul Sadler
Bruce McCabe

Melvin Wilk
Paul Dyer
Michael-jon Pease
Randy Happel
Eric Burmeister

Ed Weiss
Martin Wingfield
Tony E. Hansen
Rick Miller
Fred Mount

Larry Schlatter
John Tompkins
Jim Flansburg
James Nimmo
Rick Davis

Bruce Sanders Lehnertz
Jay Thompson
Friedhelm Brinkhaus
Michael Thompson
Allen Vander Linden

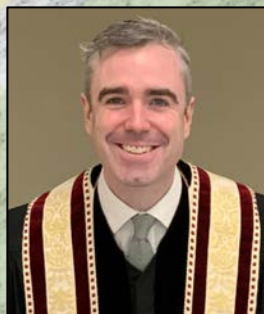
Ryan Weidner
Ryan Crane
Tim Schreck
Bill Brown
David Cotton

**Gary Kaufman**

Gary wrote music, theater, and movie reviews from August 2004 to 2016. Some reviews focused on his visits, such as the Lincoln Presidential Library.

**Bruce Carr**

Bruce Carr has written a variety of newsletter articles, most notably writing the monthly FFBC speaker profiles from September 2005 until February 2021.

**Rev. Jonathan Page**

Jonathan was a columnist ("From the Pastor's Pen") from February 2012 to September 2014. He regularly wrote about God's love & acceptance of LGBTQ+ people.

**Matt McCoy**

Whether as a State Senator or as a Polk County Supervisor, Matt has provided important articles on community issues from September 2012 to present.

**Gary Moore**

Gary has helped in many ways. We are so thankful for his photos! He took over writing the speaker summary articles in May of 2021 and continues as our current writer.

**Jordan Duesenberg**

Jordan wrote on music, media, and cultural topics as they relate to LGBTQ experience. His articles ran from December 2016 to December 2020.

**Brian Carlson**

Brian shared unique recipes from January 2022 to April 2022. In previous years, he also contributed articles and commentaries on various LGBTQ issues.

**Wade Petersen**

Wade became newsletter editor in September 2017. He has contributed a variety of articles, which includes a travel series and also this series of 30th anniversary features.

**Mark Turnage**

Mark has written movie reviews since July 2017. Mark graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with an emphasis on Film Studies and Creative Writing.

**Byron Huff**

When Byron became the President of FFBC in March of 2021, he began his regular duties as the featured "front page" writer for FFBC. His articles will continue.

Guardrails

by Jonathan Wilson

Imagine with me if we were to elect a mob boss to the U.S. presidency. A mob boss who, by definition, insists upon one-way loyalty to him, initiates serious consequences for anyone who opposes or criticizes him, and has little regard for the law, including the criminal law or violations of the Constitution. A mob boss is interested in pretty much two things: lining his own pockets and keeping his subordinates in line. Period. Drop mic.

Now, try to identify anything that would reliably be different from things as they are with tRump as president. I have genuinely tried and haven't been able to come up with anything. In fact, things are worse. Our mob boss president has the power of the pardon. To keep his subordinates in line, he need not just rely on intimidation, they know that he also can pardon them for crimes committed at his direction.

Next, try to imagine with me if we were to elect a Russian "asset" to the U.S. presidency. Again, try to identify anything that would reliably be different from things as they have been with tRump as president. Let's just say that I doubt a NON-asset's son would receive a wedding gift of hundreds of thousands of dollars from a Russian oligarch who is part of Putin's inner circle. Just sayin'. And that's not the least of it.

Okay, now imagine with me if we were to elect a clown to the U.S. presidency. You know, the guys who wear make-up all the time and try to make people laugh. With tRump, we have a clown who actually thinks that because his sycophant subordinates laugh, he said something clever or funny. Neither is usually the case.

And that brings me to guardrails. I'll have to give it to



First Friday Breakfast Club
Founder **Jonathan Wilson**

tRump; he appears to have learned from his first term when he was surrounded by bright, experienced people who helped keep him on track. The guardrails tended to be more internal to the first tRump administration. Not so with the second administration. In his second term, our country – our democracy – has had to turn to other institutions for guardrails.

Even diehard tRump supporters would have to admit, I think, that the Republican-controlled Congress has not provided much pushback over tRump's worst instincts. Tearing stuff down left and right, renaming things that didn't need a new name, initiating a trade war with our allies, and starting a shooting war of choice that he says is "small potatoes" (perhaps not for those who have died, their families, and me, for one).

That leaves us with the courts. The problem there is that people can commit crimes and violate the Constitution lots faster than the courts can keep up; courts overseen by a Supreme Court tilted by tRump appointees who were confirmed by a partisan, mere majority in the Senate.

There are diehard optimists who say that our democracy is at risk. I say it is already lost, and the question is only whether or not we will prove capable collectively of reclaiming it.

DES MOINES
GAY MEN'S
CHORUS

A BOOZY CABARET BRUNCH

HOTCAKES 'N Sausage

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

Hot breakfast. Hotter performances.

HOSTED BY THE
LGBTQ NON-PROFIT
ROUNDTABLE

NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY COMMUNITY PICNIC

OCTOBER 11TH
12PM-3PM

MICKLE CENTER
1620 PLEASANT ST.
DES MOINES, IA

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

This is a free community-wide celebration and picnic for National Coming Out Day. Whether you have been out for years or are still figuring things out, this is a gathering for the whole family. There will be fun games, art, food, and amazing community! Find us on the grounds of the Mickle Center at 1620 Pleasant Street. Please RSVP using the link to help the planning.

RSVP for the Picnic





National LGBTQ+ Calendar

- **October:** LGBTQ History Month
- **October 8:** International Lesbian Day
- **October 11:** National Coming Out Day
- **October 15:** National Latinx HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- **October 19:** National LGBT Center Awareness Day
- **Third Wednesday in October:** Pronouns Day
- **Third Thursday in October:** Spirit Day
- **Last week in October:** Asexual Awareness Week
- **October 26:** Intersex 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



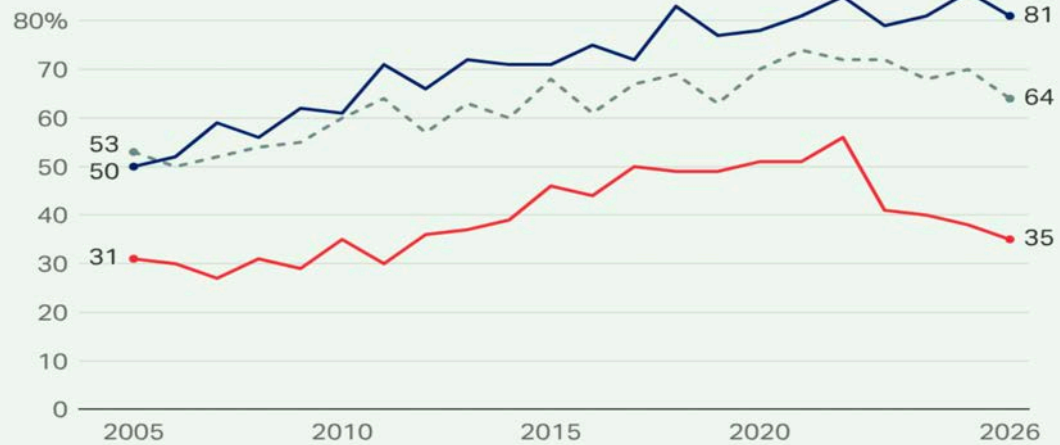
Vital Statistics

Perceived Morality of Gay or Lesbian Relations, by Party ID

Regardless of whether or not you think it should be legal, please tell me whether you personally believe that in general it is morally acceptable or morally wrong. Gay or lesbian relations

Figures are the percentage "morally acceptable"

— % Republicans - - % Independents — % Democrats



GALLUP®

zenit.org/2026/06/17/heres-what-the-new-2026-gallup-study-says-about-the-decline-in-support-for-same-sex-marriage/

Happy Halloween

from First Friday Breakfast Club



A History Lesson on Gender and Sexuality

by Gary Moore

Jackie Blount is a well-published educator, now a professor emeritus in the Department of Educational Studies at Ohio State University. She has authored three books and co-authored two others. She has been published numerous times in various professional publications since the 1990s. Her many awards include: from the American Educational Research Association, the award for Distinguished Contributions in Gender Equity in Education Research; from the American Educational Research Association, the award for Distinguished Contributions in Gender Equity in Education Research; Ohio State University's Alumni Award, Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching; Faculty Impact Award, the OSU College of Education and Human Ecology. Her wife, BeJae Fleming, is a singer-songwriter and guitarist, and they have recently returned to the central Iowa area.

Jackie grew up in the mountains of western North Carolina, just outside of Asheville, halfway up a mountain. She always had a lot of questions and observations that she did not understand, particularly when it came to her school. Like, why were almost all the teachers women, and why were almost all the superintendents men? Or in her state, where she worked at the time, all superintendents were men. She definitely was not cool with that.

While first working as a school teacher in North Carolina, the school board was informed by God-fearing Baptist students that some teachers in their county were homosexual. The board thought that this must be stopped; consequently, all teachers, male or female, were to be tested to see if they had any "homosexual ways" about them, and if so, they were to be fired. Even though she was committed and felt a calling to be an educator, she realized that she needed to choose a different livelihood. With many new questions, she applied to the doctoral program at the University of North Carolina, and fortunately, they said yes.

Since then, she has been working to put together a body of work that tries to get at the history of sexuality and gender in schools. Eventually, she got her first job at Iowa State University, where she taught for 16 years, followed by 14 years at Ohio State University. There have not been many people doing work with sexuality and gender in education because, frankly, the work can be dangerous. Not many have explored the topic since it could be seen as career-ending. There were not many sources either, and once you delve into the subject, you find it is so broad and inclusive to study. Covering the subject is very difficult, and any sources have been erased, much like what appears to be happening today.

While the book she had just finished was being put in publication, she learned there was a legislator here in Iowa who was among many who were fighting for House Bill 2121, which would have made it illegal to discuss sexuality and gender identity in the curriculum at the high school level.

Drawing on centuries of school design, hiring practices, and classroom curriculum, Jackie uncovers how seemingly neutral decisions—from the layout of restrooms to textbooks and teacher roles—have been used to enforce binary gender norms and rigid expectations around sexuality. She explores the implications for both students and educators, highlighting moments of resistance and progress. But also, the persistence of LGBTQ+ history is hard to find because people, and often journals and other documentation, pretended that gays and lesbians did not exist. Many sources that she located that referenced LGBTQ+ issues had been removed from the journals. "Homophobia has perpetuated rigid gender-identified roles in school employment, and the exclusion of LGBT history has caused harm."

It is difficult to grasp the depth of her studies that has taken several books and 30 years of research to develop in the brief time of her presentation for the First Friday Breakfast Club. I hope many will take the opportunity to explore her work further through her books.

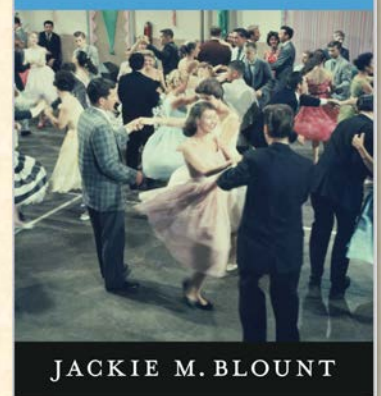


**Educator and Author
on Gender & Sexuality in Schools**

Jackie Blount

**STRAIGHTEN UP,
GIRLS AND BOYS**

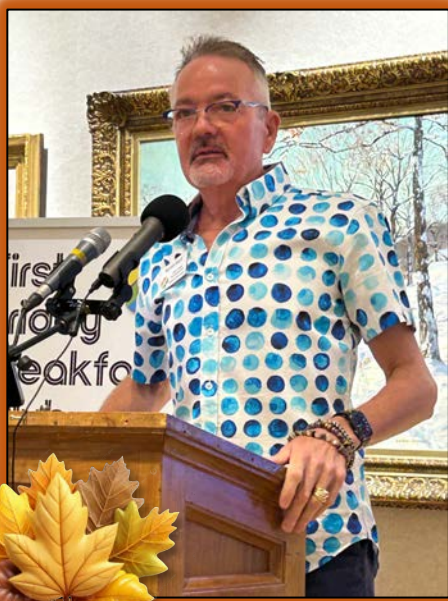
How Schools Have Shaped Sexuality and Gender



Jackie's book is available for purchase through Amazon and also available for check out from the Des Moines Pride Center's collection.



September Meeting Photo Gallery



Board President **Byron Huff** was in charge of the September meeting.



Zach Rus from Iowa Safe Schools invited people to their rebrand launch.



Beverly Smith, Board member, introduced Jackie Blount, September speaker.

FEATURE SERIES

Travels with Ken & Wade

by Wade Petersen



Mystery Weekend: Lanesboro, MN

In mid-August, I decided that I wanted to make plans to get away for our Labor Day Weekend. I first conducted an online search for places similar to Galena, Illinois, or Eureka Springs, Arkansas. The result became our “Mystery Weekend” as I chose not to reveal any of our itinerary to my husband Ken, including our destination! This seemed like a creative idea to add some fun for a mini vacation.

So, after our FFBC meeting on Friday, September 4, we loaded our car and took off. To throw Ken off track, I drove through Hampton (where I taught for 15 years) and then stopped for lunch in Charles City. After that, all he knew was that we were headed north and into Minnesota. We eventually arrived at our destination in **Lanesboro, Minnesota**.

I had never heard of Lanesboro before I discovered this town online. This beautiful little village is set against the dramatic limestone bluffs of southeast Minnesota’s “Driftless” region. I could tell that it would be a fun place to visit that accommodated tourists with all the available inns and bed and breakfast options. I booked us a cute, little room in the Root River Inn.

Once we settled into our room, we scouted out the town and its quaint shops. We had a lovely dinner at Juniper’s Restaurant with deck seating along the river. That night, I had booked tickets to the local theater company’s show “Incident at our Lady of Perpetual Help,” a hilarious play that time warped back to 1973 for a coming-of-age comedy. The play was about the wacky O’Sheas: an upstanding Irish-Catholic family in which one daughter has been tasked by her frazzled mother to teach her little sister about the birds and the bees. But when the stern parish priest overhears, “holy hell breaks loose!”



Saturday morning started with a trip to the local farmer’s market for some homemade goodies. We were then ready for our first big adventure: **tubing down the Root River**. I had never been tubing in my life, but I thought this might be the time to try it out. We rented tubes with backrests, tied our tubes together, and spent a relaxing two and half hours lazily floating. The company from whom we rented the tubes had a shuttle waiting at the end point to take us back into town. The weather cooperated as well; it was 75 degrees and overcast so we weren’t hot and baking in the September sun. I absolutely loved this and would jump at the chance to go tubing again!



Once we returned to Lanesboro, we spent more time exploring the shops. We ended our day with dinner at a local supper club called The Branding Iron in nearby Preston.

Sunday morning involved a short drive to Harmony and the **Niagara Cave**, discovered in the 1930s when a couple boys were tasked with finding three lost piglets that had fallen into the muddy cave. The tour had a mile-long hike underground that brought us nearly 200 feet beneath the sur-

face. We saw fossils, stalagmites and stalactites, and an underground waterfall!

On Sunday afternoon, Ken and I rented E-bikes to ride the scenic trails throughout the area. I’m not a bike enthusiast like Ken, so trying out these bikes with batteries that gave us an extra “boost” while riding was the perfect solution (hmm...maybe there will be a purchase in the near future?). A mandatory stop along the way was in **Whalan** at the famous **Aroma Pie Shop**. This tiny town, situated on the popular bike trail, definitely knew how to market themselves. Lines were out the door for a slice of their pie (I counted 22 different types of homemade pies available; I had the raspberry-peach crumble and Ken had berries and cream).



Our evening dinner took us to the nearby Old Barn Restaurant which was located on a resort campground outside Preston. After we checked out Monday morning, we made a quick stop at **Blossom Hill Orchard Farm** for apples and pastries.

This was a delightful “Mystery Vacation” weekend just across the border to southeast Minnesota. For never having heard of Lanesboro, we discovered a lovely little gem in Bluff Country. We definitely want to explore other options like this for weekend getaways in the future. Please let Ken and me know if you have some fun ideas for other areas that you would recommend we visit!



QUEER WRITING WORKSHOP

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



All are welcome.
Come as you are.



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



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.

Trans History

From Ancient Times to Present Day

A graphic novel by Alex L. Combs & Andrew Eackett

CHECK IT OUT

An essential introduction to trans history, from ancient times to the present day, in full-color graphic nonfiction format. Deeply researched, highly readable, and featuring a broad range of voices.



The book explains how the science of sexology and the growing acceptance of (and backlash to) gender nonconformity have helped to shape what it means to be trans today. Illustrated conversations with modern activists, scholars, and creatives highlight the breadth of current trans experiences and give readers a deeper sense of the diversity of trans people, a group numbering in the millions. Extensive source notes provide further resources.

October 18
5:00 – 10:00
\$8.00



CAPITAL CITY PRIDE

PRISM TABLETOP CLUB
LGBTQ+ GAME NIGHT

ROOK ROOM

Play with Pride & Celebrate Diversity in Gaming

CAPITAL CITY PRIDE

PRIDE BOOK CLUB

october

Someone You Can Build a Nest In
by John Wiswell
October 21, 6 p.m.
Dungeon's Gate



PRIDE BOOK CLUB

SUPPORTING SPONSOR  HOLMES MURPHY




SAVE THE DATE.

October 15th 2026
5:00-8:00 PM
NOCE JAZZ CLUB

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
 IOWA LGBTQ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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.



Resident Evil

A Movie Review by Mark Turnage

The quintessential movie monster to celebrate Halloween month: zombies! Most might remember the 2000s “Resident Evil” movies as the campy action films starring Milla Jovovich: skimpy on scares, skirts, and source material, and heavy on hotties delivering ham-fisted dialogue (Oded Fehr as Carlos, anyone?). But what do you get when a more prolific director tackles a historically silly videogame-to-movie adaptation? Zach Cregger, writer and director of the twisty modern folk-horror films “Barbarian” and “Weapons,” merges the scares and atmosphere of the “Resident Evil” videogames with the campiness of its cinematic history to create a surprisingly accessible, humorous, and scary action horror movie on the surface. Like an Umbrella Corporation complex hidden beneath a modest Midwestern city, its recurring themes of ineptitude and impulsive choice reveal a subversive satire on the perverseness of America’s “delivery gig economy.”

Enticed by double pay and motivated to support his newly pregnant girlfriend, struggling, antsy courier Bryan (Austin Abrams) agrees to a last minute, late-night delivery of a sealed medical transplant bag to snowy and remote Raccoon City. After his own panic during an encounter with an oddly-behaving accident victim prevents him from escaping by vehicle, Bryan is forced to run for his life from the countryside into a monster-infested

city to complete his delivery, using found weapons, discovered items, and his barely-together wits to survive.

Bryan’s nature as an everyday person instead of an armed-to-the-teeth badass is the biggest divergence from previous “Resident Evil” entries, and the linchpin of its hybrid humor/horror tone. After nearly 10 films featuring a hypercapable protagonist wiping the floor with zombies, it’s refreshing to see scarier, meatier stakes for its main characters. Abrams’ committed performance of Bryan’s impulsivity and weariness centers the film’s humor and mitigates its breakneck pacing, especially following intense, bloody encounters with the grotesquely transformed former citizens of Raccoon City. The creature and set designs are both original and inspired from the nearly 30-year lore of Resident Evil videogames, but the games also have more rich source material to mine here, especially in terms of monsters. Some of the movie’s most thrilling sequences are direct homages to similar in-game events, and Bryan shares space with several game-accurate Resident Evil items. But these items’ inclusion here goes a step beyond fan service and into its themes of ineptitude and impulsivity based on how Bryan *fails*, *ignores*, or *misappropriates* them—like a veteran watching a newbie play their game for the first time and miss all the save points.



Far from being cunning, conspiratorial, or clad in sunglasses, the characters of Umbrella Corp (mostly) exhibit the same ineptitude and impulsivity as Bryan, and like Bryan, there is no management or organizational approach. Notably, despite everything Bryan suffers through, the consistent aloof expectation of delivery over well-being and Bryan’s reluctant resolve to complete it and collect his earnings are still there. It’s the same dynamic and empathic distance that could exist between a delivery app’s customer and consumer, including lack of clear oversight and murky physical safety—zombie invasion or not. But what makes “Resident Evil” the most entertaining is how its audience empathizes with the reactions of its survivor, and how their humor adds more life to Raccoon City.

For a gory, fresh take on zombie catastrophe true to its videogame inspiration, see “Resident Evil” in theaters now.



LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY CALENDAR

October 2026

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

 At-A- Glance				1 Des Moines Pride Center: Queer Through the Years: Queer Trivia Night Rook Room 6:00 – 8:00 PM	2 First Friday Breakfast Club Hoyt Sherman Place 7:00 – 8:15 AM Mainframe Studios First Friday 900 Keo Way 5:00 – 8:00 PM Theme: STEAM	3 DMGMC Hotcakes ‘n Sausage: A Boozy Cabaret Brunch Fundraiser The Garden Two Shows: 10:00 AM 1:00 PM
4 DMGMC Showtunes Sunday The Garden 2:00 – 6:00 PM DM Pride Center Library Access 2:00 – 5:00 PM Mickle Center	5 DMGMC Rehearsal Walnut Hills UMC 6:30 – 9:00 PM	6 First Friday Breakfast Club Board Meeting Plymouth Room 306 6:30 PM	7 Rainbow Bowling League Merle Hay Mall 7:00 PM	8 DM Art Center LGBTQIA+ Art Gathering 6:00 – 8:00 PM International Lesbian Day	9 Iowa Safe Schools Spirit Awards Gala The Tea Room 6:00 – 9:00 PM	10 Ames Pridefest 5th St. and Douglas 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM Decorah Pride Parade 1:00 PM Festival: 1:30 PM Drag Show: 7:30 Dance Party: 9:00
National Coming Out Day11 Coming Out Day Community Picnic: Mickle Ctr 12:00 – 3:00 PM DM Pride Center Library Access 2:00 – 5:00 PM Mickle Center	12 DMGMC Rehearsal Walnut Hills UMC 6:30 – 9:00 PM	13	14 Rainbow Bowling League Merle Hay Mall 7:00 PM	15 CCP Pride Storytellers: Temple Theater 6:30 PM Latinx HIV/AIDS Awareness Day LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce Pitch with Pride Noce / 5:00 - 8:00	16	17
DM Pride Center Library Access 2 – 5 PM Mickle Center Sports League Volleyball Begins Prism Tabletop Club: LGBTQ+ Game Night Rook Room 5:00 – 10:00 PM18	19 National LGBTQ Center Awareness Day DMGMC Rehearsal Walnut Hills UMC 6:30 – 9:00 PM	20 Capital City Pride Board Meeting 6:00 – 7:00 PM	21 Capital City Pride Book Club 6:00 PM Dungeon’s Gate Pronouns Day Rainbow Bowling League Merle Hay Mall 7:00 PM	22 DM Art Center Art For Every Body 5:30 – 7:00 Feed Des Moines LGBTQ+ Dinner St. John’s Lutheran 5:00 – 8:00 PM	23	24 Pride Sports League: Soccer Cowles Montessori 10:00 – 11:30 AM Iowa Wild Hockey Pride Night Casey’s Ctr 6:00 PM
Queer Art Now! Exhibition (Pride Center)						
25 DM Pride Center Library Access 2:00 – 5:00 PM Mickle Center DM Pride Center Queer Writing Workshop Mickle Center 2:00 – 4:00 PM	26 National Intersex Awareness Day Asexual Awareness Week DMGMC Rehearsal Walnut Hills UMC 6:30 – 9:00 PM	27	28 DSM Pride Center & Drake Rainbow Union: LGBTQ+ Historical Pop-Up Drake University 6:00 – 8:00 PM Rainbow Bowling League: Merle Hay 7:00 PM	29	30	31 



Open Call for Queer /& Trans* Artists

QUEER ART NOW!

an exhibition, event series, and call to action
at the Des Moines Pride Center
featuring artworks by queer /& trans* artists
living or working in Iowa

Submissions due: Oct 1

Event Dates: Oct 22-24

Curated by
**VAN BURGO
COLLECTIVE**

Submit Your
Work Here:



Autumn Offering

I shall be Autumn
this Halloween,
with leaf draped skirt,
and folds of
boysenberry velvet wine
flowing to the ground.

Brown stained face,
eyes rimmed in gold,
nails dripping sunset,
a crown of twigs
to cover my head.

You may gather from me
the spring of my youth,
my summer of maturity,
and hold onto, with me,
the solace of these days
of remembering
before the frost.

Judith A. Lawrence



QUEER THROUGH THE YEARS

programming provided by the
Des Moines Pride Center

Queer Trivia Night

Thursday,

October 1

6:00 – 8:00 PM

The Rook Room



Celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month with Queer Trivia Night!

Answer crafted questions focused on queer
history! Winners each round will win a prize!



FALL

[INDOOR]

VOLLEYBALL

SUNDAYS | OCT 18 - DEC 6 | 3-9 PM

\$35
per person



PRIDE
SPORTS LEAGUE
OF CENTRAL IOWA

REICHARDT COMMUNITY
RECREATION CENTER
915 COLLEGE AVE
DES MOINES, IA 50314

NEW
LOCATION

SOCIAL, INTERMEDIATE, & ADVANCED DIVISIONS
[FREE AGENTS AND TEAMS WELCOME]
REGISTER AT LINK IN BIO | SWIPE FOR SIGNUP DETAILS



The McCoy Report



by Supervisor Matt McCoy
Polk County 1st District
With Taylor Van De Krol



Historic Polk County, Prairie Meadows Lease Nets \$500 Million Over 25 Years



Polk County and Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino have each approved a historic long-term lease agreement that provides greater financial certainty, protects taxpayers, and preserves public ownership of the property. The agreement could extend for up to 25 years and represents more than half a billion dollars in potential lease revenue to Polk County, while supporting an additional \$200 million to \$300 million in private investment in the county-owned property.

The agreement transitions the relationship to a more traditional landlord-tenant structure and gives the Polk County a predictable revenue stream while shifting property taxes and other significant property-related obligations away from taxpayers. Polk County will retain ownership of the property while Prairie Meadows receives the long-term stability needed to continue investing in the facility.

The lease is a 15-year triple-net lease that replaces the previous percentage-rent structure with fixed scheduled rent. Base rent increases by 6% every five years during the initial term.

The agreement also includes two optional five-year renewal periods, creating the potential for a 25-year relationship. Over the potential life of the agreement, lease revenue to Polk County is expected to exceed half a billion dollars, providing long-term financial stability while preserving County ownership of the property.

"We are pleased to continue our relationship with Prairie Meadows and to move forward with a secure revenue stream that will support the needs of our growing communities," said Polk County Supervisor Matt McCoy.

LGBTQ COMMUNITY DINNER



FEED DES MOINES

4TH THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH 5-8PM

POTLUCK COMMUNITY GAMES

St Johns Lutheran Church For more information contact:
600 6th Ave, Des Moines, IA, 50309 Email: feeddesmoines@gmail.com



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



iowatransmutualaidfund.org



Board of Directors

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

Jonathan Wilson (Emeritus)

Contact Us: info@ffbcia.org

Officers

Byron Huff

President

Ken Hanson

Vice President

Joe Raetz

Secretary



Newsletter & Website Editor

Wade Petersen

wadepetersen@gmail.com



Publication



©2026

**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



Loving Thy Neighbor

by Joe Raetz



The recent attacks on members of the trans community make me reflect on this story. I grew up in a small town in northeast Missouri. My father owned a Sears catalog store. For those who don't know what that is, it was Amazon before there was Amazon. It was a small storefront with appliances on the floor and a desk with multiple catalogs. Customers would stand on one side of the desk and employees on the other. The customer would tell you what catalog and page number the item was on and what they wanted to order. We would place their order, and it would usually arrive in three or four days. Once the items arrived, we would call to let them know that their order was ready to pick up.

Since we knew most customers, we would recognize them as they arrived in the store. One customer was an elderly black man, let's call him "James Bond." I knew him from previous encounters at the store and around town. One day I called to let him know that his orders had arrived. He thanked me and said he would be in later to pick them up. Later that afternoon, an elderly black lady arrived to pick up an order. I didn't recognize her and asked whose name the order was under. She replied, "James Bond." I thanked her and retrieved the items. She paid and was on her way. Nothing out of the ordinary. My father was in the office that had a window to the counter. After James Bond left, he stepped out and asked how the transaction went. I replied that it was fine, James Bond's wife picked up the order and was on her way. He said that there is something I should know about James Bond's wife. James Bond and James Bond's wife were one and the same. James Bond liked to dress in women's clothing. So, the next time an order for James Bond was ready and a woman came to pick it up, know that it would be James Bond; that way I wouldn't need to ask for a name. I asked if everyone in town knew about this. He said most people did and didn't care. Dad said there were people at church who thought that he should not be doing business with them. Dad's response was that he was a businessperson supporting his family and, as long as no laws were broken and no one was being hurt, he would continue to do business with all. He told me to treat this customer as I would treat any other customer. I continued to work at the store through college breaks, and James Bond continued to place orders. I can't say for sure, but I'd like to think they felt safe once they realized I knew their "secret" and continued to treat them with the same dignity and respect as I would anyone else. James Bond has long since passed, and I like to think they and my father taught me to take time and not judge so quickly, to get to know the person and to treat all with dignity. We are all trying to get through life as best we can, and everyone's journey is different.

My father was a deacon in the Southern Baptist church that our family attended. He was a deeply religious man, but he was also a capitalist who recognized James Bond's money was as green as any other customer's. I'd like to believe that, despite pressure from the church, he chose to follow the commandment to "love thy neighbor."

