



THE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OF THE

FIRST FRIDAY

BREAKFAST CLUB, INC.

First Friday News & Views

SEPTEMBER

2008

VOLUME

13

ISSUE

9

The Mendacity of Marriage Naysayers

by Jonathan Wilson

INSIDE

Speaker Review by Bruce Carr	2
“Call Me Iowa!” by Rick Davis	2
Hellboy II: The Golden Army — Movie Review by Gary Kaufman	3
From the Editor	4

CALENDAR

▼ The next FFBC meeting is 7:00 A.M., Friday, September 5, 2008 at Hoyt Sherman Place.

Our guest speaker will be Libby Nelson, general counsel to Kemin Industries.

▼ R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, September 3 to JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com or 288-2500 by phone.

The progress toward legalization of same-gender marriage is on track and the task is virtually accomplished. Basic non-discrimination laws are sweeping the nation. Marriage has been legalized in two states, and civil unions have been approved elsewhere. Iowa, where one such lawful marriage has already occurred, is poised to approve marriage for everyone as well. We’re now just engaged in mopping things up and marginalizing the last holdouts. They’re fast going the way of members of the flat earth society and the Klu Klux Klan, and same-gender marriage is fast becoming a non-issue.

The most recent developments, beyond legalization in Massachusetts and California, came with the California Attorney General ruling that a Constitutional amendment this fall can’t undo marriages performed until then, and with the Massachusetts legislature expanding legalization to include out-of-staters wanting to spend money on weddings there. Money talks and is heard sometimes when reason and fairness fall on deaf ears.

The point was made years ago when former Iowa Senator Mary Kramer spoke to the FFBC. She said presciently in 1997 that eventual equality, regardless of gender orientation and including marriage, would be driven by businesses and chambers of commerce all across the country. That wasn’t an argument to stop appealing to reason, logic, and fairness. She simply forecast that as interstate companies find it advantageous to transfer employees for the sake of efficiency and effective competition, it would be increasingly apparent to everyone that more uniform treatment for committed domestic relationships is a business imperative. When Principal Financial, Wellmark, or Wells Fargo Financial (a company headquartered in none other than San Francisco), and others like them, decide there’s a good business reason to transfer a capable employee across state lines, they won’t want the transfer frustrated by parochial, Neanderthal local laws recognizing marriage and divorce only between a man and a woman. How last century!

Not even the distinction between marriage and civil unions can survive the business need for interstate uniformity. Couples and their employers cannot tolerate supposed legal differences that may arise from or might be implied by those separate labels. The writing’s on the wall for all to see who are paying attention. Being written in the law books of every state will soon enough follow.

This is not to say that marriage is an objective of every committed same-gender couple any more than it is for opposite-gender couples. That has never been the point. The *right* to choose marriage and the state-granted privileges and responsibilities that accompany it has been the point, the same as the *right* to serve the country in the armed forces whether or not you ever enlist. The right to both is in our immediate future. There will doubtless be a few minor ups and downs between here and there, but the destination is on the horizon. Anyone who says otherwise is indeed mendacious.

Senator Obama recognizes the path to these changes on which we are traveling with accelerating speed. Candidate McCain does not. As an unapologetic gay American in a committed relationship, if I were a single-issue voter, this would be it for me. ▼

**Chairman of
Generation Iowa
Commission
Addresses FFBC**

by Bruce Carr



Our August speaker was Kyle Carlson, a young lawyer who currently works at Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa as a staff attorney and lobbyist. Carlson is the newly elected chair of the Generation Iowa Commission, established in August of last year in the Iowa Department of Economic Development to study—and reverse—the “brain drain” of young professionals from our fair state. He gave us a very thoughtful and enthusiastic presentation of the commission’s goals and accomplishments so far.

The Generation Iowa Commission has been collecting data to be used to develop a report due to the Governor and General Assembly by next January. The report includes findings and recommendations of the commission regarding the status of efforts to attract and retain the young adult population in the state, career opportunities and educational needs of young adults, and the movement of the young adult population between rural areas and urban areas and between Iowa and other states.

Carlson noted that young students, who flock in record numbers to Iowa colleges and universities for their training and then flock right out-of-state with that training to find attractive jobs and opportunities, cite two main concerns that prompt their choices: Iowa’s uncompetitive salaries, and a lack of jobs in the fields they’re interested in. He said that beginning salaries in Iowa lag almost 10% behind average salaries in the upper Midwest region (the half-dozen neighboring states) and almost 15% nation-wide. This is, of course, a major concern for twenty-somethings, who these days graduate with massive loads of education debt—often equivalent to a first mortgage! And the oft-cited lower cost of living here doesn’t actually figure much in the calculation because cost-of-living statistics seldom include the cost of paying off college loans.

The commission’s extensive, survey-based “Situation Analysis” and its “Iowa Best Practices: How to Recruit and Retain

Generation Iowa” are both available to download from their Web site, www.iowalifechanging.com/Generation/, and they make fascinating reading.

Kyle Carlson earned his BA in Political Science and Philosophy from Augustana College in Rock Island, and his Juris Doctor and Masters of Public Administration from Drake. He fielded a series of highly interesting questions from his audience with the savvy aplomb typical of a generation of workers Iowa can scarcely afford to lose. ▼

“It’s better to be hated for what you are than to be loved for what you’re not.” Andre Gide

Call Me Iowa!

by Rick Davis

Every couple of years I join up with a group of CPA’s, CFP’s and attorneys from all over the United States for a long weekend of conversations and workshops on financial and legal issues that non-traditional couples deal with as they plan for their future. The organization, called PridePlanners® is based in Massachusetts and naturally has a fairly high percentage of members located on the East Coast.

A few years back our meeting was held at the tip of Cape Cod in the small fishing village of Provincetown. Shortly after signing in and picking up the welcome packet, I sat in the lobby reading the agenda with my lanyard proudly displaying my name, town, and state. A couple of other members greeted me as they took a seat nearby. Without seeing their name tags but having the benefit of hearing them talk, I knew instantly they were from the Northeast. A quick glance confirmed my observation as the bold print below their names read, “Boston.” I’ve been to enough conventions to know that if I don’t list both my city and state, I spend a lot of time telling people in which state Des Moines is located.

Not to short change the duo from the big city, I must give them credit for hearing of us. Clearly, the sharper of the two had the overwhelming need to show his state facts prowess by stating, “You guys have a lot of pigs and corn.” He followed the statement with a quick nod and smile to his buddy, and then his focus turned back to me for acknowledgement of his wit and wisdom. An incredible sense of pride washed over me as I smiled and said we do have a lot of pigs and corn. “In fact, 90% of all soil in the state of Iowa is for agricultural use. The state of Iowa is 1st in the nation for production of not only pork and corn but also eggs. We also produce a high percentage of red meat and soybeans. Most people think Texas is the big red meat producer, but actually Nebraska is #1 one and Iowa is #2. We also hold the #2 position for production of soybeans, with Illinois being #1. Although we produce other livestock and crops, you are right, we have a lot of pigs and corn.”

My guess is that however you imagine the look to be on their faces (as I finished my 30 second commercial on Iowa) is in fact, how it was...somewhere between, he-was-correct and what-just-happened. Since he was correct and there was no place else to go with the agri topic, he quickly switched to “what’s it like being gay there?” It took a bit longer than 30 seconds, but I think he got the idea that it’s a pretty nice place to be, regardless of gender orientation. At the time of this conversation, Massachusetts had not yet legalized marriage for gay couples.

I didn’t want them to think that just because we feed the

(Continued on page 3)

BRIEFS & SHORTS

Be sure to RSVP for the September 5 meeting no later than September 3. E-mail JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com or call him at 288-2500. Our speaker will be Libby Nelson, general counsel to Kemin Industries.

Thanks to Ryan Weidner for his introduction of our August speaker, Kyle Carlson of Planned Parenthood of Central Iowa and the Generation Iowa Commission.

Thanks to Brown Bag Deli for wonderful catering services at our breakfast meetings. Catering can be arranged through Scott Hoffman, 440-6000.

Hellboy II: The Golden Army

Review by Gary Kaufman



What makes **Hellboy II: The Golden Army** stand above the other superhero comic book movies is the humanity of the somewhat humanoid star characters. It is their human relationships and emotions that make the audience care how the characters fare. For those who missed the first entry in the series, **Hellboy**, I recommend that it be rented before seeing **Hellboy II**. It will make it easier to figure out why there is a fishboy character, among others. A quick summary: Hellboy (Ron Pearlman) was born in another world but was transported into this world when a crazy Nazi opened up a portal between the worlds during WW II. The creature is found and adopted by the U. S. Army and given the name Hellboy because of his red skin and pointed red tail. He eventually becomes part of the Bureau of Paranormal Research and Defense where he is teamed with Abraham Sapiens, a fish-like humanoid that seems to be a cross between the Starwars 3CPO and the Startrek Dr. Spock. Abraham can, by touching, sense what others are all about: their feelings, their emotions, etc. He is the intellectual and logical character contrasted with Hellboy who goes more with his gut. Added to this list of characters is Hellboy's girlfriend, Liz Sherman (Selma Blair), a woman who is surrounded by a blaze of fire if she gets angry, and she can direct it in a blast. The new character added in this film, Johann Krauss (Seth MacFarlane), is an ectoplasmic creature that can send his ectoplasmic matter out in smoke capable of animating inanimate objects or even dead creatures, and control their movements. Krauss is initially a by-the-book type of leader, intent on order and discipline. Eventually he evolves into a rebel along with the rest of the humanoid gang. Krauss also provides comic relief, in that his voice is very similar to that of Disney's Ludwig Von Drake, and his frustrations become quite humorous.

The underlying plot is revealed through the telling of a legend by father figure Trevor "Broom" Bruttonhom (John Hurt) to Hellboy on a Christmas Eve in the 50's. The legend is that originally humans, fairies, and all types of magical creatures lived harmoniously on the earth. The humans, having a hole in their hearts, decided that they wanted to take it all. Men clashed with elves and fairies, and many of the magic creatures were killed. The king of the magical creatures decided to create a golden army of indestructible warriors controlled by the king who wears a magical Golden Crown. When the king saw how brutal and heartless his army creatures were as they massacred the humans, he was saddened and made a peace treaty with the humans. Humans were to live in the plains and fields while the elves and magic creatures were left to the woods. The Golden Crown was broken into three pieces, one kept by the humans and the other two by the king who went off into the woods. The Golden Army was put to sleep and buried, waiting to be called to war again.

Even though humans failed to comply with the peace agreement, the current elfin King believes it is the duty of the elves to keep the pact. The King's son, Prince Nuada (Luke Gross), believes it is time to eliminate humans by going back to war. He is hellbent on

obtaining and combining the three pieces of the Golden Crown in order to raise the Golden Army and eliminate humans for good.

That's a heavy order against the gang of heroes with super-powers. The battles between the superheroes and those out to destroy humans is exciting and visually phenomenal. But, again, it's the human story that predominates. The love between partners. Their devotion to each other. Their human needs. These bring heart to this story.

It is a film about courage, about feeling different—not similar to other people—about love and trust, and also about sacrifice. That, coupled with the visual effects and brilliant creatures from the creative mind of the director, Guillermo del Toro (**Pan's Labyrinth**), makes this a movie not to miss. There are several hints in the film of where the story may go next, including the prospect that Hellboy is going to be a father! There are more dire predictions also made in the film. I am certainly one that will be willing to see where the next adventure leads. ▼

"The test of courage comes when we are in the minority. The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority." Ralph Sockman

(Continued from page 2)

world we were somehow better than they, so I finished off by telling them we really aren't all that far behind the rest of the world. In fact, I had just carpeted my kitchen and liked it so much that I decided to continue it right out the back door and down the pathway to the bathroom. They weren't sure if I was joking, so they didn't start laughing until I cracked a smile.

As the FFBC conversation turned to marketing the State of Iowa, I thought about how many people travel from all over the world to join 10,000 other bicyclists to spend a full week traversing our state and never even getting a glimpse of 801 Grand or Court Avenue. Maybe it's the air here which even down wind from a livestock farm is cleaner than some of our neighboring big cities. Or could it possibly be the hospitality? I've been stopped numerous times by visitors asking for directions and never have I responded with, "What do I look like, a f---ing road map?" I can say that I've had that response when I've stopped to ask for directions. I won't tell you where I heard it, but I will give you the initials NY, NY.

According to the US Census Bureau, there are only 6 other states that have LOWER average commute times. Annie E. Casey Foundation ranks Iowa as the 7th best state in which to raise a child. Morgan Quitno ranks Iowa 9th in the nation for the number of state parks and recreational areas.

It seems fitting that the painting entitled **American Gothic** by Grant Wood, is associated with Iowa. Grant Wood was born in Anamosa, Iowa, in 1891. After graduation from high school in Cedar Rapids at the age of 19, he promptly moved to Minneapolis. From 1920 to 1928 he made four trips to Europe, where he studied different styles of painting. He eventually returned to Iowa, and beginning in 1934, taught painting at the University of Iowa's School of Art.

If I'm looking for wide open space, I'm not moving to New York City. If I don't like mountains, it's best I avoid Colorado, and if I'm not fond of the ocean, Florida may not be the place for me. I hope as we market our state that we don't promote ourselves as something we're not, and we're never embarrassed to embrace who we are. ▼

"In matters of principle, stand like a rock; in matters of taste, swim with the current."

Thomas Jefferson

FFBC

*First Friday
News & Views
Des Moines, Iowa*

SEPTEMBER 2008

First ▼ Friday
Breakfast Club

Board of
Directors

▼ DIRECTORS ▼

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

▼ OFFICERS ▼

DAVID TEACHOUT
Treasurer
ALLEN VANDER LINDEN
Vice President
JONATHAN WILSON
Secretary & President

Newsletter:

STEVE PERSON, *Copy Editor*
DAVID TEACHOUT, *Production Editor*
THATCHER WILLIAMS, *Webmaster*

Website: www.ffbc-iowa.org

PUBLISHER, FFBC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
©2008 FIRST FRIDAY BREAKFAST CLUB, INC.

From the Editor

The Mendacity of Hope

"Mendacity. What do you know about mendacity? I could write a book on it... Mendacity. Look at all the lies I got to put up with. Pretenses. Hypocrisy. Pretending like I care for Big Mama. I haven't been able to stand that woman in forty years. Church! It bores me. But I go. And all those swindlin' lodges and social clubs and money-grabbin' auxiliaries. It's, it's got me on the number one sucker list. Boy, I've lived with mendacity. Now why can't you live with it? You've got to live with it. There's nothin' to live with but mendacity. Is there?" Big Daddy, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

As September brings the onset of the closing months of the farce known as the American presidential race, Big Daddy's words ring with renewed meaning. Mendacity rules. The Democrats settled on a candidate who ran on a slogan of *HOPE* and not much else. Mendacity. On page 134 of Senator Obama's book, **The Audacity of Hope**, the good senator states, "Public financing of campaigns or free television and radio time could drastically reduce the constant scrounging for money and the influence of special interests." He is correct in that, but who was the candidate that eschewed public financing once he had the nomination sewed up? None other than Senator Obama. Mendacity.

I try not to be a one-issue voter, but to me, the most important issue in this and any other national campaign is universal health coverage for Americans. While the Democratic platform calls for health care for all, its standard bearer's health plan does not cover everyone, even though he claims it does. Mendacity.

On that same page in his book, Senator Obama says, "I find comfort in the fact that the longer I'm in politics the less nourishing popularity becomes, that a striving for power and rank and fame seems to betray a poverty of ambition, and that I am answerable mainly to the steady gaze of my own conscience." That's a noble thought, but who is the one seeking power and fame? None other than Senator Obama. Mendacity.

As for the Republican nominee, John McCain, mendacity is nothing new. He tries to pass himself off as a maverick within his own party, but the plain fact is that he sided with the Bush-Cheney-Rove subversion of constitutional principles as much as any of his GOP colleagues. His insistence that we cannot leave Iraq until we "win" proves his impossibly naïve outlook toward the Middle East's problems. Mendacity. His so-called energy policy clings to our country's insatiable appetite for oil and calls for the despoiling of much of the natural beauty that we have left in this country. Mendacity compounded with audacity.

The worst of McCain and his cronies came through with his paid political television commercial equating Senator Obama with Britney Spears and Paris Hilton. The ad was the sign of a desperate man and diminished McCain a lot more than it did Obama. Strangely, the only person who came out of that looking like a reasonable person was Paris Hilton herself in her wildly witty response to the McCain campaign.

So now we have a dismal choice to make as to who will be the head of state and leader of the free world. As for me, I will *give* my vote to Senator Obama. It will not be a vote *for* him because he doesn't deserve it. It's just that this country cannot withstand another Republican administration. As Eleanor of Aquitaine said to Henry II in **The Lion in Winter**, "There's everything in life but hope." No mendacity there, but the rest of us have to live with it just like Big Daddy.

—Steve Person

"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."

Ralph Waldo Emerson
