



First Friday News & Views

June 2014
Volume 19
Issue 6

The Monthly Newsletter
of the First Friday
Breakfast Club, Inc.

A Definitive Word on Abortion By Jonathan Wilson

The title may seem ambitious, but it may prove feasible if we calmly begin by identifying things upon which we can agree.

Surely we can agree that, generally speaking, each of us should have control and decision-making authority over our own bodies without interference from the state, and bear responsibility for the decisions we make. I say generally speaking because we can probably also agree that such autonomy does not extend to violation of our criminal laws regarding substance abuse. If you get caught smoking crack cocaine you can, and should, expect punishment.

That autonomy is also circumscribed when our choices may infringe upon the rights of others to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If speed limits are ignored by one person who is indifferent to the danger, for example, that behavioral choice puts the rights of others at risk and should be punished.

Injuring others is not absolutely prohibited. The law allows the use of force, even deadly force, in self-defense or the defense of another. There are a variety of other times when potentially deadly force is deemed perfectly appropriate, such as in times of war or in the course of law enforcement. Apart from matters of self-defense, even homicide is graduated by degrees of culpability ranging from accidental killing of another, on the one hand, to premeditated, mass murder on the other.

So far, so good?

The debate between so-called “pro-life” folks and “pro-choice” folks is thus framed. From the former we find advocates who oppose abortion altogether, asserting that it amounts to homicide, and intentional homicide at that. Among the latter we find advocates for women’s autonomy, asserting that women should have a right to make an informed choice about abortion. Many of these are motivated by the horrific history of botched, illegal abortions that pre-dated the right to legal abortion. In a nut shell, the debate pits life against life much as the law does in the context of homicide.

Boiled down to that nutshell makes our belief about where the line is to be drawn between the woman’s rights and the rights of the unborn highly dependent upon when we believe human life begins and, therefore, when it begins to have protected rights.

Surely we can agree that there are wide-ranging opinions, often religion-based, about when “human life” begins. That range of views runs the gamut. There are those who believe that it’s wrong to do anything to prevent conception. I leave them aside because the debate is about abortion, not contraception.

Continued on p. 2

*COVER: A Definitive
Word on Abortion
by Jonathan Wilson*

Inside This Month

*May’s Speaker, Zach
Bunkers by Bruce Carr*

Briefs and Shorts

*The McCoy Report by
Sen. Matt McCoy*

My M.O.

by Steve Person

Calendar

▼ The next FFBC Meeting is 7:00am, Friday, June 6, 2014, at Hoyt Sherman Place, 15th & Woodland, Des Moines, IA

▼ RSVP by June 4 to JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com, or phone 515-288-2500

Jonathan Wilson, Continued from p. 1

The abortion debate is between those who believe human life begins at conception and those who believe it begins at some later point. The former acknowledge no right of a pregnant woman to terminate a pregnancy intentionally. The latter would afford some latitude.

Still with me? I haven't taken sides in the debate yet.

As a society we decide as a matter of law what constitutes human life -- what is human and when is a human alive or dead. We also decide when human life can be taken, and how.

Where we stand on those issues is often informed by our religious beliefs -- the faith traditions in which we were reared or that we have adopted. Among those who believe that human life begins at conception, I am most familiar with those in the Christian religious tradition. Those who claim to be Christian, however, are not of one mind on this topic and count among their number people of faith who are "pro-life" and "pro-choice." Those in the "pro-life" camp see in every conception the hand of God and, accordingly, conclude that humankind should not interfere with procreation post-conception by terminating a pregnancy. For them it's no matter whether the pregnancy was the result even of rape.

Those with religious beliefs are welcome to cling to them and can unquestioningly rehearse those beliefs at their places of worship. When they bring them into the public arena as a basis for what the law should be, however, they have some explaining to do. They need to be prepared to answer some tough but reasonable questions about their religious beliefs, something that may not be happening in their places of worship.

The fact is, according to creditable scientific research, more than 30% of all human pregnancies are terminated by spontaneous miscarriage. Simply, the early termination of pregnancy is apparently a part of God's plan. Those who see God's hand in every pregnancy have some explaining to do over those statistics.

Beyond the science, they should also read their Bibles. The Bible actually provides an answer to the question of when human life begins. In the

Genesis account of creation it is reported that God formed man from the dust of the ground, and "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; *and the man became a living being.*" Genesis 2:7 (italics added) According to the Good

Book, man became a living being when he was capable of drawing breath -- viability. More explaining to do.

Paradoxically, the much maligned Roe v. Wade decision of the United States Supreme Court drew the same line as does the Bible -- viability. Before viability, a woman can access a lawful abortion, no questions asked thanks to Roe. After viability her right to do so diminishes and eventually goes away completely.

We as a society decide matters of life and death and write those decisions into law. Many lines we draw as a society are essentially arbitrary, albeit informed by facts and common experience. We decide the voting age, the drinking age, the age of consent, the age of competence to make a contract, when a person is legally dead, and when a person is legally alive. Those who would draw those lines based on religion don't get a pass in the public arena when it comes to reason and science.

Briefs & Shorts

Be sure to RSVP for the June 6 meeting no later than June 4. Email JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com or call him at 288-2500. Our speaker will be Michael Gartner, former director of NBC News and former publisher of **The Des Moines Register**. It is also the meeting where we present our scholarship winners. They and their families will be our very special guests. You won't want to miss.



Be sure to peruse the front table for a book you might like to read. Book donations are always welcome. Thanks to Barry McGriff for coordinating the book exchange.

Consider a tax deductible gift to the FFBC scholarship fund. You can also designate FFBC as the recipient of your United Way contribution under the Donor Direct program.

Consider helping man the FFBC tent at Pride activities on June 8. Contact Chris Correy or Phil Williams to sign up for an hour between 12:00 and 6:00 or contact Jonathan and he'll pass the word to them.

Honoring Our Past: Imitation is the Highest Form of Flattery

By Bruce Carr



The FFBC guest speaker on Friday morning May 2, 2014, was Zach Bunkers, who has been for three years the chief restorer of the elaborate stenciling on the walls and ceilings of the Iowa State Capitol and elsewhere. Bunkers, who first began his employment there swinging on ropes from the dome -- 275 feet in the air -- applying 23.75-karat gold leaf, presented us a fascinating, colorfully illustrated look at Capitol rooms, only rarely seen by the public, where he works.

Bunkers's description of the intricacies of calculating patterns from partial traces uncovered under many layers of paint, of cutting stencils (by hand), of exactly matching the extraordinary variety of original colors and hues (with oil-based paint, never water), and of repairing old plaster faults, proved a revelation to the audience -- and prompted a lively Q&A session. Several of his slides came from his complete restoration of the old (1896) E.E. Warren Opera

House in Greenfield, Iowa, which had been unused (and partially roofless) since the late 1940s and was finally re-opened in spring 2012.

Pictured below is an example of Bunkers's work in the State Capitol. More pictures are available on Facebook under Z Painting Studio.



FFBC member Steve Person, who is a tour guide at the Capitol, noted in his introduction that Zach Bunkers began his art education at Iowa State University intending to become a medical illustrator -- a profession taken over by computer technology by the time he graduated. Bunkers lives in Waukee with his wife and children; the Z Painting Studio is at 3017 6th Avenue in Des Moines, and he can be reached at (515) 371-7944.



14 WAYS WE'RE STRENGTHENING IOWA IN 2014

Iowa legislators adjourned the 2014 session early this month after reaching bipartisan agreements that will have big benefits for our state. This year, we built on efforts to provide greater economic security for Iowa families by standing up for workers and investing in skills training, job creation and the best educational opportunities from preschool through college.

Here are some of our best accomplishments this year:

1. Balancing the state budget without raising taxes. Iowa is expected to have a budget surplus of about \$610 million when this fiscal year ends on June 30. We also have \$649 million in our reserve funds, the largest amount in state history.
2. Increasing the number of skilled workers with support for apprenticeships, job training and retraining.
3. Creating jobs and growing our economy by investing in efforts to strengthen and expand small businesses.
4. Investing in the arts, recreation, environment and historic preservation, which increase enjoyment for locals and draw tourists. This includes a record \$25 million for REAP, Iowa's popular Resource Enhancement and Protection program.
5. Ensuring Iowa remains a leader in renewable energy by capitalizing on our state's agricultural strengths and natural assets.
6. Freezing tuition at our state universities and keeping tuition affordable at our community colleges.
7. Recruiting and training the best teachers for our classrooms through the Teach Iowa Scholars and Teacher Leadership initiatives.
8. Strengthening literacy skills among students with assistance for those struggling with dyslexia or falling behind in learning to read.
9. Protecting vulnerable kids by helping those in the child welfare system make a smooth transition to adulthood, investing in Homeless Youth Shelters and cracking down on those who exploit children.
10. Helping working families by boosting our state's child and dependent care tax credit, expanding childcare assistance to those working and going to school, and defraying adoption-related expenses.
11. Passing key pieces of the Home Base Iowa initiative to encourage more veterans and service members to make Iowa their home.
12. Promoting public health by modernizing Iowa's infectious disease law in a way that will encourage those with HIV to seek treatment rather than living in fear of being charged with a crime.
13. Helping kids with intractable epilepsy by legalizing the use of non-intoxicating medical cannabis oil to treat life-threatening seizures, upon the recommendation of a doctor.
14. Standing up for Iowa seniors by cracking down on elder abuse and financial exploitation, and providing resources that will increase their safety and quality of life.

For a complete list of accomplishments from the 2014 session, go to www.senate.iowa.gov/democrats/2014-session-successes.

Additional information

This is a legislative update from Senator Matt McCoy, representing west part of Des Moines, portions of West Des Moines and Cumming in northwest Warren County. For newsletters, photos and further information, go to www.senate.iowa.gov/senator/mccoy.

To contact Senator McCoy during the week, call the Senate Switchboard at 515-281-3371. Otherwise he can be reached at home at 515-274-0561. E-mail him at matt.mccoy@legis.iowa.gov.

My M.O. by Steve Person

continued from P. 6

‘Bloody Mary.’

A writer of Ackroyd’s stature manifests itself not only in his vivid portrayal of historic events but also in his ability to challenge his readers to expand their vocabularies. Words I found particularly interesting in this volume: “wether”—a castrated lamb; “praemunire”—the appeal to a foreign court or authority; “contumacious”—insubordinate; “Lollards”—followers of John Wycliffe, a religious

reformer; “Anabaptist”—anyone with beliefs that might lead to subversion or anarchy; and “jakes”—a latrine.

The reign of Elizabeth I insured the establishment of the Church of England as the state religion, although Catholicism continued to divide the kingdom until the abdication of Catholic James II in 1688. The 1701 Parliamentary Act of Settlement decreed that every monarch must be Protestant.

For any student of English and European history, Ackroyd’s books are a must-read.

Ponder This

"If you have never been discriminated against, you don't know how that feels. If you have never been discriminated against, you don't know how to feel discrimination. I urge you to vote against this bill because it legalizes discrimination," Mississippi Senator Derrick Simmons.

It is our responsibility to teach others how to treat us. We either give them implicit permission to disrespect us -- and they will, or we insist upon respect and it will come. Jeffrey Campbell

Experience is the cruelest but most effective teacher; it gives us the test before it gives us the lesson. Dr. Bill Anderson



Ponder this: The NFL has drafted the first openly gay player, making 2014 a banner year.

Those favoring the proposed Keystone Pipeline running north-south across the United States would do well to take a look at the pipe line break that occurred in northeast Los Angeles, spilling over 10,000 gallons of crude oil into the community that ran knee deep in some places.

Where there's a will, I want to be in it.

The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on my list.

Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.

We never really grow up; we only learn how to act in public.

War does not determine who is right - only who is left.

FFBC

First Friday
News & Views

Des Moines, Iowa

June 2014

First Friday
Breakfast Club

In Service

Board of Directors

CHRIS CORREY
RYAN CRANE
KEN HANSON
BRAD HOLLAND
BYRON HUFF
SCOTT KLINEFELTER
RICK MILLER
GARY MOORE
MIKE SMITH
ALLEN VANDER LINDEN
PHIL WILLIAMS
JONATHAN WILSON

Officers

KENT DONALDSON, TREASURER
BYRON HUFF, VICE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN WILSON, SECRETARY & PRESIDENT

Newsletter

STEVE PERSON, EDITOR
BRUCE LEHNERTZ, PRODUCTION EDITOR
ARTHUR BRUER, WEBMASTER

WEBSITE: WWW.FFBCIOWA.ORG

PUBLISHER, FFBC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
©2014 FIRST FRIDAY BREAKFAST CLUB, INC

MADE ON A  MAC

MY M.O. (MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS)

by Steve Person

The History of England from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I: Tudors

by Peter Ackroyd

Perhaps the greatest writer of biography and history in the English language today, Peter Ackroyd concentrates his second volume of his three-volume trilogy of the 900,000-year history of England on a scant 94-year period, 1509-1603. But what an era it turned out to be! The Tudor dynasty included Henry VII (1485-1509), Henry VIII (1509-1547), Edward VI (1547-1553), Mary I (1553-1558), and Elizabeth I (1558-1603). The reign of Henry VII Ackroyd used to conclude the first volume of the trilogy.

Henry VIII ascended the throne upon the death of Henry VII, a king considered by some to be a usurper after his victory at the Battle of Bosworth Field over Richard III. The elder Henry's reign grew increasingly paranoid as the years went on, and upon his death in 1509 Henry VIII's succession to the throne was undisputed. The new king was but seventeen years old. Energetic, handsome, and young, it appeared that Henry VIII had every advantage a sovereign could want. Yet history would prove the new king to be one of the great brutes of English royal history.

Henry VIII's marriage to his sister-in-law, Katherine of Aragon, promised to be a blessed union. She had previously been wed to Henry's elder brother, Arthur, whose untimely death made Henry the heir presumptive. As the years progressed, Katherine gave birth to only one live child—a daughter named Mary.

Mary came to the throne after the greatest upheaval in English recorded history—the break with Rome during her father's reign, thus making the English sovereign head of the English Church. Even though Henry VIII died believing himself to be a devout Catholic, his policies during his reign did everything to establish the Church of England as a Protestant entity. The short reign of his sickly son, Edward VI, cemented this reality.

When Mary, a devout Catholic, came to the throne upon her brother's death and the short nine-day “reign” of Lady Jane Grey, the great granddaughter of Henry VII, the issue of the Roman Church again came to dominate. Mary's five-year tenure was violent by any measure, and according to Ackroyd, “Three months before her death the queen sent a letter of complaint to the sheriff of Hampshire; his offence was to cancel the burning of a man who had recanted at the first lick of the flame. It was thus that she earned the sobriquet of

Continued on Page 5