



# First Friday News & Views

May 2016

Volume 21

Issue 5

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

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Learning Curve*  
by Jonathan Wilson

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▼ The next FFBC Meeting is 7:00am,  
Friday, May 6, 2016, at Hoyt  
Sherman Place, 15th & Woodland,  
Des Moines, IA

▼ RSVP by May 4 to  
[JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com),  
or phone 515-288-2500

## The Unavoidable Learning Curve

By Jonathan Wilson

We've actually heard presidential candidate Trump promise that, under his leadership, we'd potentially get "bored" with winning so much and so often. Now, however, we're seeing him get the most votes in Louisiana, but fewer convention delegates.

The same in Colorado.

The same in South Carolina.

In Washington State the Trump campaign sent an email encouraging supporters to sign up as potential convention delegates; it was sent two days after the deadline for signing up.

He was dealt similar setbacks in Indiana, North Dakota, Tennessee, South Dakota, and Georgia. Comparable setbacks are currently in the making in Iowa and North Carolina.

And now, like a frustrated child in the school playground, Trump is crying foul, blaming others for the failures, and claiming that the system is rigged against him. "Wa-a-a-a!"

This is all happening in the course of a campaign for president of the United States, where the rules are spelled out in advance for the edification of anyone who wants to be a serious contender. When the rules of the game are knowable from the git-go, one either studies those in order to map a winning strategy, or one humbly hires top notch political-types who already know the rules and can help in generating that winning strategy. Trump has obviously done neither.

Purportedly, pride goeth before a fall, as the Bible warns. Trump's pride, his bravado, got in the way of doing his homework, or hiring smart people to do the homework for him.

As he himself wrote in 1987, "You can't con people, at least not for long . . . If you don't deliver the goods, people will eventually catch on."

In actual governing, there are diverse interests, some rules, and myriad checks on dictatorial power, unlike in the private business environment in which Trump has had some success. The person most effective in the governance arena understands all of that and has the enviable ability still to get from point A to point B. When it comes to governance, finesse and cunning are indispensable skill sets to delivering all those potentially "boring" wins Trump has promised. He has demonstrated neither.

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Talk is cheap. Really cheap. It can actually be counter productive when it comes to delivering the goods in the face of concerted opposition from powerful vested interests. In the arena of governance, those interests will hand Trump his proverbial lunch and laugh behind the scenes while they're doing it. Senator Cruz is among them in his trek toward the convention. He has to be saying, "This self-righteous rube is clueless when pitted against someone disciplined in the art of knowing, following, and even taking advantage of, the rules." Trump, having made it his "brand" to be unconventional and not to follow the rules, may have made it impossible to do otherwise in his White House quest.

More to the point, however, is the important fact that there are very few hard and fast rules in the international political and economic arenas. There are almost no hard and fast rules in the battle to deal with the threats of international terrorism that defy all civilized boundaries (short of committing war crimes and otherwise adopting the tactics of the terrorists). If Trump has not done his homework, or hired others to do it for him in the context of a rules-driven presidential campaign – which he indisputably has not done – it's almost a certainty that his promises of "boring" repeat wins in those larger arenas are utterly illusory.

Reality is a cruel teacher. It delivers the test before delivering the lesson. As Iowan Meredith Wilson wrote in **The Music Man**, "You gotta know the territory." There is no substitute. There are no shortcuts around that truism. You either do the homework or hire it done. That's it. Otherwise, you're headed for loser status.

It's actually not pride that goeth before a fall, at least not directly. Pride goeth before unbridled ignorance. Ignorance goeth before a fall.

It is perhaps what one should expect when an ignorant apprentice is running for president. It's time we said, "You're fired."

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## Briefs & Shorts

Be sure to RSVP for the May 6, 2016, meeting by calling 515-288-2500, or on line at: [JonathanWilson@DavisBrownLaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@DavisBrownLaw.com). Our scheduled speaker will be openly gay teacher Tyler McCubbin who gained some considerable notoriety when Dowling Catholic High School withdrew his offer of employment *because of his disclosed sexual orientation*. This after Archdiocese Bishop Pates said to the breakfast club that nondiscrimination was one of the strongest social values held by the Roman Catholic Church.

Thanks to Senator Matt McCoy for the introduction of Senator Joe Bolckom at our meeting in April.



Be sure to peruse the front table for a book you might like to read. **Book donations are always welcome.** Thanks to Scott Kuknyo for helping coordinate the book exchange.

Consider a tax deductible contribution to the FFBC scholarship fund, or a tax exempt testamentary gift, or both. Contact Jonathan Wilson for details.

Save the dates: Our speaker in June will be Joshua Barr, Executive Director of the Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Commission. Our speaker in July will be Iowa Congressman David Young.

**A Rose is a Rose . . .**

By Jonathan Wilson on behalf of Bruce Carr

The speaker for the breakfast meeting in April was State Senator Joe Bolkcom. He touched upon a variety of interesting topics, but the focus was on a Death With Dignity bill that he introduced in the Iowa Legislature this year. He rounded up several co-sponsors of the bill, including FFBC member Senator Matt McCoy. The bill did not advance to a vote in either chamber.

The bill was modeled after a similar piece of legislation adopted about seventeen years ago in the state of Oregon. He provided interesting statistics about the number and demographics of Oregonians who have availed themselves of the legislation since its inception. More to the point, however, he observed that the world has not come to an end in Oregon, nor have dire predictions materialized there or in other states that have adopted similar statutes.

Bolkcom reported that a strong majority of Iowans already favors such legislation according to polls and, although admittedly controversial, he anticipates its reintroduction in the next legislative session. He said that it is not at all unusual for bills, especially those bridled with controversy, to require two or even more sessions of the Legislature to gain adoption.

He did indicate that the reintroduced legislation would likely be renamed in the hope that would provide “cover” for some legislators or otherwise make the legislation more palatable. He suggested End of Life Options as the candidate label. Nothing different in substance.

Whatever works. With the aging Iowa population, it is anticipated that public support will only increase. [Editor’s Note: Bruce Carr, our usual reporter, has been under the weather. We wish him well and a quick return to his speaker reporting duties.]



*State Senator Joe Bolkcom is serving his fifth term in the Iowa Senate. He previously served six years on the Johnson County Board of Supervisors. He serves as the Senate Majority Whip and chair of the Ways & Means Committee among other leadership positions. Senator Bolkcom works as the outreach and community education Director for the UI Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research and the Iowa Flood Center. He can be contacted at [Joe.Bolkcom@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:Joe.Bolkcom@legis.iowa.gov).*

*P o n d e r      T h i s*

**Glass** takes one million years to decompose, which means it never wears out and can be recycled an infinite amount of times!

**Gold** is the only metal that doesn't rust, even if it's buried in the ground for thousands of years.

**Your tongue** is the only muscle in your body that is attached at only one end.

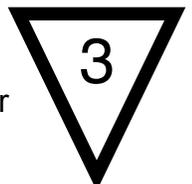
**If you stop getting thirsty,** you need to drink more water. When a human body is dehydrated, its thirst mechanism shuts off.

**Zero** is the only number that cannot be represented by Roman numerals.

**Kites** were used in the American Civil War to deliver letters and newspapers.

**Nine out of every 10** living things live in the ocean.

**Airports at higher altitudes-**  
**require** a longer airstrip due to lower air density.





## **ATTRACTING VISITORS & WORKERS BY ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE**

Workforce development must be an Iowa priority, according to the Iowa Business Council's 2016 report. To fill an expected 612,000 job openings by 2025, we need to attract and retain more workers.

That's a challenge for Iowa, which has a relatively low unemployment rate of 3.7 percent and the slowest population growth in the country. The Business Council's report indicates that Iowa is the only state whose total population did not grow at least 50 percent between 1900 and 2010. Our growth rate during that time was 36.5 percent. From 2010 to 2015, America's population grew by 4 percent, while Iowa's increased by only 2.5 percent.

[Senate File 2280](#) is designed to spur Iowa's economy by attracting more visitors and tourism, as well as more families to live, work and make their home here. It would provide resources to programs that enhance Iowa's economic development, create recreational and cultural opportunities, and invest in natural resources.

The bill creates an Enhance Iowa Board, an Enhance Iowa Fund, a Sports Tourism program and fund, and provides additional resources to existing recreational, cultural and natural resources programs. Each fiscal year that the state has a surplus of more than \$100 million, \$25 million will go to these "Enhance Iowa" efforts. The money will be used for state and county parks, watershed protection, recreational trails, community attractions and tourism projects, and sporting events that attract visitors to the area.

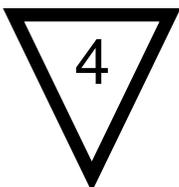
[SF 2280](#) has been approved by the Appropriations Committee and is ready for debate in the full Senate.

### **Additional information**

*This is a legislative update from Senator Matt McCoy, representing the west part of Des Moines, portions of West Des Moines and northwest Warren County.*

For newsletters, photos and further information, go to [www.senate.iowa.gov/senator/mccoy](http://www.senate.iowa.gov/senator/mccoy) or [www.matt-mccoy.com](http://www.matt-mccoy.com). Follow Senator McCoy on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/senatormccoy](http://www.facebook.com/senatormccoy).

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](mailto:matt.mccoy@legis.iowa.gov).



*Senator McCoy is an Assistant Senate Majority Leader, chair of the Transportation & Infrastructure Budget Subcommittee, and vice-chair of the Commerce Committee. He also serves on the Appropriations, State Government, Transportation and Ways & Means committees.*

**Flying and Out**  
by Ryan Weidner

I recently returned to flying after taking several years off. My passion for aviation began in the summer of 2000. I had just moved to Des Moines and was looking around to entertain myself with what I felt was an extreme sport and started flight lessons. Later, I went on to become a commercially rated pilot and a flight instructor before eventually hanging it up for a few years.

One of the most prized possessions of any pilot is his/her flight logbook. In addition to serving as official documentation of aviation experience and currency for pilots, it is a treasure trove of memories!

While thumbing through my pilot logbook recently, many interesting memories came back. Then there it was, on page 17, a single entry of a flight I had long since forgotten about: ***“IOW w/Mitch 4 Books \*Univ of Iowa”***. That was me journaling in code that I flew to Iowa City (IOW) with a boy named Mitch to pick up that semester’s books for my MBA classes in Des Moines. I couldn’t write in the log book that he was a boy I was “interested” in so I simply put a (\*) to remind me of that day.

At the time I didn’t know it, but Mitch was my first gay significant other. I was 24 and he was 19, even though I was older he had a better grasp on his identity than I did. We had meet online and while the relationship was very short lived it was also a turning point in my life. I had discussed with him my interest in guys and explained that while I had not acted on it, I had often thought about it. He was bothered that I was struggling with the simple concept of being gay. We had a wonderful day and a beautiful flight home. We pushed the airplane back into the hanger and talked for what seemed like hours.

The (\*) in my entry was to remind me both of Mitch and our hanger conversation. He asked why I refused to refer to myself as “gay.” Surprised by his question I said, “It’s not intentional. I had never given it much thought.” Up to that point the word “gay” had never been used around me in anything but a hurtful manner in school. He then encouraged me to give it a try. Feeling this was a silly activity I agreed to do it. “Ok...I am gay,” I said. Wow, I could feel my heart beat rapidly and I was light of breath! I felt a weight had just been lifted off of my shoulders. “I am gay,” I said a second time with a smile and tears of relief in my eyes. He leaned in and kissed me, once again I whispered “I am gay.”

Even though Mitch and I parted ways shortly after this experience, I will forever be grateful that I had the chance to open up and, for the first time ever, acknowledge who I am. I’m reminded by this experience of the importance of having a safe and supportive environment in which we can be who we are without judgment. The logbook brought back the memory of this extremely impactful experience in detail but it can simply be summarized as ***“IOW w/Mitch 4 Books \*Univ of Iowa.”***

# FFBC

First Friday  
News & Views

Des Moines, Iowa

May, 2016

First Friday  
Breakfast Club

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MADE ON A  MAC

## MY M.O. (MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS)

### FROM THE RIDICULOUS TO THE SUBLIME

By Steve Person

Two issues ago, I wrote a review of what has to be one of the worst written biographies ever. That book about Peter O'Toole would likely have him spinning in his grave. Alas, the craft of the excellent biography is alive and well in the hands of Michael Coveney with his **Maggie Smith: A Biography**. (St. Martin's Press, 2015)

Coveney's book spans the breadth of Smith's life from cradle to **Downton Abbey**. Born December 28, 1934, in Ilford, Essex, Smith describes her life rather simply: "One went to school, one wanted to act, one started to act, and one's still acting." But, as Coveney so succinctly writes, "There's a little more to it than that."

Smith gained early notoriety as a performer in revues in London and other venues in the United Kingdom. In 1956 she garnered fame in the United States with the comedy revue, **New Faces**. The show opened in Boston and ultimately made its way to Broadway where it ran for seven months. Upon her return to England, Smith joined the acting company of the Old Vic. Maggie's talent expressed itself in roles written by dramatists ranging from Shakespeare to Congreve, to Ibsen to Harold Pinter. She easily plays comedy, melodrama, and tragedy. Versatility is her key.

For many years Smith took her children to Canada where she was the main attraction of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in that small Canadian town. From there, she frequently found her way to Hollywood where she made many films. Her most successful movie role came with her 1968 Oscar-winning performance in **The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie**, a story of a gifted yet flawed teacher in 1930s' Edinburgh. A second Oscar came her way ten years later for her supporting role in **California Suite** where she brilliantly portrayed an Academy Award loser.

A good book not only informs but also teaches. Coveney employs the term "litotes" on page 183. It is a word I used to teach to my Advanced Placement English Language and Composition class and means, "the expression of an affirmative in which the negative is ironically implied." Maggie Smith exemplifies it when, as Lady Violet in **Downton Abbey**, she states, "Principles are like prayers—noble of course—but awkward at a party!"

I had the pleasure in 1974 of seeing Maggie Smith on stage at the Vaudeville Theatre in London in an awful comedy entitled **Snap**. The title is another slang word for "clap," and the play revolved around Maggie's character who infects everyone in the cast with gonorrhoea! Not a good subject for a comedy, but it was a pleasure to watch her perform live.

Coveney's book is one that I highly recommend.