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BREAKFAST CLUB, INC.

# First Friday News & Views

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## PRIESTLY MAN DATING

by Jonathan Wilson

The Roman Catholic Church has a *big* problem. Some might think it's a public relations problem, and the Church does have one of those. The cloak of secrecy in Church governance and its exemption from accountability for centuries have revealed a remarkable inability to recognize that problem or to deal with it effectively in the modern world.

Others might think it's a problem with complicity in acts of pedophilia toward those most vulnerable to abuse by Church authority figures for a period of many decades if not centuries as well. What had been rumored for that same length of time has now been confirmed and brought into the light of day. That is certainly a problem for the Church. It's one thing for a priest to fool around with a nun or two now and then, to purchase lavishly using church coffers, or to hit the bottle too hard and too often. But to get away with breaching the trust of parents by repeatedly abusing their children and then, despite the known propensity, to get transferred by the Church hierarchy in order to "pray" upon another crop of innocent youngsters is beyond contemptible and definitely a problem.

Others might think the Church has a big problem because of the cover-up. Certainly the attempts to conceal, the attempts to minimize, and the outright lies that have been exposed, constitute a serious problem and makes some of the others even more intractable -- if that's imaginable.

Still others might think the Church has a big problem because the Pope himself has been implicated in all of the above -- lock, stock, and barrel. The Pope mind you, God's purported vicar on earth and the direct successor to Peter, the "rock" upon which Jesus deigned to establish *the* Church, knew of priests who included sexual abuse of children as a part of their ministry, and he took no appropriate action. He didn't defrock them, let alone turn them over to authorities for the criminal prosecution that they deserved. Instead he treated it as a mere indiscretion, an exercise of poor judgment, a regrettable transgression, a run-of-the-mill sin readily forgiven and hopefully forgotten. A mere embarrassment. It is claimed in his defense that, as Cardinal, he was unaware that a known pedophile priest had not been successfully treated and was being returned to pastoral duties involving children where past abuse was then repeated. He feigns ignorance that a predator priest in his charge was being "called" by the Church to another parish in order to offend again. It's always a problem when claimed incompetence is deemed the best defense, as in, "It wasn't a moral lapse on my part, I was incompetent in the position that I held." That defense ranks with, "Ah shucks, the devil made me do it."

To my way of thinking, however, and despite the gravity of all these problems of the Church, the *big* problem for the Church, that underlies all of these others, is the mandate of celibacy for the priesthood. Insisting on priestly celibacy has done three things, none of them good.

First, it has attracted to ministry countless talented but closeted gay men, making the Roman Catholic Church the largest organization of gay men in the history of mankind. It makes the FFBC pale by comparison. It has, until more recently, provided an opportunity for stature, service (both genuine and as in bull-in-a-pasture-of-cows service), relative comfort for a lifetime, and relief from family pressures to marry some unsuspecting straight woman in the real world. Closeted gay men are a problem; organizing them makes it worse. Can you say "fundamentalist, it's-a-choice, Christian?"

Second, it caused (and causes) unimaginable sexual frustration because it is undeniably unnatural -- an abomination if-you-will. Like insisting that folks with two legs elevate one and hop

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## CALENDAR

▼ The next FFBC meeting is 7:00 A.M., Friday, May 7, 2010 at Hoyt Sherman Place.

R.S.V.P. by Tuesday May 5 to [JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com) or 288-2500 by phone.

around all day on the other “for the sake of the Church.” Denying one of your God-given appendages arbitrarily is bound to cause frustration. Behind closed doors such folks would be planting both feet solidly on terra firma with a tremendous sigh of relief.

That pedophilia, a trait not uncommon in every population of human beings regardless of sexual orientation, found expression in priest/alter boy interactions in perceived disproportionate numbers is not because gay men are more prone to be pedophiles. It’s just that the pedophiles among priests more often turn out to be same-gender oriented because the priesthood has been so dominated by closeted gay men. The phenomenon is merely a function of attracting so many gay men to the ranks of the priesthood in the first place. It has actually been that phenomenon, the disproportionate representation of gay men among priests, that has led to the false stereotype that gay men in other settings will likewise be pedophiles. If the priesthood had similarly attracted and become so dominated by one-legged hoppers, the public would perceive, again erroneously, that hoppers are *prone* to pedophilia.

Until the Church addresses the *big* problem of mandating priestly celibacy so that the priesthood can more nearly reflect the sexual orientation of the population-at-large, there can be no hope of reducing those historic sexual frustrations among the clergy and get pedophilia there down to a level more consistent with its prevalence in the general population. Then, as in other denominations, the *big* problem can be pastors sleeping with willing organists or consenting church secretaries, something to be much preferred over abusing innocent children.

The Church needs to move gay priests toward man dating

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*Just going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car.*

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## **Breakfast with Roxanne Conlin**

By Bruce Carr

Scarce a month had passed since we listened to the Mayor of Des Moines describe, with some irony, his latest social encounter with Iowa’s current and long-time senior Senator (a Republican)--when The Remedy appeared before us: our speaker on April 2 was the likely Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in the upcoming election, Roxanne Conlin.

Admitting that she is emphatically not a morning person [“For the first and only time since I announced,” she said, “I found myself questioning whether this is really a good idea--when the alarm rang this morning”], Roxanne nevertheless presented her candidacy articulately, passionately, and convincingly. Even at 7 o’clock in the morning.

After a short summary of her childhood, education, and

career, Roxanne tackled the main question head-on: can she win? “I wouldn’t subject my family and friends and supporters to this campaign if I didn’t know it will succeed,” she said. “It’s past time for a change.” “Chuck” Grassley has pots and pots of money--corporate money--and lots of history, she went on, but he has no local organization. He has a carefully cultivated image as a “moderate,” but Iowans don’t know his real voting record--or haven’t until recently. His formerly high ratings in the polls have now plummeted towards barely 50% approval. Roxanne Conlin, who will not take money from PACs and federal lobbyists, has a swiftly growing base of popular support, both face-to-face (speeches and local gatherings) and electronic (Facebook--thousands of fans--and Twitter), and a proven record of standing up for everyday Iowans against powerful interests. “I’m not popular with the corporations,” she noted. “My law firm has never represented one.”

“Most people don’t even realize,” she’s told focus groups in the majority of Iowa’s 99 counties, “that I would be the first woman ever elected to Congress from Iowa.” She changes a lot of minds with that one.

Responding to our questions, Roxanne noted that she had articulated her support for GLBT and other civil rights issues as far back as 1977 - International Women’s Year. Her primary focus right now is on jobs and the economy--a new, “green” economy that will simultaneously tap Iowa’s highly educated workforce and increase national security by ending dependence on foreign oil. She supports the development of energy from wind, solar, ethanol, and biomass--and not more nuclear power, citing the unresolved question of what to do with nuclear waste. All this and more is outlined on her constantly updated Web site: <http://roxanneforiowa.com/>.

Roxanne concluded ringingly, “I need your support, I want your support, and I hope I can earn your support.” And she was thanked fulsomely by our president, who [mindful of the club’s 501(c)3 tax-status] also announced that her opponent would be invited to address us “as soon as he asks,” just as Ms Conlin did.

Battling organized crime, corruption and giant corporations, Roxanne Conlin has spent her life standing up to special interests for Iowa families who have been hurt by powerful forces. Growing up in Iowa, Roxanne’s family lived paycheck-to-paycheck, moving from town-to-town in search of steady work. Her father was an alcoholic, who struggled to hold down a job, and Roxanne went to work as a waitress at the age of 14 to help the family make ends meet.

At the age of 16, Roxanne entered Drake University. She worked her way through college, graduating at 19, graduating from Drake Law School at just 21, and chose to dedicate her legal career to speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves.

As an Assistant Attorney General for Iowa, Roxanne fought public corruption and wrote the first law of its kind protecting rape victims. As the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Iowa, she worked hand-in-hand with law enforcement, leading major drug busts and cracking down on violent crime. For more than 25 years, Roxanne has owned and managed a small law firm in Iowa. Her firm is dedicated to representing everyday people who do not have an effective voice. She has never worked for a single corporate interest.

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# Clash of the Titans

Review by Gary Kaufman

(with a couple added comments)

When I was a lad, with the phenomenal box office successes of films like **Ben Hur** and **The Ten Commandments**, there was a rash of semi-low budget adventure movies depicting eras when men wore skirts. Yes, as a teenager I saw a lot of Steve Reeves movies, totally oblivious to the connotations that would have for me later in life. One of those men-in-skirts genre films was the original **Clash of the Titans**, which featured the special effects skills of Ray Harryhausen where the animated figures are moved one-frame-at-a-time and then the frame is shot, repeatedly. The stop motion animated process would be painstakingly slow, but in the hands of Ray Harryhausen the creatures being animated in the films came alive. His first major picture was **Mighty Joe Young** in 1943, with **Earth vs. The Flying Saucers** in 1956, **One Million Years B.C.** in 1966, **The Golden Voyage of Sinbad** in 1974, and **Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger** in 1977, culminating with **Clash of the Titans** in 1981, after which he retired from film making.

That culminating original has now received a major makeover using current state-of-the-art animation techniques to spectacular effect. In fact, at one point the film actually compares the animation to that of the past in having a scene where a soldier, who is told to load up “everything” as they prepare to take on the Kraken, picks up a gold mechanical owl that kind of crudely flutters around a bit and opens its eyes. The soldier asks, “What is this?” “Just leave it!” was the response. The golden owl was one of the characters in the Ray Harryhausen original film. I am still not sure if its inclusion was a tribute to Harry and the original film, or an act of ridicule of what once passed for animation, but it was nice to be reminded how far things have progressed.

In the modern version of the movie, the story begins with a prologue telling that the Titans once ruled the Universe, but their children waged a war upon their elders and, in the process, produced an unspeakable horror called the Kraken to conquer the Titans. With the Titans conquered, three brothers were left to rule. Zeus to rule the Heavens; Poseidon to rule the Seas; and, through trickery, Hades was left to rule the Underworld. Zeus then created Mankind, because it was the prayers of Mankind that would power the Gods’ immortality. Men grew tired of the scraps of life that the Gods gave them and for which they were supposed to be grateful. The discontent grew until Mankind declared war on the Gods.

Into this world a child is born, Perseus. The child is found at sea in a floating coffin, held in his dead mother’s arms. The fisherman who found Perseus raises the child as his own. The fisherman, too, was tired of living for scraps and being expected to praise the Gods for his pitiful existence. He instilled

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*Walking around Gray’s Lake I’ve learned that folks who wear audio ear plugs think their flatulence is silent.*

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in Perseus the thought that “someday someone is going to have to take a stand. Someday someone is going to have to say, ‘Enough!’”

Soon that day arrives. Their vessel approaches the coast where Perseus and the fisherman chance to witness mankind’s opening flurry against the Gods; soldiers destroy an enormous Colossus of Zeus and topple it into the sea. Hades sends himself out as demons to attack the soldiers and the fisherman drowns in the aftermath. Hades proclaims that Zeus has been too nice to his creation, Mankind, especially since they were no longer praying to the Gods and thereby causing the Gods to grow weaker. “Let me loose on them,” assures Hades, “and they will pray again!” Zeus agrees saying, “Like children, they need to be reminded of the order of things.”

Thus the war between the Gods and Mankind began in earnest and Perseus is soon thrown into the fray to be the savior of Mankind. From that point on the movie becomes a succession of battles between men armed with arrows and spears against supernatural beings like giant scorpions, Medusa, and eventually, the Kraken itself. The modern special effects treatment of these creatures is phenomenal. Mankind fights for freedom from the tyranny of the Gods and, in the process, a love interest for Perseus is also developed.

As a former aerospace engineer and amateur astronomer, it was exciting to sit through a movie in which its characters are represented in the stars as constellations. Andromeda, Cassio-

(Continued on page 4)

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*If it's true that we're here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?*

## BRIEFS & SHORTS

Be sure to RSVP for the May 7 meeting no later than May 5. E-mail [JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com) or call him at 288-2500. Our next speaker will be Ryan Roermann of the Iowa Pride Network.

▼ ▼ ▼  
Thanks to Matt McCoy for introducing our April speaker, Roxanne Conlin.

▼ ▼ ▼  
Mark your calendar for the July 24 FFBC/PROS party at the home of Allen Vander Linden and Mike Thompson. Details and directions will be distributed closer to the event.

▼ ▼ ▼  
Be sure to peruse the front table for a book you might like to read. Book donations are always welcome.

## Film Festival (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

peia, Cepheus, Perseus, and Pegasus are all part of the present-day description of our heavens. Here is a story that embodies them.

If you like this sort of adventure film, I am sure you will enjoy the **Clash of the Titans** remake. Liam Neeson and Ralph Fiennes make excellent characterizations of Zeus and Hades. It is a wonderful film that features state-of-the-art animation. And who doesn't enjoy seeing beefy men in skimpy skirts!!

**TO 3D OR NOT 3D:** I saw **Clash of the Titans** initially in 2D on the enormous screen and terrific THX sound system at the Plaza Theater, and then in 3-D at the much smaller screened Wynnsong Theater with OK sound. At the Plaza Theater it seemed like I was viewing an epic film with incredibly exciting fight sequences. The 3-D version seemed gimmicky and didn't really add anything. So I would suggest 2-D at a reduced cost of admission.

**AVATAR AT THE IMAX:** I did not review **Avatar** when it originally came out; I saw it in 3-D and it just didn't affect me emotionally. But a friend suggested I try the experience of seeing **Avatar** at the IMAX theater. In the past, my experience of seeing feature films at the IMAX was not great. The movies aren't filmed with an IMAX camera and the film is projected on the inside of a curved surface rather than flat. Lines would no longer be straight, but were instead curved, and I found it unsatisfactory. I don't know if they are using a new lense for these types of projections or what, but the problem seems to be fixed. When you see **Avatar** at the IMAX, even though it is 2-D, you really feel that you are in the world of Pandora because the images are all around you and you are inundated by the surround sound. It has transformed the viewing experience, and I highly recommend it. Sitting directly above the projector is the ideal spot.

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*'Tis a far greater challenge to change the culture in a people, than to change the people in a culture. So we continue to fight the Civil War and die-hard bigotry. It explains why our cause makes greater progress over time thanks to actuarial tables than it does thanks to the powers of persuasion.*

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## Thank you, Alan Turing

John Bentrall

Alan Turing is a hero whose story is too seldom told. He was a gay man whose intelligence and creativity enabled the Allied Forces to defeat Nazi Germany in World War II, and who is also considered one of the fathers of modern computing.

Mr. Turing worked at Bletchley Park, Britain's code breaking center, leading the section responsible for breaking the supposedly unbreakable German codes, signing up for duty the day after Britain de-

clared war on Germany. He invented techniques for determining the settings for the German "Enigma" code machine.

Allied General Dwight D. Eisenhower said that his work was decisive to the Allied victory over Germany. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated, "It was thanks to [the code breaking] that we won the war." The breaking of the German codes prevented the Nazis from blockading Britain with U-boats and allowed the Allies to out-maneuver the Germans during critical junctures. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire for his wartime services in 1945, as his nation, the United States, and the other Allied Forces celebrated victory. His work remained secret for many years, though, because of its classified nature.

Mr. Turing was charged with gross indecency in 1952 due to his relationship with another man. He was forced to undergo chemical castration and committed suicide two years later. Laws forbidding homosexual relationships remained on British books until 1967.

The British government officially apologized to Mr. Turing in 2009. Prime Minister Gordon Brown declared, "Turing deserved so much better than the treatment he received from post-war society. It is no exaggeration to say that, without his outstanding contribution, the history of World War II could well have been very different. He truly was one of those individuals we can point to whose unique contribution helped to turn the tide of war."

Gays and lesbians have served openly and honestly in the British military since 2000, fighting in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world against international terrorism and to ensure that freedom endures.

How many Alan Turings have been turned away from the United States military? We will never know. However, we should pause to consider history when deciding whether we take the chance of turning away any more.

Mr. Turing, thank you for playing a significant role in keeping the United States of America, your nation's closest historical ally, free, even though you did not experience full personal freedom because of who you were.

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## Difference in Coffee Pots

Tony Hansen

If one thinks about the difference between generations, clear differences emerge. My grandparents grew up in a depression era when people had to make the most of whatever they had. Today, some people might consider my grandparents stingy for not wanting to spend money on the latest trends. I remember working with my grandfather on some sauna-like days at his farm, loading hay. For lunch, we would come into the house and Grandpa would pour coffee into his cup from a coffee maker that had to be at least 25 years old. The coffee pot that I bought only a year ago is already showing wear. This, of course, encourages me to go back to the store to pick up a new one for a "low" price. I will, of course, have to replace the new one in another year.

I could look around my grandparents' house and see that the entire time they lived there, little had changed except that

more grandchildren walked through the doors. Some things were replaced when needed, but my grandparents had much of the same furniture, wall fixtures, decorations, and other items they always had. Even more, they were happy and grateful for what they had.

Each generation tends to blame another for the current misfortunes of society, and there is plenty of blame to go around. Without the Depression and world wars, would my grandparents have made the kinds of decisions my generation makes today?

The old saying, "They don't make things like they used to," is starting to make sense. Today, we accept that items we buy do not hold up like things used to. This result of speed capitalism and marketing is the force behind big-box, faceless retail stores and fast food. Slowly, counter help has been replaced by self-service signs, and product quality has eroded over the years. This gives consumers more power over their decisions and away from "pressure sales" because marketing already has you looking. At the same time, the company saves money with fewer labor needs. Customers can walk through a store, get what they want, and never have to see a clerk.

Today, this is an intrinsic element of the free enterprise system, and that system depends upon a sense of materialism and individualism. Quality service is replaced by expectations of self-service and good marketing. We *are persuaded* the latest and greatest whatever will make us happy until the next latest and greatest comes along. On top of that, the packaging can make the difference between a product sitting on the shelf or going out the door, regardless of the product's quality. The packaging has increased for items over the years. Packaging is great for bringing the coffee pot home but gets tossed out with the garbage. We cannot simply go to a McDonalds and order a hamburger and fries in a basket. Half of what we order at any fast food joint is thrown away as we walk out. Thus, packaging is a large portion of what we buy today because without it, we would not know what we are buying.

With the evolution of computers and video games, the trend to buy the "latest and greatest" has increased dramatically. Our society cannot save any money because we are too busy buying the latest improvement in modern technology or replacing poorly made products. Automakers build cars with 5-year warranties so that we have to buy a replacement for that vehicle using, of course, customer loyalty benefits. Clothes are trendy for only a few months. People "need" to get the latest fashion for the season. There are plenty of people who have closets and dressers full of "nothing to wear." We go to the mall and get a new outfit that will last a few washes before we have to get replacements. We are in a constant state of upgrading.

Companies and consumers share the blame. Companies perpetuate, for profit, the idea of consumerism because they know they can tempt people to buy excessively. People do

not take responsibility for their actions and are ready to sue over trivial incidents where someone should have simply paid attention (for example, reading the latest text is seen as more important than driving in one lane). Consumers become competitive in their purchases by "staying ahead of the Joneses." That is how we got into the recent recession, and we still have not learned our lesson.

The question is, "where does this stop?" If everything we use and purchase is only to be replaced later, what does that say about the rest of our lives? Could the idea of the material goods we purchase that need consistent upgrades, instead of "making do" with what we have (and perhaps enjoying them more), extend to personal lives, friends, and significant others?

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*Who built the gas chambers and crematories, and what were they thinking?*

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## Conlin (cont.)

Instead, Roxanne has chosen to fight for family farmers squeezed by big banks, for police officers wronged by the system, and for workers hurt by large companies. A successful small business, Roxanne Conlin & Associates was recently cited as one of the best firms to work for because of its family-friendly practices.

With each new milestone--serving as United States Attorney in Iowa, winning the Democratic nomination for Governor of Iowa, being elected as the first woman president of the American Association of Justice, and selected as one of the first women in the Inner Circle of Advocates--Roxanne leaves behind a trail of shattered glass ceilings. Through it all, she still sees the world through the eyes of the courageous, everyday Iowan who refuses to give up in the face of overwhelming odds. Roxanne lives in Des Moines with her husband of 45 years, James, with whom she has four adult children and five grandchildren.

*Contra* Grassley:

- ◆ In America, we have systems like speed limits, no passing zones, and air traffic control because they keep us all safe. When Senator Grassley deregulated Wall Street, he threw open the doors to unrestrained greed and recklessness.
- ◆ During the healthcare debate, President Obama met with Senator Grassley three times, and telephoned him three more times, to keep in touch. In April, Grassley declared, "I'm doing everything I can to make the reform effort in Congress a bipartisan one." That was then! But by last August Grassley's campaign sent out a fundraising appeal stating, "The simple truth is that I am and always have been opposed to the Obama Administration's plans." And in that same month, he made the absurd (and dishonest) claim that the legislation would allow the government to "pull the plug on Grandma..."
- ◆ Iowa seniors need and deserve a senator who will protect and defend Social Security, not try to privatize it. Senator Grassley--who was elected to the Senate in 1980--has long supported privatizing Social Security.

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*9/11 Lessons Revisited: Those who underestimate the underdog will not survive.*

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# FFBC

*First Friday  
News & Views  
Des Moines, Iowa*

*APRIL 2010*

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## My M.O. (Monthly Observations) “Hidden” Treasures?

Among life’s pleasures is the opportunity to sit down with a good book and transport myself into another era or tread in someone else’s shoes for awhile. I sometimes check out books from the library but tend to use that valuable resource more for books on CD so I can listen to books while I am driving, especially on longer car trips. Likewise, the FFBC’s book exchange is an opportunity to find books for excellent reading with no expiration dates to worry about. However, I mostly purchase books because I like to write in them or underline passages or fold pages down so I can return quickly to something I like in the book.

Of the “hidden” treasures for book lovers in Des Moines is The Book Store located in the Equitable Building in downtown Des Moines. It is an independent book store and offers readers the opportunity to browse among its shelves without the distractions found in the chain bookstores in the suburbs. Because it is a local business, I know that most of the money I spend there stays within the community, unlike the money spent at chain outlets. As an independent bookstore, it cannot offer as large a selection as can be found at Barnes and Noble or Border’s, but the owner, John, orders for me anything I want if he does not have it in stock. Furthermore, he offers a discount of at least ten percent on book purchases. In addition to the relaxed atmosphere, shoppers there can converse with John or his assistant when John is not there. It is, simply stated, the best place to purchase books and periodicals.

One of the books I found there on a recent visit was a short biography entitled **Leonardo da Vinci** by Sherwin B. Nuland, Clinical Professor of Surgery at Yale. With the precision of a surgeon, Nuland writes with clarity about Leonardo’s interests in sixteenth century medicine, including his observations in both drawings and writings of the many dissections he performed. Leonard’s drawings of the various “hidden” systems within the human body transformed the science of medicine that until then was based on the most inaccurate information.

Of further interest was Leonardo’s observation of that usually “hidden” male organ:

“About the penis: This confers with the human intelligence and sometimes has intelligence of itself, and although the will of the man desires to stimulate it, it remains obstinate and takes its own course, and moving sometimes of itself without license or thought by the man, whether he be sleeping or waking, it does what it desires. Often the man is asleep and it is awake, and many times the man is awake and it is asleep. Many times the man wishes it to practice and it does not wish to; many times it wishes to and the man forbids it. It seems, therefore, that this creature has often a life and intelligence separate from man and it would appear that the man is in the wrong in being ashamed to give it a name or exhibit it, seeking rather constantly to cover and conceal what he ought to adorn and display with ceremony as one who serves.”

Ya just gotta love that Leonardo!

- Steve Person