



First Friday News & Views

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Issue 11

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

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Calendar

▼ The next FFBC Meeting is 7:00am, Friday, November 6, 2015, at Hoyt Sherman Place, 15th & Woodland, Des Moines, IA

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

Confessions of a Margin of Error Maker

By Jonathan Wilson

I stopped lying after I came out as an unapologetic gay man, now a long time ago. Being a closeted gay man was really the only secret I had, and lying to keep that secret was pretty much all-consuming and utterly exhausting. It seemed like I didn't have the energy to lie about anything else. Once the coming out exercise was complete, it's been largely clear sailing for telling the truth. Moreover, it has freed up a tremendous amount of energy that I've directed toward more productive, worthwhile endeavors. Lying has simply lost its appeal for me despite the fact that I was rather good at it.

I do make one exception. As is true of so many Iowans leading up to the first-in-the-nation caucuses, or folks in New Hampshire that hosts the first presidential primary, I am bombarded by pollsters, on line, by mail, and by telephone. We are being poked, prodded, dissected, and analyzed, demographically, politically, and otherwise. The results are faithfully published by news media as if the information -- with whatever "margin of error" -- has some relevance to anything.

I regularly lie to pollsters.

I've been a 94 year old (lie) African-American (lie) Jewish (lie) female (lie) who uses social media at least daily (lie) who plans to attend my Republican caucus (lie) where I will support Donald Trump as my first choice (lie) and Mike Huckabee as my second choice (lie). I've supported "traditional" marriage exclusively (the exclusivity part was a lie), and opposed abortion in every situation, including cases of incest and especially rape, figuring God works in mysterious ways (lie, lie, and lie). I've extolled the virtues of the NRA (a lie; the NRA has no virtues), and I've opposed *any* restrictions on the types or quantity of weaponry available to self-proclaimed patriots (lie), who should be able to acquire armaments at gun shows or wherever without background checks designed to weed out felons, domestic abusers, or the insane (lie). I've expressed disbelief in the phenomenon of climate change (lie), and I've insisted that if the climate is changing humans have nothing to do with it; it's God's way of ushering in the End Times and the second coming of Christ (lie times two).

Mind you, I've not been able to lie about all of those things in a single interview or survey. I prefer to mix-and-match them in order

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Jonathan Wilson, Continued from p. 1

to maintain some semblance of credibility. And, I suspect that because I have always been so responsive and taken the time to provide my meaningless input, I've perhaps been contacted more by pollsters than have others. I think taking up the time of pollsters may reduce the time they have to pester other hapless Iowans and New Hampshireites, (or whatever you call people who hail from New Hampshire). I figure I'm doing a public service. You're welcome.

Candidates whose campaigns are driven by the polls tend to pander to crazy stuff that appears to be supported by the polls. If the polls indicated a substantial body of the electorate believes the earth is flat, there'd be candidates catering to them and giving voice to such beliefs. It's good to be able to know them for who they are. The Bible warns against false prophets, but provides precious little guidance for identifying them. Their pandering is a "tell." Another public service. You're welcome.

The only polling that counts will be the votes cast on caucus night or at the ballot box.

Between now and then, I recommend that you entertainingly join me in public service.

Person, Continued from Page 6

all that George Washington did to assert the authority of the federal government.

James Madison showed one of his two faces to a grateful President Washington during his first term in office only to rebuff the president and offer his fanatic following of Jefferson in the second term. It was during Washington's second term that ugly party politics reared its head, led by Jefferson and his hatred of Alexander Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury. Washington did his utmost to keep civility within the crumbling ranks of his cabinet. And

Jefferson, as the first Secretary of State, worked behind the scenes to subvert his president and his country.



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When elected to the presidency in 1800, Jefferson felt his new administration was his chance to undo all that Washington and an ineffectual John Adams had established before him. Despite all his efforts, the Constitution survived.

Fleming's book should be required reading for every person who considers himself to be an American.

Briefs & Shorts

Be sure to RSVP for the November 6 meeting no later than November 4. Contact Jonathan at 288-2500 or email him at JonathanWilson@DavisBrownLaw.com. Our scheduled speaker will be Jeremy Rozen, Executive Director of ACLU Iowa.

Thanks to Ryan Crane for his introduction of our October speaker, Robby Mook, the openly gay national director of Hillary Clinton's campaign for President of the United States.

Volunteers Needed!!!! Our traditional Red Party fundraiser that means everything to our fundraising efforts to generate resources for our scholarship program is being re-formatted in 2016. It will, again, be on the first Friday of February 2016, but it will be held as an Open House Reception at the home of Jonathan Wilson and Scott Kuknyo. Volunteers are needed for set-up, clean-up, and logistics in between. Volunteers attend at no charge.

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.

Republican Woes Are Our Woes

By Jonathan Wilson

Ralph Reed is to blame for the disarray that is presently plaguing the Republican Party. That disarray was predictable, but an unintended consequence of his work as the first Executive Director of the Christian Coalition founded by evangelical “Pat” Robertson in the 1989-91 time frame.

Reed saw the short-term beneficial potential in attracting evangelical “Christians” into the political process. These uber-Christians were ripe for the political picking. They characteristically are relatively unquestioning believers in some pretty nutty stuff (one might even say gullible), are rather insular in their independent street corner churches that lack much connection to one another, and have little accountability for the credentials, theology, or pulpit pronouncements of their pastors. Their frustration with feeling persecuted by non-believers, feeling that secular society is headed straight to hell in a proverbial hand-basket, being fed up with feeling powerless, and being impatient with the pace of gentle proselytizing, made Reed’s efforts to give these flocks common cause through alignment with the Republican Party and flocking dutifully to the ballot box where they would actually vote against their self-interest, particularly seductive. And it worked. They turned out in large numbers to vote. But, not content just to vote, they also turned their energy into becoming the activist “base” of the Republican Party.

Evangelicals had then (and continue to have) another characteristic that appears not to have been factored into the longer term political landscape. The unintended consequences of making a pact with the devil. These folks are uncompromising; the very reason that there were/are literally thousands of “Christian” denominations and even more of those free-standing churches, was (and remains) their purist ideology in favor of a very narrow and unforgiving world view. The very reason there were/are so many evangelical churches was/is this uncompromising, judgmental spirit; the cheap way to feel good about one’s self that comes from judging others, without compromise.

They have given Christianity a bad name; it’s no wonder that affiliation with Christianity is facing sharp decline as Americans are becoming even less aligned with any particular church or religion. The percentage of adults who describe themselves as Christians dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just the last seven years to about 71 percent, according to a recent survey conducted by the Pew Research Center. That trend follows a pattern documenting that in 1990, 86 percent of American adults identified as Christians, compared to 76 percent in 2008.

Having become the unquestioned “base” of the Republican Party, moderate Republicans left the party of their own accord, in droves, or were unceremoniously ousted. Not surprisingly, thanks partly to gerrymandering that has become endemic across the country -- allowing politicians to choose their voters rather than voters choosing office holders -- these ideologically driven and uncompromising types have been elected to the United States Congress. Their unwillingness to compromise, on just about anything, has made it into the public view most recently and starkly with the resignation of John Boehner as Speaker of the House followed by their clown-car confusion in finding his replacement.

It’s proven to be a sad state of affairs in our on-going efforts in reasonable self-governance. Paradoxically, having brought religion into the public arena, the views of fundamentalist Christians have been exposed to scrutiny and criticism that is largely absent in their churches, thus fueling their sense of persecution and intransigence. Politically they are becoming their own worst enemies.

Riding a tiger is exciting, to be sure, but a successful dismount is particularly perilous and, in the case of the Republican Party’s alignment with uncompromising evangelical Christians, perhaps impossible.

Thank you Ralph Reed.





IOWA'S WIND & SUN CREATE CLEAN ENERGY

Iowa is a leader in clean energy. Since 1983, Iowa has had laws on the books requiring major utilities to provide a portion of their energy from renewables. Over the years, clean energy has created jobs, boosted our economy, lowered energy bills and made our environment healthier.

Iowa's known for its wind, and we have done a good job of harnessing it for energy. Generating wind power creates no emissions and uses little water. In 2014, Iowa was the top state in the country for wind energy, generating 28 percent of our electricity from wind.

According to a [report on Iowa wind energy](#), last year Iowa's wind industry:

- Supported about 7,000 jobs.
- Included 12 active manufacturing facilities.
- Made a capital investment of \$10 billion.
- Generated more than \$17 million in land lease payments.

The [American Wind Energy Association](#) predicts we could produce 40-percent of our state's energy from wind within five years.

Solar is also taking off in Iowa. The Legislature approved [solar energy tax credits](#) in 2012 to encourage Iowans to install solar energy systems on homes, businesses and farms. In addition, the state tax credit allows Iowa to take advantage of a federal tax credit that also promotes solar energy installations.

Iowa's solar energy tax credits have been popular. In response, the Legislature has increased the tax credits to \$5 million per year and made utilities eligible for production tax credits for solar power projects.

Since 2012, the credits have helped build more than 1,200 projects, leverage more than \$50 million in solar investments and create nearly 1,000 jobs for solar energy installers, technicians to service the systems, and others.

To see the number of solar energy installations awarded tax credits in the area or to learn more about applying for the tax credits, go to www.tax.iowa.gov/solar-energy-system-tax-credits.

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.



Gaily on the Campaign Trail

By Bruce Carr

Our guest speaker on Friday morning, September 4, 2015, was Robby Mook, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, and the first openly gay manager of any major presidential campaign. Mook's message to us was simple and direct: "More is at stake for LGBT lives in this national election campaign than ever before."

Democrats *must* maintain (or increase!) control of the White House and Congress, he said, because of the clear likelihood of as many as three retirements from the Supreme Court during the next presidency. Complacency is

the enemy, he urged: if any of those justices' successors are appointed by a Republican majority, we could very well lose all of the recent legal support we have gained.

Mook pointed out that there is almost no substantive difference on gay issues between Hillary Clinton and her Democratic opponents, and that she has by far greater experience in politics and government than any of them. He noted that, in a campaign in which the far right can and surely will vastly outspend us, Clinton is the Democrat who can win. He lauded her successful attention to gay issues while she was Secretary of State, as when she secured equal treatment for dependents of gay diplomatic workers. And he praised her tenacity and negotiating skill: even when she was unable to win universal health care in the nineties, she kept at it until she succeeded at better health care for children. "Clinton has achieved when it mattered and whether or not anybody was looking," he said.

Robby Mook was born in Sharon, Vermont [also the birthplace, he noted a bit ruefully, of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism] and raised in Norwich VT across the river from Hanover NH, where his father is a professor at Dartmouth. His partisan political activism began already in high school, when he served as a volunteer for his drama teacher's reelection campaign to the Vermont House of Representatives. He attended Columbia University in New York City, where he majored in classics and graduated in 2002. After college, he worked as a United States Senate Page, then returned to Vermont to work for the state Democratic Party, leading up to Howard Dean's 2004 presidential campaign. In 2006, he coordinated two winning campaigns (Martin O'Malley and Ben Cardin) in Maryland. Mook then joined the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and worked for Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign as a state director in Nevada, Indiana, and Ohio. He managed Jeanne Shaheen's campaign as she ran for election to the Senate from New Hampshire that fall, served as the executive director of the DCCC in 2012, and as the campaign manager for Terry McAuliffe's successful 2013 gubernatorial campaign in Virginia.

Last January, Hillary Clinton hired Robby Mook as a strategist, and at the announcement in April of her 2016 campaign for president, he was introduced as her national campaign manager. The *Mother Jones* profile which greeted that introduction can be found at <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/04/robb-mook-hillary-clinton-campaign-manager-profile>.

P o m d e r

And you didn't think English was difficult? Consider these:

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce produce.
3. The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
4. He could lead if he would get the lead out.
5. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
6. Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
7. When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
8. A heterosexual buck does exciting things when the does are present.

Be thankful if English is not a second language for you.

T h i s

All the experiences in life are good ones, but only if you draw the right lessons from them. Otherwise they're just things that happened to you.

You cannot change people; you can only help people.

When in doubt, resort to the truth.

A moment's pleasure can lead to a lifetime of regret.



FFBC

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Des Moines, Iowa

November, 2015

First Friday
Breakfast Club

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Newsletter

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MADE ON A  MAC

MY M.O. (MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS) YOUR AMERICAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS DECEIVED YOU!

By Steve Person

George Washington died December 14, 1799. On January 1, 1800, Thomas Jefferson ferried across the Potomac to Mount Vernon to offer his condolences. Martha Washington told friends, “next to her husband’s death, the ‘detestable’ Jefferson’s visit was ‘the most painful occurrence’ of her life.”

Unfortunately, we as Americans have been lied to and bullied into believing that our so-called “Founding Fathers” could do no wrong. What a farce! Thomas Fleming’s The Great Divide: The Conflict Between Washington and Jefferson That Defined a Nation (Da Capo Press, 2015) shines a much-needed spotlight on the ideas that brought this government into being and Thomas Jefferson’s unending attempts to subvert the Constitution that was written in 1787.

I began to have my doubts regarding Thomas Jefferson after reading Fawn Brodie’s Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History back in the mid 1970s. But it was not until I read Fleming’s chilling account of how Jefferson and his cronies (James Monroe and James Madison to name but two) did everything they could to subvert the power of the presidency as defined by George Washington during his two terms as our first and arguably greatest president.

Every American should thank his lucky stars that George Washington was this nation’s first chief executive. Many have cited his questionable record as a soldier and general, but no one can deny the fact that he led this country’s fight for independence admirably and resigned his commission once the deed was accomplished. Likewise, no one can deny the gifted accomplishment of Jefferson’s stirring prose in the Declaration of Independence although his original drafts were highly altered by the members of the Continental Congress.

Jefferson’s less than impressive tenure as Governor of Virginia from 1779-81 strengthened his fanatical hatred of the British born from his seat in the Continental Congress at the time of the Declaration. When he was posted to France in 1775, as this country’s minister to that country, he found another love for revolution as twisted as his hatred for England. During his time as minister, he sat on the sidelines as the new Constitution was framed in Philadelphia to replace the Articles of Confederation that kept the United States disunited and powerless. We are lucky he was in France at the time. He entirely overlooked the bloody and perverse machinations of the so-called “leaders” of the French Revolution and rallied to their not-to-be-successful efforts in setting up a republic. Upon his return, he began his own revolution to undo *Continued on p. 2*