

# First Friday News & Views

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

April 2020

Volume 25

Issue 4

The next FFBC meeting is  
Friday, April 3,  
2020  
7:00 a.m.



FFBC Meeting Location:  
Hoyt Sherman Place,  
15<sup>th</sup> & Woodland,  
Des Moines



R.S.V.P.

[JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com](mailto:JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com)

or phone (515) 288-2500

or the website  
by Tuesday,  
March 31.



FFBC Website:  
[www.ffbciaowa.org](http://www.ffbciaowa.org)



## FFBC Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic

by Jonathan Wilson

The COVID-19 virus Pandemic and the Des Moines Mayor's Emergency Declaration cannot be ignored when it comes to the First Friday Breakfast Club, particularly when several members (myself included) are "of a certain age" and considered more vulnerable to infection, and, more vulnerable to croaking if infected.

We typically have more than 50 in attendance at our monthly meetings, a number that appears to have been rather arbitrarily set as a threshold for gatherings to be avoided. In fact, gathering with just one person who is actually infected is a gathering that should be avoided. The problem, obviously, is not knowing who is and isn't infectious – often apparently, people can be infectious and not even know that they are. The larger the number of people gathered together, the greater the chance that someone attending is infectious. In a meeting of 50 attendees, including just one infectious person, and by the end of the meeting there could be 50 carriers released into the community. That's how viral pandemics work.

Several responses are under consideration by the Board of Directors. It is possible that the April meeting will be canceled – perhaps the meeting in May as well. Hoyt Sherman Place and Gateway Market are being alerted to that possibility. If that happens, notice of cancellation will be circulated to everyone on the listserv data base. If either meeting or both meetings were to be canceled, a credit could be arranged into calendar year 2021, for those who have paid dues for calendar year 2020. It is also possible that, rather than a credit of some amount in 2021, the dues attributable to canceled meetings can be treated as a tax-deductible contribution to our scholarship fund.

IT (typo pun intended) is also possible that we will be able to tap into modern technology and hold a meeting "virtually." It just so happens that one of our members is the holder of a Zoom license that can accommodate up to 100 participants simultaneously, providing video conferencing coupled with an audio bridge. If that were to happen, detailed instructions for participation will be circulated to everyone who is on our Listserv. When things get tough, the tough get creative.





[continued on page two]

Rumors and conspiracy theories abound in situations like this, or any other, societal crisis. Many are those who believe them. A case in point is the run on toilet paper based on the rumor that such paper products come from China. In fact, China produces something like 13% of the WORLD supply of toilet paper. The United States imports only about 9% of our toilet paper needs and most of that comes from Canada and Mexico. It's a very low density, high volume product with a very short supply chain because it's not financially feasible to ship it long distances. But the rumor gets started (maybe by someone who owns stock in a toilet paper manufacturer), it's believed by the gullible, and that turns into a run on toilet paper.

The one I'm expecting is that a virus has been unleashed on the population that disproportionately kills off senior citizens as a means for keeping the Social Security System actuarially solvent. We know that its solvency has been impacted by people living longer and killing off seniors would "help" in some measure. So, prepare yourself for that one and don't believe it.

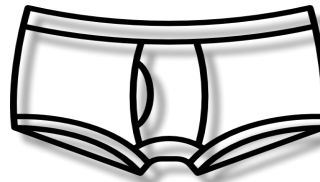
I intend for FFBC to get through this without missing a beat or the loss of a single member. We'll probably need to cut back on hugging, at least for a while, until an effective vaccine can be developed.

April  
Speaker: **Ted Corrigan**



Our speaker in April will be Ted Corrigan, Executive Director of Des Moines Water Works. You won't want to miss this. You are also encouraged to invite some of your friends to attend!! Provide the name(s) of any anticipated guest(s) so we can have name tags for them at the registration desk.

## Briefs & Shorts:



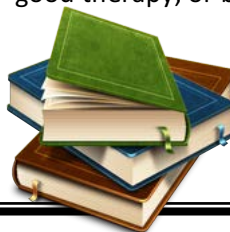
Thanks to **Steve Person** for introducing our March speaker, Troy Price, the former chair of the Iowa Democratic Party. Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter production editor. Thanks to **Ryan Weidner** for his work as our technology guru. Thanks to **Nicholas Williams** for managing our website. *Thanks to all our contributors to the monthly newsletter!*

A special thank-you to those FFBC members and friends who have chosen to designate FFBC through the Donor Direct program of United Way. The contributions through United Way are tax deductible. Those who have chosen this means of supporting FFBC have gone to the trouble of completing their United Way campaign worksheet by designating FFBC as the beneficiary of their generosity. FFBC is an eligible recipient of such funding designations.

Our annual fundraising effort is underway to fund our scholarship program. To date we have raised over \$275,000 for scholarships that are awarded to Iowa high school seniors who have done remarkable, courageous things to reduce homophobia and teach about LGBTQ issues in their schools and communities. Please consider a contribution on line or by sending a check.

The next copy deadline for the FFBC newsletter will be **April 13, 2020**. If you have something on your mind, put it on paper and get it to me by the copy deadline. It'll be interesting, good therapy, or both. Caring is sharing.

Don't Miss the  
**DEADLINE!**



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.





FFBC awards annual scholarships to outstanding Iowa high seniors who fight homophobia and educate their schools and/or communities about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. Academic excellence, extracurricular activities and community involvement also factor into the awards.

The scholarships are \$3,000 each. The number of awards varies each year based on the number and quality of applicants and the funds available.

Applicants must be Iowa residents and plan to pursue post-secondary education. There is no restriction on the type or location of the institution where post-secondary education is obtained. Scholarships are awarded without regard to sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, transgender status, race, religion, marital status or employment status of the prospective recipient.

*"It's an interesting paradox that Republicans, when they are leaving Congress due to retirement or terminal illness, start acting like Democrats."*

-- Matthew Wilson

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Smile.amazon.com gives you the exact same shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to FFBC if you've selected us as your charitable organization!

**FFBC**

# Thank You to the following Scholarship Donors

Total Donations are at \$21,000!!!



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Jim Sterba  
Randy Swarts  
Michael Thompson  
& Allen Vander Linden  
David Wilfahrt  
Jonathan Wilson & Scott Kuknyo  
Laura Cean Wilson  
Connie Wimer



# Caucus: “We Did Our Job”

by Bruce Carr



Our guest speaker on Friday morning, March 6, 2020, was Troy Price, former chair of the Iowa Democratic Party (IDP). In what he told us was his first public appearance since he stepped down from the chairmanship in mid-February, Troy gave us a cogent and convincing defense of the Iowa Caucus as a valuable initiator of the national nomination process, and some of his thoughts about the current state of the Democratic presidential race.

Troy praised Iowa’s caucus process for its unique, face-to-face intimacy and its resistance to mass-marketing. A prospective candidate doesn’t need a vast monetary investment to participate here – and indeed may not win if s/he relies on money alone. “You can’t phone it in, in Iowa,” he said, you’ve got to campaign in person and with superior organization. Which is exactly what Pete Buttigieg did: the Mayor came here with no national name-recognition and made himself and his ideas known in all 1,678 of Iowa’s precincts no matter their color or their position on same-gender weddings -- and he won. And you can learn a lot in Iowa, Troy said, including what you’re doing wrong. When the Biden campaign ran so miserably here, they paid attention and made the changes that brought their candidate back into the race.

As for the 2020 Caucus itself, Troy noted that for the participants themselves the event was a great success, even including over 5,000 who attended satellite caucuses outside the state. Of the hundreds of volunteers who herded and counted, and especially of his IDP colleagues, Troy said simply, “We did our job.” But the unprecedentedly complex reporting process mandated by the Democratic National Committee failed, and in particular it failed the nationwide media personalities who don’t like to be kept waiting. Everyone piled on, and the inevitable social-media fallout escalated beyond belief, beyond satire even to death-threats made to Troy’s staff and family. “I should not have trusted the DNC, nor Tom Perez,” said Perry, who had no safe choice but to resign. “Maybe now I’ll have time to find my perfect job,” he told us, “which I already know is managing the cheese counter at Whole Foods.”

***You can listen to a complete audio recording of Troy Price’s remarks, and the Q&A which followed, by clicking on the Speakers tab at our Web site, <[ffbc Iowa.org](http://ffbc Iowa.org)>.***



***Photos by Gary Moore***



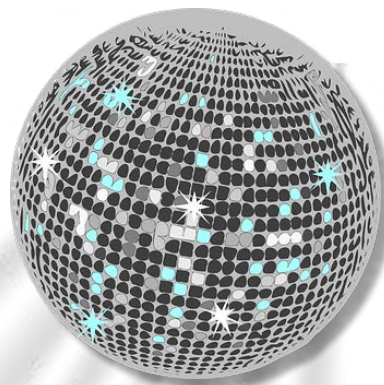
***Steve Person Introduces the March Speaker***

Troy Price is a native of Durant, Iowa, where he graduated from Durant High School. He studied political science and government at the University of Iowa, earning a B.A. there in 2004. Drawn to Democratic Party politics, he worked in the administration of Governor Chet Culver and later served as a press aide for former Governor Tom Vilsack. From June 2010 to February 2012, he was executive director of One Iowa, leaving that post to work in the remaining months of 2012 as Iowa director of the Obama reelection campaign. From January 2013 to March 2015, Price was executive director of the Iowa Democratic Party, and then from April 2015 through the end of 2016, he managed Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign in Iowa. He was Chair of the Iowa Democratic Party from July 2017 until he resigned in the middle of February 2020, in the wake of journalistic inability to handle non-instantaneous reportage of IDP caucus results. Troy Price lives with his husband, Eric, in the Des Moines area, where he is now between assignments, and is taking some time to evaluate what comes next.



# Bobby O

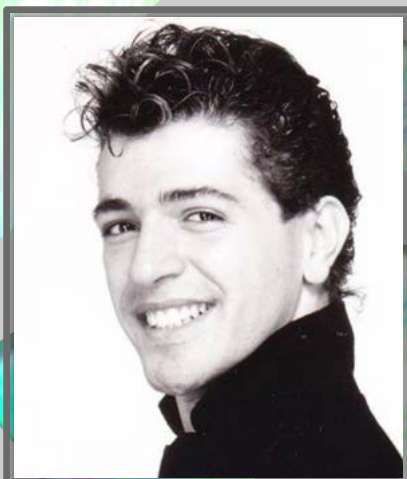
By Jordan Duesenberg



What can I say? The world seems like it's going to hell. Who knows what's going to happen with Coronavirus, which has dominated all of the news and conversations making life grim. It's times like these, that I turn to music to take me away from negativity. Dance music in particular is a great escape. One of my favorite (and gayest) dance subgenres is high energy disco (commonly known as hiNRG) which was in its heyday in the early to mid 80s. One of its greatest contributors was Bobby Orlando a.k.a. Bobby O, who was both an artist and producer. Writing about Bobby O in an article about underrepresented LGBTQ musicians, seems a bit odd. For one, Bobby O wasn't gay, in fact there are even a number of reports of his openly homophobic behavior. Yet Bobby O made gay hiNRG disco music, for gay clubs. He often made songs for drag queen megastar Divine and produced songs for openly gay dance pop group Pet Shop Boys. So at the end of the day, Bobby O's contribution towards LGBTQ music is extremely important and understated, but complicated to say the least.



Bobby O originally had his musical career start in glam rock, before jumping into producing forgettable disco music at its height in the 70s. He wouldn't catch a break until producing the hiNRG hit "Desire" for Roni Griffith which would lead him to opening up his own record label, O Records. This is when his musical output took off which earned him the name "the Ronald McDonald of the music industry." He literally has thousands of credits, and put out hundreds of songs. As Bobby O, he released his own hiNRG songs "She Has a Way" and "I'm So Hot For You," among others. He also would go on to personally release a high volume of songs under dozens of other names, aliases, and made-up bands, including Hippies with Haircuts, Girls Have Fun, Lilly & the Pink, The He Man Band, The Bang Gang, etc. One of the groups that Bobby O created and is perhaps his most well known group, is the interchangeable girl group, The Flirts, who had such break-out hits like "Passion," "Calling All Boys," "Helpless," etc. Bobby O created everything about The Flirts, and constantly rotated models to front the group with each release of theirs. In fact the only consistent part about The Flirts was Bobby O's booming hiNRG 80s production.

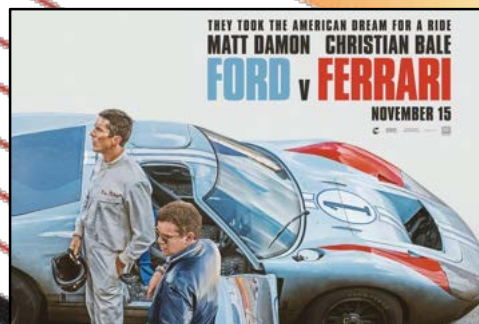


Perhaps what Bobby O is best known for is his collaborations with Pet Shop Boys and Divine. For Pet Shop Boys, he has produced 12 tracks for the group, but most popular are his productions for Pet Shop Boy's original 12" versions of "West End Girls" and "One More Chance." For drag megastar Divine's musical career, Bobby produced "Native Love (Step by Step)," "Love Reaction," (a blatant ripoff of New Order's "Blue Monday") and "Shoot Your Shot" (another blatant Patrick Cowley's "Menenergy" ripoff). I should note that one thing that Bobby O is known for in his productions is how similar his songs sound to other huge hits of the day, just check out the two previously listed songs as well as some other blatant ripoffs which would include Roni Griffith's "Hot Lover," a Bobby O production he ripped off from Blondie's "Call Me," or another Bobby O production, Girly's "Saving Myself," which was a ripoff of Dead or Alive's "You Spin Me Round." He also had a knack for essentially just revising his own songs with each release, so in a lot of cases, a good amount of his songs sound the same. Lets just say, when you hear a Bobby O song, you know it's a Bobby O song. Chances are, if you danced in gay bar in the 80s, you were dancing to some Bobby O! You can call him a hack, but at the end of the day, he made some monster hits that encapsulate what the gay 80s sounded like and for that, he'll forever be a legend, if not a problematic one.

disco

# Ford v Ferrari

A Film Review by Mark Turnage



Balancing screentime in most racing films falls between capturing thrilling vehicles that risk a fiery demise and the larger-than-life personalities who make those machines move. With *Ford v Ferrari*, director James Mangold expands the traditional racing film's scope to include not just the grueling 24-hour Le Mans race it builds toward, but also the story of a car born out of a bitter feud, and a team divided between crafting an image and engineering technical prowess. While the film's length is a bit long (2.5 hours), its core cast, exciting yet easy-to-follow racing sequences, and inclusion of multiple plot threads make it Oscar-worthy material.

*Ford v Ferrari* opens with two major setbacks: the first is racecar driver and 1959 Le Mans winner Carroll Shelby's (Matt Damon) forced retirement into car design due to a heart condition; the second is Ford Motor Company's failed 1963 buyout of Ferrari, and its owner Enzo delivering a scathing message to Ford as being second-rate. In spite, Henry Ford II, president of Ford Motor Company, hires Shelby to design a racecar to crush Ferrari at the race his team has won for the past four years: the 24-hour Le Mans. Shelby recommends the best driver he knows: Ken Miles (Christian Bale), a hot-headed automotive genius with a lead foot and a racer's intuition. Ford's executives aren't thrilled with Shelby's choice, however, and the tension between the team of suits and the team of racers begins to boil over, stoked by an antagonistic senior vice president (Josh Lucas), who seems to complicate their mission of winning Le Mans at every turn.

The film frequently dives into the technical aspects of racecar design, and some of it may seem like rocket science to those unversed in auto mechanics. It certainly feels a lot like they're designing a space shuttle, especially when an early test of their creation, the GT40, has its brakes lock up and begin to melt, in a tense but beautifully shot nighttime sequence that parallels a rocket burning up on re-entry. The sense of mortal peril hangs over Ken Miles like a specter, but despite his hot-headedness, Bale plays his character with an almost zen-like aura when he's immersed in racecar science. Several poignant scenes feature Miles taking time out of his schedule to mentor his son in his craft, not only avoiding the "absent father" trope but giving him more depth as someone equally invested in his family as his cars. Damon plays Shelby with slick Texas swagger, especially when facing down an intimidating Henry Ford in his office after a series of racetrack failures. One hilarious scene has Shelby taking Ford for a test drive in the completed GT40, where the executive is reduced to a sobbing mess after experiencing the sheer power and risk involved with driving a car of this magnitude.

Speaking of the racing sequences, *Ford v Ferrari* thankfully scraps the shaky-cam so prevalent in racing movies for a smoother Steadi-cam and digitally rendered camera views, making the GT40 easy to track and exciting to invest in. This isn't *Fast and Furious*. You have a clear sense of what's going on in the middle of a chaotic race, and Mangold succeeds in showing us the zen moments that Ken Miles experiences by contrasting them with the volatile world outside the cockpit.

Spotlighting the conflict between Shelby's team and the Ford execs was a wise decision on Mangold's part, adding more meat to a narrative that would otherwise have been carried solely by Damon and Bale. Josh Lucas shines as a smarmy, odious Ford executive eager to throw anyone under the bus to win. It's telling that his character receives no comeuppance, and is ultimately rewarded for his interference—casting a bittersweet pall over Shelby and Miles' work. Yet the final scenes are a touching tribute that the race must go on. For a film that fires on all 8 cylinders, look no further than *Ford v. Ferrari*.





## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Preparedness

By Polk County Supervisor Matt McCoy

As we are all aware by now, the world is experiencing a new pandemic known as the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). This new strain of coronavirus is cause for awareness, however it is not a cause of immediate concern in Central Iowa.

Polk County is working diligently with state and national healthcare professionals as we monitor the situation. Our office is in daily contact with the Polk County Health Department which is provided updated information hourly by the Centers for Disease Control.

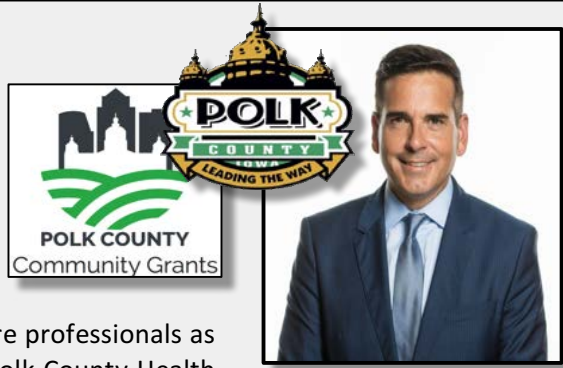
The Polk County Health Department is relaying the best possible information to those of us in Central Iowa. Currently, it is important to remember a Coronavirus is not all that uncommon. In fact, you have most likely had a coronavirus in your lifetime as it is typically better known as a cold or flu. This particular strain of coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new form of the virus that affects the respiratory system. To date, healthcare professionals are yet to have a treatment. This means those who contract COVID-19 are most vulnerable if they are elderly or have underlying health issues.

**The best advice currently offered by health care professionals is to treat this airborne outbreak much like you would the flu. That includes:**

- Washing your hands (20 seconds or sing "Happy Birthday" in your head two times).
- Use hand sanitizer.
- If you sneeze, be sure to use a tissue.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible.
- If you are not feeling well, stay home.
- If you receive an order and it comes from China, open it as there is no link to packaging and the spread of the illness.
- Disinfect surface areas, such as countertops, often.
- Face masks are *not* recommended. There is a shortage and our healthcare professionals need them for their daily jobs as they treat patients for any other illness.



As we now have our first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in central Iowa, our healthcare professionals are working this rapidly evolving situation as best as they can. I am asking all of you to take all necessary precautions and rely on the health department website for the most accurate and updated information at [www.PolkCountyIowa.gov/health](http://www.PolkCountyIowa.gov/health)



**"It's an interesting paradox that a self-styled 'stable genius' has so viciously attacked the Intelligence Community and the intelligent community, exposing sycophants along the way."**  
J. Wilson



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# A Human Petrie Dish

by Steve Person



*As I write this article, it is March 15, the ides of March. Not a particularly good day for Julius Caesar in 44 B.C.*

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One hundred seventy-eight years ago in its April 1842 edition, *Graham's Magazine* published Edgar Allen Poe's short story, "The Masque of the Red Death." In that tale, Prince Prospero seals his castle tightly shut with only him and 1000 lords and ladies to escape the Red Death plague. He gives a masquerade ball to celebrate his "accomplishment." Unfortunately, a mystery guest shows up—The Red Death itself. Despite Prospero's attempt to kill it, the plague spreads to all, and one by one, each suffers a horrible death.

Fast forward to 2020. As of today, eighteen people in Iowa are CONFIRMED cases of the latest coronavirus. Common sense tells us that many more are infected but not yet diagnosed. Part of the problem for that is the lack of testing kits. Thank you Donald Trump! I worked at the Capitol March 12 giving a tour to a group of fourth graders. Before I started my tour, I talked with a friend of mine who is a lobbyist. The Capitol teemed with legislators, lobbyists, employees, and hundreds of school children. My friend referred to the building as "a human petrie dish." Truer words were never spoken. Upon receiving information from a trusted confidant, I learned that the Republican leadership in the legislature had been asked WEEKS AGO what should be done to prepare for the inevitable oncoming virus. Their response was, "Nothing. It is a hoax." I wonder where they got that information! When cases began to appear in the state, they asked for sanitizing measures to be taken. Upon learning that all cleaning supplies were sold out, the problem was "solved" by placing a bottle of hand sanitizer outside the entrance of the House and Senate chambers. That's it! Nothing for the public except recommendations to wash hands frequently. One of our guides is self-quarantined because of symptoms similar to the virus. Having been on an airplane a few days before, the person is home and feeling lousy. The doctor can do nothing since no testing kit is available.

Cancellations of gatherings abound now around the state: the Civic Center canceled the run of *My Fair Lady's* national tour, and rightly so. Imagine more than 2000 people every night and twice on Saturday and Sunday under one roof for a week. The odds are that at least one person for each performance would be carrying the virus and not even knowing it. Des Moines Public Schools extended its spring break until at least the end of March. Churches around the state canceled Sunday services or if possible conducted them online. The list goes on. Companies are asking many employees to work from home if possible.

I hope we get through this with minimum cases of the virus, but if the so-called leadership of our legislature is any indication, I have my doubts. I do give the director of the Legislative Agency kudos for telling my supervisor that any of us guides who would rather not work for awhile, it would be OK. He is well aware that most of us fall into the demographic of being the most vulnerable since the average age among the guides is pretty high.