

## 2024 CSA Conference at Ephrata Cloister--Presenter Bios and Abstracts

**Name:** Deborah Altus  
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**Institution:** Washburn University, Emerita

**Presentation Title:** Game Show: Test your Communal Studies Knowledge!

**Abstract:**

Come and test your communal studies knowledge or just watch as Deborah Altus and Tim Miller try to stump contestants with questions over historical and present-day trivia. Our goal is to have lots of fun and to learn some things about communal societies in the process.

**Biographical Statement:**

Deborah Altus is professor emeritus of Family & Human Services at Washburn University, a long-time member of the Communal Studies Association and fan of all things communal!

**Name:** Jeff Bach  
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**Institution:** Young Center, Elizabethtown College, Emeritus

**Presentation Title:** Climbing into the Bridal Bed of Sophia and Christ: Conrad Beissel's Altered Concepts of Sexual Identity at Colonial Ephrata

**Abstract:**

Conrad Beissel wrote to the sixty-nine-year-old Brethren minister who baptized him to abandon marriage, take up celibacy and climb into the marriage bed with the Heavenly Virgin Sophia. The celibate Sister Berniece at Ephrata wrote before 1744 that she longed to climb into the bridal bed with Christ and have union with him.

How did Conrad Beissel construct a rhetoric for celibacy that inverted language for sexual activity to redefine altered understanding of sexual identity for women and for men at Ephrata? This paper explores the background of Beissel's concepts of sexuality derived from Jacob Boehme and Johann Georg Gichtel and their concepts of an androgynous God. Examining some of Beissel's most significant writings alongside some devotional accounts by celibate sisters at Ephrata will lead to an interpretation of how Beissel and some of Ephrata's members created new concepts of identity for celibate women and men.

**Biographical Statement:**

Jeff Bach is the Director of the Young Center, Emeritus at Elizabethtown College. He retired in 2020 after serving thirteen years as the director. He was also an Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Elizabethtown College. He was Associate Professor for Brethren Studies at Bethany Theological Seminary from 1994 to 2007. He earned a Ph.D. in

religion from Duke University in 1997, concentrating on Anabaptist and Pietist groups. He is the author of *Voices of the Turtledoves: The Sacred World of Ephrata* (Penn State Press, 2003). He and his wife, Ann Mason Bach, live in Mount Joy and have two adult daughters.

**Name:** Zenas Baer

Presentation Title: Roundtable on Hutterite Life

Abstract:

This session will be an open-ended question and answer session on Hutterite Life with Zenas and his sister, Ruth Lambach.

Biographical Statement:

Zenas Baer is the 9th of 15 children of Allan Baer and Edna Baer, Old Order Mennonites, who converted to Hutterites, then left the communal movement in 1960, to become capitalists. He received his Juris Doctorate Degree from Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, MN. Zenas Baer was elected to the City Council of the City of Hawley in 1981, and re-elected in 1985. He did not seek a third term, and became City Attorney, a post which he has held since 1990. He contributes substantial amounts of time to ending the barbaric practice of routine infant male circumcision worldwide, insuring genital integrity for all citizens of the world. Interests outside of the practice of law include: biking, tennis, racquetball, wood carving, and making homemade sauerkraut.

**Name:** Michael Barkun

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Institution: Syracuse University, Emeritus

Presentation Title: The Burned-over District at 75: Whitney Cross's Analysis and Its Problems

Abstract:

Whitney Cross's seminal work, which virtually invented Burned-over District studies, appeared at virtually the same time as Arthur Bestor's *Backwoods Utopias*. I plan to examine The Burned-over District through Cross's central concept, "ultraism," a tantalizing but ambiguous idea. Cross does not devote much of the book to communities, but seeks to demonstrate the environment in which communities are likely to take root. This raises the issue of whether it is more productive to study individual communities or examine the milieu in which they grow.

Biographical Statement:

Michael Barkun is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University. His books include *Crucible of the Millennium: The Burned-over District of New York in the 1840s*; *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement*; and *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*. He received the CSA Donald E. Pitzer Distinguished Service Award in 1995 and the CSA Distinguished Scholar Award in 2003.

**Name: Greg Brown**

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Institution: University of Southern Indiana

Presentation Title: Developmental Communalists

Abstract:

his session will invite participants to consider how the ideas of Developmental Communalism — that healthy groups and movements may use communal living as one phase of development and leave it at later times when it is no longer the best choice for them — may apply to the individuals within a community as well as to the group or society as a whole. Information from post-communal members will be considered for evidence of how individual growth and change during one's communal period lead to new life choices. Seen in this way, the lives of individuals leaving communities can be examined for evidence of communities as places of growth rather than as simple indicators of failure.

Biographical Statement:

I have studied communal societies since 1974 and serve on the boards of the CSA, the Center for Communal Studies, and Historic New Harmony. In addition to publications and presentations on communal studies, I ran a successful alternative program for expelled middle school students using ideas and practices from communal studies. My most recent publications include *Unified Field Theology* and *Matchsticks Contemplating Eternity* composed of essays on the human search for meaning and belonging in the twenty-first century.

**Name: Stephanie Carpenter**

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Institution: Michigan Tech University

Presentation Title: Cult Followings: A Consideration of Streaming Docu-series about Lifestyle "Cults"

Abstract:

I plan to look at the recent spate of popular streaming docu-series about "cults". (E.g., *Seduced: Inside the NXIVM Cult*; *Escaping Twin Flames*; *Dancing for the Devil: the 7M TikTok Cult*). What are these series saying about their subject matters; how are the producers enticing their viewers? I'll offer some formal analysis of the series themselves, looking at aspects like pacing, structure, and character development; I'll also consider how and why the series' producers define/depict the featured organizations as cults. Other areas of exploration will likely include the role of social media in the profiled organizations' recruitment and fundraising; and the way gender is depicted in these series.

**Biographical Statement:**

Stephanie Carpenter is a fiction-writer and assistant professor of creative writing at Michigan Technological University. Her novel, *Moral Treatment*, won the inaugural Summit Series Prize and is forthcoming in February 2025 from Central Michigan University Press. She's also the author of *Missing Persons: Stories*, winner of the Press 53 Award for Short Fiction and her work has appeared in literary journals including *Copper Nickel*, *Ecotone*, and *The Missouri Review*. Stephanie first attended the Communal Studies Association conference while working on a (as yet unpublished) fiction project about Shakers during the Era of Manifestations. She's contributed reviews to *Communal Societies* and is currently a member of the CSA board.

**Name:** Brian Carroll

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Institution: Israelite House of David

Presentation Title: Revisiting the Virgin Law: Celibacy, Sex, and Relationships at the House of David 1903-1978

**Abstract:**

Celibacy was a core belief of the Christian Israelite faith of the House of David commune in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Almost nothing has been written about what celibacy meant to the two thousand rank and file members or how it was practiced. Peeling back the veil of secrecy reveals a complex patchwork of different and sometimes competing sexual, relationship, and living arrangements. Clear distinctions can be made regarding sex at the colony prior to 1927, and the 50-years following. The latter period can be characterized as having a mostly celibate core community that became over time more open and permissive regarding dating, marriage, and expressions of sexuality. The rise of a significant resident non-member population further undermined celibacy restrictions. Other findings include that early on most members followed the strict prohibitions against sex, and that marriages at the House of David could be intensely romantic and fulfilling, even if not sexual.

**Biographical Statement:**

Brian D. Carroll, PhD., is historian and archivist for the Israelite House of David, in Benton Harbor Michigan. Brian grew up in Massachusetts and New Hampshire and has worked for over thirty years in academia and public history. He has been a tenured professor and a museum director, published numerous academic articles and book reviews, curated exhibitions, received myriad scholarships and fellowships, and done countless speaking engagements. Brian is currently organizing the House of David's collections in preparation for the opening of a House of David museum in the coming years. He is also pursuing numerous writing and research projects, as well as drafting a monograph about the House of David during World War II.

**Name:** Nicholas Chiaia

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Institution: George Mason University

Presentation Title: Unification and Fragmentation of Community: a 50 year look back

**Abstract:**

I am a 69 year old Unification Church Movement (UCM) convert and lawyer. I will share about my 50 year-long aspiration for inter-generational, familial, and community love and unity. I will highlight the UCM second generation and their compounded sense of alienation resulting from their parents' separation from mainstream society, anti-cult characterizations of the UCM, the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, ongoing intra-UCM litigation, and the plethora of public disclosure of UCM issues with money, waste of community assets, power, infighting, and sex. I will contextualize my perspective, explaining the UCM promise of "true love and true family" and my own developmental needs for affirmation, emotional security, containment, belonging, and identity at age 19 and now.

**Biographical Statement:**

I joined the Unification Church movement (UCM) in 1973, was married in a Moon mass marriage, and lived communally until 1986. I played an active ministerial role within the UCM extended community of families until its schism in 2008. I received a JD from the University of San Francisco in 1990 and I have served as legal counsel for UCI, a UCM-related nonprofit since 2011. I have been extensively involved in intra-UCM litigation and have in-depth understanding of UCM's political, legal, and economic dimensions. I was drawn to the UCM in my earlier years based on its presentation as a communal extended-family-styled group. My wife of 41 years and I have three sons, and three grandchildren.

**Name:** Tom Cimarusti

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Institution: Florida Gulf Coast University

Presentation Title: "Let This Be a Day of Rejoicing": The Solar and Lunar Festivals of the Koreshan Unity

**Abstract:**

The Koreshan Papers at Florida Gulf University's Special Collection currently house numerous event programs detailing two annual festivals celebrating the births of its founder Dr. Cyrus Teed (Koresh) and the Unity's President, Annie G. Ordway, respectively named the Solar and Lunar Festivals. These festivals were major social events for Unity members as well as for the local community and often showcased musical and theatrical performances, food, awards, and an address by Dr. Teed. The purpose of this paper is to trace the history of these festivals and to address several questions: What other types of cultural activities took place during these festivals and in addition to them? Did these festivals serve to be more than a celebration? And

what efforts are being made today that reflect the Unity's testament to social and cultural engagement?

**Biographical Statement:**

Dr. Thomas M. Cimarusti is an Associate Professor of Music History at Florida Gulf Coast University. He has lectured at various campuses across the country including Florida State University, Utah Valley University, and Texas Tech University. With an interest in 18th- and 19th-century music, Dr. Cimarusti has presented conference papers in Asia, Europe, and the US and has published on Italian chamber music, Italian folk music, the art song. His current research interest concerns the musical culture of the Koreshans. He is the founder/director of the Center for Public Musicology (CPM) – a local center that promotes community engagement through privately and publicly tailored music lectures, opera excursions, and performances throughout Southwest Florida. Follow the CPM at [www.naplescpm.com](http://www.naplescpm.com)

**Name: Cheryl Coulthard**

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Institution: Communal Societies, Associate Editor

Presentation Title: Sexuality and Harmony: Ideals in Tension in the Rappite Community

**Abstract:**

While utopian communities aspire to harmony, the reality often falls short. That George Rapp named his community the Harmony Society perhaps makes its shortfalls more ironic. This paper uses Harmonist documents including letters, agreements and conflict resolutions to examine the types of behavior that Rapp considered disharmonious in his female followers, the community response to these behaviors, and to contrast them with the expectations for male Harmonists.

**Biographical Statement:**

Cheryl Coulthard received her PhD in History from Texas A & M University in College Station in May 2019. After graduating Cheryl and her family left Texas for Virginia's Shenandoah Valley where she is enjoying small town living and finishing up writing a book on women in the Harmony Society. Last year, Cambridge University press published her book, *Communal Societies and New Religious Movements*, as part of the Elements series. Cheryl serves on the board of the Communal Studies Association and is Associate Editor for the journal *Communal Societies*.

**Name: David Entin**

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Institution: Rocky Hill Cohousing

Presentation Title: Northampton Association of Education and Industry

**Abstract:**

I would like to present a narrative and side show on the Northampton Association of Education and Industry, a lesser known 19th century utopian community in western Massachusetts. The community involved a total of 240 people running a silk mill and other enterprises and living communally from 1842 to 1846. Each member received a living subsistence and shared equally in any year-end profits. The presentation will cover who and why the community formed and why, in the end, it did not continue. It will include excerpts of letters from those living there describing daily life in the community. Sojourner Truth lived there and Frederic Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison visited.

**Biographical Statement:**

My name is David Entin. I joined the Communal Studies Association in 2023 and attended the 50th annual meeting in New Harmony. I live in Rocky Hill Cohousing in Northampton, MA, and am retired from a second career in higher education administration. My first career was in anti-poverty work. I have bachelor's and master's degrees in American history and a Ph.D. in sociology. A Five College Learning in Retirement seminar on 19th century American utopian communities led to my interest in and research on this topic.

**Name:** Martha Bradley-Evans

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**Institution:** University of Utah, Emerita

**Presentation Title:** What's Sex Got to Do With It? The Demographics of Mormon Polygamy

**Abstract:**

During the past thirty years, scholars have examined 19th century plurality among the Latter-day Saints and the 20th century practice of polygamy by the Fundamentalist Mormons creating a narrative about this subterranean yet elemental doctrine and life style. Some historians, cultural geographers, and sociologists have focused on the demographics of the region to better understand its scope, the impact on family formation, and power structures. These demographic studies challenge myths and reveal patterns in terms of geography, social hierarchies, and the number of individuals involved in plural families as husbands, wives, and children. This historiographical study looks at what we know in terms of demographic, social and hierarchical patterns in the practice of a plurality of wives among the Latter-day Saints and the Fundamentalist Mormons.

**Name:** Boaz Feldman

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**Institution:** NeuroSystemics

**Presentation Title:** "Nervous System Approaches for Resilient Community Living"

### Abstract:

Nervous system dynamics are always occurring, even as you are reading this abstract. Understanding the various functions of an individual nervous system, and the even more complex interactions among a group of people will enable fresh perspectives on individual and community wellbeing, social embeddedness and conflict-resolution.

A regulated nervous system is one which is oriented in the present moment, grounded and engaging with the situation at hand. One can develop attention-regulation capacity based on one's own experience, with qualities such as mindfulness and self-compassion, in particular on interoceptive, visceral and somatic phenomena. The strengthening of observer skills acts as a form of inner social engagement and increases one's ability to stay grounded and relate skillfully to emergent experiences. Somatic techniques such as titration and pendulation (Levine, 1997) and positive psychology tools (Garland & Fredrickson, 2019; Rashid et al., 2019) such as embodied resourcing and savouring of pleasure have been shown to help.

But how to support nervous system regulation when we are with others? It's called co-regulation, and there's a lot of empirical data telling us how it works and how to benefit from it. For example, the Social Baseline Theory (Beckes & Coan, 2011) propounds that when we feel safe in the company of others, neurobiologically we budget less bioenergetic resources to do the same tasks. For example, the quantity of glucose spent in the brain during moments of stress for the nervous system to regulate itself is reduced when we are with friends. So one key consideration for communities is to build a "felt-sense" of safety. Moreover, we each have a different metabolic structure as to how much we "merge" with others, or remain "differentiated," which will impact the optimal range of engagement in the community, also known as the "community organism."

In this presentation, we will explore these themes, how they apply in relational interactions, communication techniques and key takeaways to build successful communities.

### Biographical Statement:

Boaz B. Feldman (MSc, SEP, FSP, PgD) is a pragmatic visionary, clinical psychologist, trainer, researcher and contemplative acting for worldwide positive change. A depression in his early 20's led him to ordain as a Buddhist monk in Thailand, where he practiced mindfulness meditation intensively for 3 years. He then returned to Switzerland to train as a clinical psychologist, and led a number of psychological first aid and staff welfare programs with International NGO's (UNOCHA, Doctors Without Borders, International Medical Corps). After numerous missions in conflict affected countries (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Myanmar) and low-income regions (Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa), he designed a 3-year complexity science, somatic and positive psychology-centred CARE training program (Clinical Abilities for Resiliency & Empowerment) and founded NeuroSystemics, a Geneva-based NGO. He is currently a research lead at Life Itself Research (France) and a Research Scholar at Harvard University in community-based citizen sciences for mental health with youth.

**Name:** Kathleen Fernandez

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Institution: Executive Director, Communal Studies Association

Presentation Title: Die Heller Signalstern: The Significance of The Zoar Star

**Abstract:**

Today we call them logos, symbols that stand for an organization or its product. McDonalds' Golden Arches, Apple Computer's apple with a bite taken out, AT&T's segmented globe. All instantly recognizable. The communal Society of Separatists of Zoar (1817-1898) had a "logo," too, the Zoar Star. The Star was an integral part of the religious beliefs of this German Pietistic group. This paper will attempt to trace the background of the Zoar Star, "Die heller Signalstern" (the bright shining star) as called by Zoar trustee Jakob Ackermann, and its place in Zoar's history.

**Biographical Statement:**

Kathleen M. Fernandez, a graduate of Otterbein College with a B. A. in History, is the former site manager at Zoar Village and Fort Laurens State Memorials for the Ohio Historical Society (now the Ohio History Connection), retiring in 2004. She worked as the Executive Director of the North Canton Heritage Society from 2006-2016. She has been the Executive Director of the Communal Studies Association since 2004. She is the author of *A Singular People: Images of Zoar* (Kent State University Press, 2003) and a general history of Zoar called *Zoar: The Story of an Intentional Community*, (Kent State University Press, 2019, winner of the 2019 Distinguished Book Award from the Communal Studies Association), and has written numerous papers and articles about the Zoar Separatists for journals and conferences. She was awarded the Communal Studies Association's Distinguished Scholar Award in 2020.

**Name:** Stephen Fleming  
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Institution: Independent Scholar

Presentation Title: Jane Lead and American Communalism from Ephrata to Mormonism

**Abstract:**

English visionary Jane Lead (1634-1704) inspired a number of German radicals many of whom migrated to Pennsylvania including Johannes Kelpius, the Schwarzenau Brethren, and the Ephrata Cloister.

Scholars have long noted the similarities between distinctive Mormon practices and those at Ephrata, especially baptism for the dead, Melchizedek priesthood, and Heavenly Mother. All of those practices are described in Lead's writings.

In 1744, the cloister sent out missionaries who were invited to New London, Connecticut, near where Joseph Smith's grandfather, Solomon Mack, lived. Lead's ideas then spread among the

radical Separates, a new religious movement that started in New London, and had Solomon's cousin, Ebenezer, as a leader.

Out of that network, new communal movements formed including Shadrach Ireland and the Public Universal Friend. Solomon's son Jason taught many of Jane Lead's ideas and likely passed on those to Joseph Smith Jr, who made his own communal attempts. Ann Lee was also likely influenced by Lead.

**Biographical Statement:**

Stephen Fleming holds a PhD in religious studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara. My dissertation, "The Fulness of the Gospel Christian Platonism and the Origins of Mormonism," won my department's Gerald J. Larson Dissertation Award for best dissertation. I've published in *Church History*, *Religion and American Culture*, and *Max Weber Studies* as well as Mormon journals. I am currently working on an intellectual biography of Joseph Smith, or where his ideas came from. I argue that Jane Lead was his major source and that the Ephratan missionaries were a likely conduit of Lead's ideas into the circles of Smith's family.

**Name:** Larry Foster

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**Institution:** Georgia Tech, Emeritus

**Presentation Title:** *Religion and Sexuality: An Author's Retrospective Reflections on his Book after its more than Four Decades in Print.*

**Abstract:**

This paper will reflect on (1) the distinctive goals I was trying to accomplish in researching and writing my first book, (2) how well I believe I accomplished those goals, and (3) why people with widely conflicting points of view have nevertheless found my book compelling. Spinoza's credo - "I have made a ceaseless effort not to ridicule, nor to scorn human actions, but to understand them"--has been my guiding objective in writing this book, I'll also share some behind-the-scenes anecdotes about the challenges of working with my first editor at Oxford, who wanted me to highlight the more sensational aspects of my findings (I refused compromise the integrity of my vision), and I'll correct some common misconceptions about *Religion and Sexuality*.

**Biographical Statement:**

Larry Foster taught American social and religious history, modern European history, and comparative world history at Georgia Tech in Atlanta for forty-two years from 1977 through 2019, before becoming an emeritus professor. His major scholarship compares and contrasts attempts to introduce new patterns of family life, marriage, and sex roles in three pre-Civil War American millennial religious groups--the celibate Shakers, "free love" Oneida Community, and polygamous Mormons. Larry has published three books--*Religion and Sexuality* (1981), *Women, Family, and Utopia* (1991), and *Free Love in Utopia* (2001), all still in print--as well as dozens of scholarly articles and chapters in edited books. Larry was the first non-Mormon to have full access to the central Latter-day Saint Church archival holdings in Salt Lake City on Mormon

polygamy. Based upon that research, he reconstructed for the first time the 21-year period from 1831 to 1852 when Mormon polygamy was secretly conceived, introduced, and institutionalized, at the same time that it was being publicly denied.

**Name:** Jeremy Genovese

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Institution: Cleveland State University

Presentation Title: The Earth for All: Intentional Communities and the Georgist Model

Abstract:

Generations of American students have been taught that all utopian experiments have failed. However, those of us who study intentional communities recognize this as a superficial assessment. In fact, many intentional communities have lasted for generations. The more intriguing question is: what factors contribute to their success or failure?

Quantitative studies generally find that religious communities are more successful than secular ones. However, one type of secular community stands out for its endurance—those founded on the philosophy of Henry George. This group includes Arden, Delaware; Fairhope, Alabama; and Free Acres, New Jersey. Why have these communities been more successful? I argue that the Georgist notion of cooperative individualism effectively balances collective ownership with individual incentives, leading to their greater longevity compared to other approaches.

Biographical Statement:

Jeremy Genovese is Emeritus Associate Professor of Human Development and Educational Psychology at Cleveland State University and author of the forthcoming *-The Earth for All: Henry George, Utopian Communities and Market Socialism* (McFarland).

He has a long interest in intentional communities and utopian movements. As a teenager he spent two weeks working on a kibbutz, in the 1970s he lived in the Pine Street House commune in Philadelphia, and has been active at the Chautauqua Institution. Currently he is Great Lakes coordinator for Esperanto-USA.

**Name:** Christian Goodwillie

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Institution: Hamilton College, Richard Couper Press

Presentation Title: Alpha and Omega: Richard McNemar's Evaluation of the Shaker West

Abstract:

Shaker Richard McNemar functioned as a "minuteman" for the Shaker cause west of the Appalachians. From the moment of his conversion in 1805, McNemar fully turned his time and talents to the promotion and defense of Shakerism. Following the recall of Elder Benjamin Seth Youngs to New York in 1836, McNemar was faced with the sad reality of the state of the

western Shaker communities. In a moment of self-reflection, McNemar took up his pen to answer a letter written at New Lebanon, New York, on December 30, 1804. Carried by the three Shaker missionaries to the west, Youngs among them, the letter was read to hearers, both eager and trepidatious, on the long road to Turtle Creek. McNemar's response, written thirty-two years later, provides his candid assessment of the successes, and failures, of the western Shaker converts in managing their own affairs.

**Biographical Statement:**

Christian Goodwillie is director and curator of special collections at the Burke Library of Hamilton College in Clinton, New York. He also serves as Editor of the Richard W. Couper Press. He was Curator of Collections at Hancock Shaker Village from 2001-2009, and past president of the Communal Studies Association. He has authored, co-authored, or edited twelve books and numerous articles on the Shakers, Freemasonry, and other topics. His most recent book is *Richard McNemar: Frontier Heretic and Shaker Apostle*. He also co-hosts the podcast *Communes USA*.

**Name:** Carl Guarneri

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**Institution:** Saint Mary's College of California, Emeritus

**Presentation Title:** *Backwoods Utopias at 75: Arthur Bestor's Scholarship and Its Legacy*

**Abstract:**

Arthur Bestor's pioneering work, which virtually opened the field of communal studies, was published in January 1950. In this presentation I plan to present biographical information on Arthur Bestor and his career, discuss the genesis of *Backwoods Utopias* and its reception, and point to several important elements of Bestor's scholarship and their impact on subsequent scholarship.

**Biographical Statement:**

Author of two books—*The Utopian Alternative* (1991) and the forthcoming *America's Utopian Moment*—on American Fourierism and many other articles and reviews on various American communal utopias. Winner of the CSA Distinguished Scholar Award in 2006.

**Name:** Thomas Guiler

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**Institution:** Oneida Community Mansion House

**Presentation Title:** The Oneida Community Mansion House: A Lab for Learning

**Abstract:**

In fall 2023 the Oneida Community Mansion House was a lab for learning as the site of a Colgate History and Museum Studies course. Throughout the semester students met on campus and at the Mansion House learning about the history of the Oneida Community and Oneida Ltd.; examining museum collections ranging from silverware to manuscripts to textiles; and learning the inner workings of a career in museums. Taught by Colgate Professors and Mansion House Staff, students produced 5-mini exhibit installations throughout the Mansion House that allows guests to see the Mansion House and the Oneida story through students' eyes. This presentation will review this successful experiment with special attention to the work produced, partnerships formed, and lessons learned. Ultimately, it will provide one framework for ways in which small historic sites can leverage partnerships with local colleges and universities to make a big impact on institutions and students' experiences.

#### Biographical Statement:

Thomas A. Guiler is Director of Museum Affairs at the Oneida Community Mansion House. A scholar of intentional and utopian communities, Tom received his Ph.D. from Syracuse University in 2016 and taught for 5 years at the University of Delaware and Winterthur Program in American Material Culture. He researches and teaches 19th and 20th century American social and cultural history and has particular interests in social protest, material culture, and the digital and public humanities. He has published and presented on a wide variety of intentional communities including Byrdcliffe, Roycroft, and Rose Valley in addition to extensive work on the Oneida Community. He is currently working on a book, *The Handcrafted Utopia: Arts and Crafts Communities in America's Progressive Era*.

**Name:** Mary Ann Haagen

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Institution: Dartmouth College

Presentation Title: Counting the Cost: Shaker Celibacy

#### Abstract:

Celibacy is a foundational tenet of Shakerism. Those considering a Shaker life are expected to discontinue sexual relations with a spouse, or set aside romantic relationships that might lead to sexual involvement with another. Covenant Shakers commit themselves to a life of sexual abstinence.

Historically, celibacy, as a condition of faithfulness, put extraordinary demands on the individual, but also on the community. A society so constituted could not depend on procreation to refresh the ranks of Believers. After the death of Mother Lucy Wright in 1821, adoption or indenture of children was actively pursued as a recruitment alternative. Doing so meant that Shaker societies offered an essential safety net to families in distress. And indentured children contributed to the vibrancy and sense of purpose of their adoptive community. But the practice of indenture frequently led to bitter conflict with "the world."

I will use William Pillow's mid-19th century lawsuits against the Mt. Lebanon Shakers to illustrate the emotional, legal, and financial costs of those conflicts.

Making life-long Shakers of indentured children proved difficult enough that some Believers began to question celibacy as a principle of the faith. That internal “heresy” only re-affirmed the Shakers’ commitment to a celibate life, even as dramatically declining membership continued to define Shakerism’s future.

**Biographical Statement:**

Mary Ann is a Shaker scholar and musician, serving as a visiting scholar and teacher in the music department at Dartmouth College. She is actively engaged in all aspects of the Enfield NH Shaker Museum’s educational mission. Her research focuses on the N.H. Shaker communities. She lectures widely on Shaker history, music, and dance; has recorded three CDs with a vocal ensemble she directed. The group’s DVD, “We Find No Harm in Dancing,” documents their work with Shaker dance. She is editor of the *The Collected Writings of Elder Henry Cumings*, published by Couper Press.

**Name:** Tommy Hines

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Institution: South Union Shaker Village

Presentation Title: Benjamin Seth Youngs: An Easterner in the Shaker West

**Abstract:**

When Benjamin Seth Youngs began his missionary journey to the west on January 1, 1805, he was unwittingly embarking on a new life that would eventually require his leadership at South Union, Kentucky for twenty-five years. Between 1811 and 1836, Youngs steered South Union through its formative period, watching the community grow in population, guiding its increase in land holdings, and experiencing the village’s greatest era of building construction. He also systematically adapted to a culture that was at first foreign to him, customs and traditions different than those with which he was familiar in the northeast. Youngs would come to love South Union, but the task of interpreting the ways of Kentucky to his northeastern counterparts was never-ending. The challenges of adapting to a new way of life while attempting to tame Kentuckians into good Shakers makes Benjamin Seth Youngs’ story a fascinating one.

**Biographical Statement:**

Tommy Hines is a graduate of Western Kentucky University with an undergraduate degree in Music Theory and Folk Studies, and a Master of Arts degree in Historic Preservation and has spent his career as Executive Director of South Union Shaker Village. He has presented on topics related to Southern decorative arts at venues that include Colonial Williamsburg, the Decorative Arts Trust, and for the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts. Hines has also authored three award-winning exhibit catalogs, published articles in *Antique Review* and the magazine *Antiques*, and contributed to other publications, including *Kentucky by Design: The Decorative Arts and American Culture (2015)* and *Making Time: The Art of the Kentucky Tall Case Clock, 1790-1850 (2019)*. Hines received the Ida Lee Willis Service to Preservation Award from the Kentucky Heritage Council (2001), the Edith Bingham Excellence in Preservation

Education Award from Preservation Kentucky (2018), and the Frank R. Levstik Award for Professional Service from the Kentucky Historical Society (2020).

**Name:** Mitchell Jones

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Institution: University at Buffalo

Presentation Title: Enchanted Motor Power: A New Materialist Approach to John Murray Spear's Electric God, 1830-1872

**Abstract:**

In 1853, John Murray Spear, a former Unitarian activist for prisoners' rights turned spiritualist, and a handful of followers began constructing a prophetic machine called the "New Motive Power" that promised to provide perpetual motion and an new era of abundance on earth. To Spear, spirit was material, just of a more ethereal variety. Material problems like tyranny, inequality, violence and ignorance were the result of earth's disharmony with God's natural, harmonial order. The intelligent angels of the spiritual realm had plans to remedy material disharmony. Spear was an enchanted materialist, attempting to solve problems in the temporal world through material manifestation of spiritual harmony. Thus, Spear's "mechanical messiah" was not an odd aberration in his otherwise respectable career as an activist, but was an expression of Spear's ever present desire to unite spirit and material.

**Biographical Statement:**

Mitchell K. Jones is a historian from Rochester, NY. He is a PhD candidate in the department of history at the University at Buffalo. He has a bachelor's degree in anthropology and a master's degree in history from the College at Brockport, State University of New York. He has written on communities inspired by French socialist Charles Fourier and other radical movements in the Western New York "burnt over district" in the 1840s. Jones also enjoys singing and playing guitar and banjo at his church, Unity Spiritual Center of Rochester.

**Name:** Tom Kendig

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Institution: Old Economy Village

Presentation Title: Could a Leprosy Colony Be Considered a Communal Group

**Abstract:**

Although it is rare, leprosy still exists today. According to the World Health Organization, approximately 208,000 people have leprosy (also known as Hansen's disease), around the globe, with most cases found in Asia and Africa. Though leprosy has never been extremely present in the Americas, there have been a handful of leprosy colonies throughout US history. A few of the groups were located in Kalaupapa, in Hawaii, Penikese, in Massachusetts and Carville

National Leprosarium in Louisiana. In exploring considerations this presentation will focus on the Penikese location.

The causes, signs and symptoms of leprosy will be reviewed. We will then explore the conditions found in the Penikese leprosy colony to better understand the facilities that existed. Penikese is a small island near Cuttyhunk at the outermost end of the Elizabeth Island chain extending westward from Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Characteristics, evaluations and considerations concerning a leprosy colony will be examined from academic journals as well as those of several disciplinary viewpoints including those from sociology, history, and philosophy. Although leprosy colonies have been around from Biblical times it still seems appropriate for this consideration.

**Biographical Statement:**

Frequent visits to and independent research on the Amanas, Quakers, and Harmonists have contributed to my appreciation of the lifestyles, experiences and histories of these and other Communal groups. After graduating from Southern Methodist University with a BA in Comparative Literature, I spent my working career as a vice-president with the Atena Life & Casualty for 35 years. Living and traveling in Missouri, Texas, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts has provided me with an array of opportunities to actively pursue my ongoing interests in communal societies.

**Name:** Ruth Lambach

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Presentation Title: Roundtable on Hutterite Life

Abstract: This session will be an open-ended question and answer session on Hutterite Life with Ruth and her brother, Zenas Baer.

**Biographical Statement:**

Ruth Baer Lambach has been involved with the CSA since October 1989 when that year's conference was hosted by Hutterites in South Dakota. Over the years she has been a presenter, a writer, a board member and book review editor of the Journal.

Ruth has over the course of her life been a part of Mennonite, Hutterite, and Bruderhof communities as well as living at Koinonia Farm. Ruth now lives "on the outside" and writes and speaks about her life experiences.

**Name:** Etta Madden

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Institution: Missouri State, Emerita

Presentation Title: Murder in a Galápagos Utopia: A Review of Abbott Kahler's *Eden Undone* (2024)

Abstract:

Abbott Kahler's recently released book, *Eden Undone: A True Story of Sex, Murder, and Utopia at the Dawn of the World War II* unfolds the gripping account of eight Europeans who attempt to survive on a Galapagos island. This review of the book nods to the new feature-length film on the same subject, produced by Ron Howard, but devotes more time to pointing out the similarities between this south sea adventure and other literary and lived utopias. From Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) to William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) and beyond, the literary and the lived experiences overlap as humans face their interior dreams and darkest desires for love and power as well as food, clothing and shelter.

**Biographical Statement:**

Etta Madden is Professor of English, Emerita, at Missouri State University. She will be a visiting professor at the University of Pisa, Italy, Fall 2024, and has been a visiting scholar at the American Academy in Rome, a Fulbright Senior Lecturer in American Literature at the Università degli Studi di Catania (Italy), and a recipient of research fellowships at the New York Public Library and the Library Company of Philadelphia. Her books include *Engaging Italy: American Women's Utopian Visions and Transnational Networks* (SUNY Press 2022), *Eating in Eden: Food & American Utopias* (U Nebraska 2006) and *Bodies of Life: Shaker Literature and Literacies* (Greenwood 1998).

**Name:** Richard (Rick) Marshall

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Institution: University of Indianapolis

Presentation Title: Shakers Celibacy: A Cover for Sexual Scandal? (Part 2)

**Abstract:**

The humorist Artemus Ward once quipped that “the Shakers is the strangest religious sex I ever met.” Years before and many years after Ward’s snide statement, people have cast doubt on Shaker celibacy. One Shaker poetess, Hortency Hooser, extols the “pure love” among the brothers and sisters, but many writers of Shaker novels and short stories have drawn a very physical interpretation of the love described in countless Shaker poems and songs. This presentation will continue my CSA 2023 talk, explaining how other fictional authors (ones not cited last year) insinuate that such phrases as “pure love” could refer to a heightened sexual tension and activity that pervade Shaker communities, a condition ironically engendered, so the stories suggest, by the sect’s tenets of celibacy. And unfortunately these authors have sustained this false image of Shaker life from the nineteenth century, throughout the twentieth, and into the twenty-first century.

**Biographical Statement:**

Richard Marshall, a professor of composition and American Literature at the University of Indianapolis from 1983 to 2021, also taught many sections of Utopias in Literature and History, a course that examined Shaker short stories and novels as well as Shaker historical documents

and concludes with a field trip to Pleasant Hill. He has also published on the Shakers in *Utopian Studies* (2010) and in *American Communal Societies Quarterly*, (2019).

**Name:** Dan McKanan  
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**Institution:** Harvard Divinity School

Presentation Title: Sexual Misconduct at L'Arche: A Challenge to Communal Studies Scholars

**Abstract:**

In January 2023, a "Study Commission" established by L'Arche International issued a remarkable report detailing its investigation of sexual misconduct perpetrated by L'Arche founder Jean Vanier. This report was in some ways unprecedented in the history of communalism. A large, thriving communal movement responded to accusations of abuse by its founder without either denial or minimizing, but by re-evaluating its identity and founding story. The report concludes that Vanier's "intimate gestures and sexual acts" with twenty-five adult women constituted a pattern of "abuses at the heart of L'Arche." It also posits that "the stages of the foundation of L'Arche" had unfolded "very differently from what is recounted by the official history" and suggests that abuse was intrinsic to Vanier's practice of charismatic authority.

This presentation will ask what the Commission's report might mean for those of us who study other communal movements. Communal history is rife with accusations of misconduct, and historians often interpret these as evidence of the prejudiced hostility of outsiders. The L'Arche Commission challenges us to "take seriously the subjectivity" of abuse victims, and consider the possibility that abuse of power may be central to many communal stories.

**Biographical Statement:**

Dan McKanan is the Emerson Senior Lecturer at Harvard Divinity School, where he has taught since 2008. He is the author of six books on religion, leftist politics, environmentalism, and intentional community. Dan's most recent book is *Camphill and the Future: Spirituality and Disability in an Evolving Communal Movement* (2020). He serves on the board of the International Communal Studies Association and as the founding director of Harvard's Program for the Evolution of Spirituality.

**Name:** Carol Medicott  
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**Institution:** Northern Kentucky University, Emerita

Presentation Title: The Complicated Legacy of Shaker Pioneer Issachar Bates

**Abstract:**

Issachar Bates, who spent most of his Shaker life in the western communities, casts a strong shadow across the Shaker manuscript record. His autobiography, first recorded between 1832 and 1835, holds the distinction of having been copied in manuscript more extensively than the life story of any other Shaker: at least eighteen times by different scribes across the Shaker world. Even the life stories of the original Shaker “Gospel Parents,” or of such crucial early figures as Joseph Meacham or Lucy Wright, have not received as much attention in manuscript by Shaker scribes as the life story of Issachar Bates. This paper explores why the life story of Issachar Bates so captivated later Shakers. While Bates’s life was uncommon by any standards, I argue that Bates’s story offered a window into lively history of the Shaker West’s first few decades. The writing and initial collation of Bates’s autobiography unfolded during the mid to late 1830s, a time of thorny upheaval and transition in the Shaker West, when most of the original eastern Shaker emissaries – like Bates, who had labored to establish the western communities — were returning to the East, leaving many western communities to face uncertainty. Bates’s life story would serve as a window for Shakers everywhere into the historical context of a Shaker West that by the mid-1800s was fully transformed.

**Biographical Statement:**

Carol Medlicott is Emeritus Professor of Geography in the Department of History and Geography at Northern Kentucky University. Her research considers a range of topics in historical and cultural geography, including religious geographies, memory, sacred spaces, and musical geographies. Since 2005 her research has focused on Shakers, including the western Shaker communities of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. She is author of *Issachar Bates: A Shaker’s Journey* (University Press of New England, 2013). Her most recent book, co-authored with Christian Goodwillie, is *This Chosen Pleasant Hill: Shakers of the Kentucky Bluegrass*.

**Name:** Tim Miller

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**Institution:** University of Kansas, Emeritus

**Presentation Title:** Game Show: Test your Communal Studies Knowledge!

**Abstract:**

Come and test your communal studies knowledge or just watch as Deborah Altus and Tim Miller try to stump contestants with questions over historical and present-day trivia. Our goal is to have lots of fun and to learn some things about communal societies in the process.

**Biographical Statement:**

Tim Miller is professor emeritus of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas. He is a long-time member of the Communal Studies Association and fan of all things communal!

**Name:** John Murphy

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Institution: Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College

Presentation Title: Great Green Hope for the Urban Blues: Hudson Valley Art and Utopia

Abstract:

For two centuries artists have portrayed the Hudson Valley, stretching between New York Harbor and Albany, as a region of beautiful landscapes, picturesque villages, alternative lifestyles, and rural lifeways. Art colonies like Elverhoj and Byrdcliffe appealed to artists and artisans hoping to escape the modern world through renewed contact with nature and handicrafts. Religious communities like the Bruderhof and the International Peace Mission Movement sought the “promised land” in the Hudson Valley. By the 1960s the Valley, especially the village of Woodstock, symbolized a countercultural retreat from the oppressive military-industrial complex. A 1970 New York article described the Valley as the “great green hope for the urban blues.” Drawn from research for a forthcoming exhibition at the Loeb Art Center, this paper will cast a critical eye over the various myths of the Hudson Valley, questioning how it came to represent a space, both real and imaginary, of rest and retreat from the stresses and anxieties of modern urban life.

Biographical Statement:

John P. Murphy (PhD, Northwestern University, 2017) is the Philip and Lynn Straus Curator of Prints and Drawings at The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College. His research interests include the Woodstock art colony, the Arts and Crafts movement, prints and politics, and the New Deal art programs. Recent scholarship has appeared in *Print Quarterly*, *Communal Societies*, *American Communist History*, and *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*. His research has been supported with grants and fellowships from the Winterthur Museum, the Huntington Library, the Tamiment Library (NYU), and the Wolfsonian Museum. His book "New Deal Art: Culture and Crisis in the WPA Era" is forthcoming (2025) from Thames & Hudson's *World of Art* series.

**Name:** Ryan Obert

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Institution: Quincy University

Presentation Title: The Shakers: From Celibacy to Women Empowerment

Abstract:

The Shakers were a thriving utopian society from the late 18th to the early 20th century. This paper argues that the Shaker’s communal efficacy and cohesiveness was more attributable to sexual equality, in the hierarchy of Shaker society, than to the abandonment of marriage. Rather, celibacy became a conduit, which was inspired by the bible, to allow women to gain equal representation within the Shaker community. The Shaker community also became a safe haven for women, men and children alike. The Shakers serve today as a beacon for the importance of women’s rights and equality within the structure of society.

**Biographical Statement:**

I am currently finishing my undergraduate degree at Quincy University. I will be applying to law school in the fall of 2024. I wrote this paper on the Shakers as a part of a Great Books course, "Real Utopias," for my professor, Dr. Neil A. Wright. When I proposed the idea to him for a final paper, he insisted I enter this conference. The topic: "For your final paper, write a ten page argumentative essay that analyzes a utopian community in light of one of the theories that inspired them." My grandmother, Mary Obert, graduated from Marquette University in 1960. She is a huge inspiration for pursuing my education and as soon as I thought of the idea for this paper, I was gently reminded of her. After my professor proposed that I enter into the conference, I knew it was the right way to honor her.

**Name:** Hugh Perry

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Presentation Title: Full Spectrum Management: A Workshop

**Abstract:**

Full Spectrum is a method of management, built on four creative processes that can be observed in all of Nature, energetics, structure, manifestation and reflection. It is especially useful in reaching consensus, minimizing conflict and turning obstacles around. Forming and established communities will benefit from participating in how this system works. While in community this was our governance system. It worked well for us in originating ideas and seeing them through to completion, while achieving consensus with little or no conflict. I have adapted the same method for use in the construction industry where it has worked well in reducing costs and keeping enthusiasm alive through out projects.

**Biographical Statement:**

I have lived the communal life for thirteen years, four in preparation and nine fully engaged in living together. Eventually choosing to take my experience into urban communities of Canada to promote communal life style through workshops and writing. I am the author of 'Silent Partners', an ecological adventure novel set in various Intentional communities across North America, write regularly in *Communities Magazine* and recently presented at the ICOSA conference.

**Name:** T. Ashton Reynolds

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Institution: Southern Methodist University

Presentation Title: Monogamy to Royal Polygamy: The Evolution of Marriage Practices among the Strangite Mormons

**Abstract:**

My paper explores Strangite Mormonism's transition from a religious group that strongly rejected polygamy to one whose prophet, James J. Strang, embraced the practice even if his followers were lukewarm to the idea. Initially, Mormons who chose to follow Strang did so because they were troubled by Brigham Young's reorganization of the leadership structure and his endorsement of the open secret of Polygamy. Strang's claim was more consistent with Mormon scripture and anti-polygamy. Over time, however, Strang's understanding of Mormon doctrine shifted and embraced an Old Testament tone and embraced a Davidic approach to executing his office. All of this coincided with Strang reading the writings of Abbé Claude de Fleury on Ancient Hebrews. Though some Strangites broke with Strang over polygamy, many remained loyal even as only a few families embraced the practice. Strang's polygamy was a part of Strang's innovation but not a lynchpin to his doctrinal innovations.

**Biographical Statement:**

T. Ashton Reynolds, M.A., is a Ph.D. Candidate in history at Southern Methodist University. His area of focus is American Religious history focusing on the growth of non-Protestant religions that were born and developed in the United States. Ashton's dissertation, "Making the Strangites Normal, De-exoticizing Religious Outsiders in Antebellum America," analyzes the Strangite branch of Mormonism and argues our historical understanding of groups like the Strangites have inaccurately been described as outside the American mainstream. Rather, these groups are consistent with a brand new nation where the definitions of everything from democracy to religion to sexuality were in development.

**Name:** Claudia Roesch

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Institution: University of Konstanz

**Presentation Title:** A response to Malthusianism? Birth Control and Population Planning within Owenite Communal Schemes

**Abstract:**

In 1830, Robert Dale Owen, son of community leader Robert Owen, published the first pamphlet on birth control on American soil. His pamphlet *Moral Physiology* included a rejection of Thomas Malthus' claim that only abstinence prevented overpopulation. Already in 1815, his father had argued that Malthus' vicious circle of population growth, famine, and crisis could be stopped by rational planning, modern science and communal agriculture. In a way, Owen's New Harmony settlement represented an experiment in rebuffing the Malthusian cycle. Promoting birth control seems a logical expansion of that idea. My paper investigates the politics of reproduction in Owenite community experiments. In a history of ideas perspective, it examines how Owenism constituted a response to Malthusian fears and proposed using modern science to solve the population problem. I take a novel approach to Owenite communities by placing them within the discourses of 19th century sexual politics and population control.

**Biographical Statement:**

Claudia Roesch is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Konstanz affiliated with the history of knowledge working group. Her research interests include the history of knowledge and technology, North American history, gender, reproductive rights and the family. She recently won the Fulbright American Studies Award and the USI Communal Studies Travel Grant for her book project "Utopian Engineering: Solving the 19th century Slavery, Labor, and the Women's Questions with Science." Her current project investigates the role of science and engineering in social reform projects in the 19th-century Atlantic world. Previously she has published a monograph on the transnational history of birth control entitled *Wunsch Kinder: Eine transnationale Geschichte der Familienplanung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Wanted Children: A Transnational History of Family Planning in West Germany. Göttingen: 2021). Her most recent publication is "Owen and the Engineers: Cross-Fertilization between Engineering and Early Socialism in the Owenite Tradition," *Global Intellectual History* (2023): 1–16.

**Name:** Zach Rubin

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Institution: Lander University

Presentation Title: Military Veterans and Intentional Communities

**Abstract:**

This study delves into the experiences military veterans have had during their military service, during their time living in Intentional Community (IC), and while living as a civilian in mainstream society in order to cultivate a deeper understanding of what ICs offer to individuals as well as the potential impact on our greater society. We conducted in-depth interviews with 32 veterans who have both served in the military and lived in an IC. Our initial analysis revealed three major themes. First, the study uncovered varied connections between veterans and ICs, with some finding community during times of crisis, and others seeking a type of community connection that they previously found in military service. Second, the influence of compulsory conscription was important to shaping perspectives on military service and subsequent integration into communal living. Finally, positive reflections on military service highlight the importance of a values-driven mindset, benefits of a structured lifestyle, and emphasis on personal growth, indicating potential alignments with IC ethos. While veterans exhibit qualities conducive to good communarians, challenges such as mental health issues and biases from others remain. This research underscores the need for nuanced understanding and inclusive practices within ICs, inviting communities to reconsider assumptions and embrace the unique contributions of military veterans.

**Biographical Statement:**

Avi Kruley thrives in the liminal magic of transitions as a Facilitator of Change for The Next Big Step. She has been a passionate player in the world of IC for over a decade, and currently lives

in a small IC she founded in Oakland focused on sacred living. <https://www.nextbigstep.org/avi>  
(avi@nextbigstep.org)

Zach Rubin is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Lander University in South Carolina. He is a two-time winner of the Communal Studies Association's outstanding article award for his academic papers on Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage and measuring success in intentional communities. There are so few ICs where he lives, which is why he seeks out awesome research partners like Avi and Sky for projects like these.

Sky Blue has been deeply embedded in the IC Movement for over 25 years as an activist, organizer, consultant, and dedicated communitarian. [www.incommunity.us](http://www.incommunity.us)  
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**Institution:** Harvard University

**Presentation Title:** Sinful Relations and Salvific Unions: Sexual Ethics, Erotics, and Intimacies in the Early Ephrata Cloister

**Abstract:**

In the 1730s, a group of predominantly German Dunkers assembled on the very grounds of the annual CSA meeting to establish an exceptional community of Christian living and eschatological expectation: the Ephrata Cloister. Central to Ephrata's theology was the belief that human sexuality and the need for reproduction were consequences of the fall. True redemption was achieved by those who abstained from coupling with an earthly spouse and instead dedicated themselves to a nuptial union with Christ/Sophia. However, the full extent of Ephrata devotion cannot be grasped by hastily dismissing Ephrata monastics as asexual and desireless. Drawing from textual materials produced by Ephrata's celibate brothers and sisters, as well as from rich material and visual culture, this paper illustrates how these monastics conceptualized and enacted their relationships with the divine and each other as queer and salvific intimacies, both individually and communally. In doing so, they subverted conventional ideas about heterosexual intercourse and envisioned new ways of relating and experiencing pleasure.

This paper is supported by archival research made possible through the generous support of the CSA and their Research Fellowship.

**Biographical Statement:**

Anca Wilkening is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Study of Religion (North American Religions) with a secondary concentration in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Harvard University. Her research interests bridge the Study of Religion with Queer Theory, Indigenous and Colonialism Studies, and Early American and Atlantic History, with a special concern for the intersections of

religion, intimacy, and kin-making. She is currently a Loeb Religious Freedom Initiative Dissertation Fellow and her dissertation, an interdisciplinary study of the eighteenth-century American Northeast, draws from multilingual archives, built environments, material cultures, and community-engaged methodologies to interrogate the intersections of religious practice with formations of kinship and intimate relations among a diverse set of Indigenous, European, and African actors in Pietist communities.

**Name:** Johannes Zinzendorf

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Institution: The Hermitage

Presentation Title: Community within Community or, How did people like you end up in a place like this? Episodes, mainly humorous, a few not, from a communal queer life among the Pennsylvania Dutch

Abstract:

This paper will feature episodes from our 35 years of living in community among our Pennsylvania Dutch neighbors, as *auslanders* well outside the *freundschaft* that has developed among the locals, whose ancestors settled here 200 years ago. I was initially scheduled to give this talk earlier this year in Indiana, but was unable to attend in person, so Greg suggested I reapply for the Ephrata conference. I have spoken at two previous CSA conferences at Ephrata over the past two decades about the history and spirituality of the Hermitage, but this will be different, a (mainly) light-hearted presentation of vignettes from living a queer life in Dutchland.

Biographical Statement:

Johannes Zinzendorf co-founded The Hermitage, a Harmonist spiritual center, with Zephram de Colebi in 1988. The Hermitage is located in the Mahantongo Valley of central Pennsylvania, inhabited primarily by descendants of the original Pennsylvania Dutch pioneers who settled here.

The men's goal was to re-establish an eighteenth-century Moravian community of Single Brothers. To that end, they built a community primarily of log and timber-frame buildings moved to the site and adaptively reused, including workshops and cabins. Over time, the goal changed, to create a safe place for creatures, historic buildings, collections of local folk crafts, and the land itself, combined with an emphasis on living in the unity and wholeness of the creating spirit. The Hermitage is open seasonally for tours and workshops.

The men are co-authors of "The Big Book of Flax" published by Schiffer. They have written for magazines such as *Pennsylvania Folklife* and *Early American Life*. Articles about their work have appeared in *Country Home*, *Pennsylvania Magazine*, *Communities Magazine*, and others. They are connected with intentional communities, museums and living history sites, craft centers, and folk studies academics. They were featured in the New York Times in 2015:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/17/style/they-built-it-no-one-came.html> .

Zinzendorf majored in film studies and English literature at the University of Utah; as well as educational psychology.

The men are currently writing *Everyday Furniture of the Mahantongo Valley*, to be published in two forthcoming volumes by The Pennsylvania German Society.