# **Minutes of the Center for Communal Studies Advisory Board Meeting**

**November 11, 2013 – 12 Noon**

## USI Campus – University Suite, University Center

**Members Present:** Dr. Casey Harison, Dr. Jason Hardgrave, Dean Michael Aakhus, Ms. Wendy Bredhold, Ms. Jennifer Greene, Dr. Don Janzen, Dr. Jane Johansen, Dr. Don Pitzer, Dr. Silvia Rode, Ms. Connie Weinzapfel, and Ms. Rachel Wright-Summerton

**Guests Present:** Mr. Gerry Adams, Ms. Martha Janzen, Dr. Carol Medlicott, and Mr. Bob Medlicott

**Administrative Assistant:** Ms. Marilyn Thielman

1. **Introductions**

After the lunch buffet, Director Casey Harison welcomed Center Board members and guests, and he asked attendees to introduce themselves. He then thanked Carol Medlicott for her lecture concerning the Shakers, which was held in Kleymeyer Hall preceding the Board meeting. There were 79 in attendance for Medlicott’s informative lecture.

Harison explained that the order of items on the agenda distributed to members has been changed slightly since Silvia Rode must leave shortly for another commitment.

1. **Procedure for Writing Minutes**

Marilyn Thielman, the Center’s Administrative Assistant, explained the procedure that she follows for capturing the minutes at our Board meetings. After reviewing her notes taken during each meeting, she asks those who have given special reports to give her copies of their reports, if they so choose. Thielman then asks questions of those persons if any of her notes are not in agreement with theirs. A draft of the minutes is then submitted to Harison. After his review and any corrections or additions are made, the draft is submitted to Board Secretary Jane Johansen for further review. Her draft is resubmitted to Harison, who passes that draft to Board members for their final approval at the next Board meeting. After Board approval, the minutes are filed in the appropriate file drawer in the Center as well as in the appropriate file on Thielman’s computer. The minutes then become part of the documentation of the history of the Center for Communal Studies.

1. **Approval of Minutes of Spring 2013 Meeting**

Harison asked for any additions or corrections to the minutes from the May 13, 2013 Board meeting. These two corrections were indicated:

1. Silvia Rode added to the first paragraph of her report under **Item #7** the name of the graduate class that she taught in fall of 2013. That class was LBST 680.002 – *Utopian Fault Lines*.
2. Rachel Wright-Summerton corrected one word in the last sentence of her report under **Item #6** from “new” to “young.” The sentence now reads as follows: “The future of Padanaram is in the hands of these young community members according to Wright-Summerton, whose upcoming books should be very enlightening.”

***These corrections will be made. There being no other, Ms. Connie Weinzapfel moved that the corrected May 13, 2013 minutes be accepted. The motion was seconded by Dean Michael Aakhus, and all were in favor.***

Harison said that the date for the spring 2014 Board meeting has not yet been set. He will try to arrange it around Board member Susan Matarese’s teaching schedule since she has been unable to attend the last two Board meetings.

1. **Report: International Communal Studies Association (ICSA) Meeting**

Silvia Rode attended the ICSA Conference “Communal Pathways to Sustainable Living” which was held in summer 2013 in Findhorn, Scotland. She said that it focused on the nexus between “community” and “sustainability.” At a time of increased public awareness of the human causes of climate change, there is critical need for information about, and demonstration of, low impact sustainable lifestyles, according to conference speaker Dr. Graham Meltzer. Rode said that the conference (1) exposed participants to practical aspects of communal living, such as organic food preparation and biodegradable sewage treatment, and it (2) offered theoretical thoughts on sustainability and communal living. She also explained that a brief political crisis erupted when a bomb threat was phoned in, as a protest of lectures presented by Israeli colleagues. Rode’s presentation at this conference – *Harmonist horticulture: Nourishment for the body and soul* – was published in a special issue of the Social Science Directory (Vol. 2, No.3 – 2013). ICSA’s next conference will be in India with others planned in Africa and Asia.

Rode also reported completion of her manuscript draft, which is a critical edition of *George Rapp’s* *Gedanken über die Bestimmung des Menschen* or *Thoughts on the Destiny of Man.* She is now in need of a good editor to assist with revision. Don Pitzer commented that this book has significance on a number of different levels, and he challenged Board members saying that they really need to help Rode get it prepared.

1. **Collections Development**

Jennifer Greene reported on the following matters:

Greene should hear something regarding her grant filed with the National Historic Publications and Records in January or February. She is waiting on a grant to hire a part-time person to process the Shiloh Family collection and return to Arkansas to collect remaining materials in March or April.

Concerning donations, Skyview Acres in Rockland County, New York, contacted us about a year ago. It is a cooperative land community, started by several families from New York City after World War II. Also, the Rosenthal Collection – 7500 images from Hanover College – is now at USI. This was a cooperative project, Greene explained. Bob Rosenthal had a student scan and identify the images, and USI is now in the process of refining the metadata and loading them online. This collection should be live by the end of January. Greene will let the Board know when it does become available.

Additionally, Greene is currently working with Historic New Harmony to process a slide collection from the 1970s – building, renovations, filming, and events. She reported having had five inquiries: two students working on projects, two image requests, and a community request.

Don Pitzer recently turned over to the Archives some information from Douglas Hamilton, a long-time resident of Fairfield, IA. Hamilton has been close to the Transcendental Meditation movement that is headquartered at Maharishi University. The materials on the Transcendental Movement will be added to USI’s Communal Studies collection.

Don Janzen then reported that he now has close to 25,000 images as part of the Shiloh collection, and more is said to be housed in the attic of Joshua Hall on site at Sulphur Springs, Arkansas. His next pursuit is to get the collection of Shepherdsville, a Christian community which is located in Shepherdsville, KY.

1. **Center By-Laws**

Before Jane Johansen, Secretary of the Board of Advisors and Chair of the By-Laws Committee, arrived at the Board meeting, committee member Jennifer Greene reported that committee members are searching for a good Mission Statement. Their plan is to pattern the Center By-Laws after the framework of the Communal Studies Association’s by-laws. They will also be contacting Center Board members who have been on the Board for a while. Harison explained that he contacted long-time Board member Rachel Wright-Summerton when this project was first begun. Don Pitzer also suggested that Marilyn Thielman search through the Center’s files concerning the Self-Study that was completed in the year 2000 to determine if any progress was made concerning by-laws for the Center at that time.

Other discussion continued prior to Johansen’s arrival concerning just who should be on the Board of Advisors for the Center. Casey Harison explained that he recently invited Marna Hostetler, Director of the Library, to become an Ex-Officio Board member. Hostetler accepted the invitation but was unable to make today’s meeting. She is replacing the former Library Director who was an Ex-Officio Board member.

Then, Harison questioned concerning which members are considered “permanent” members. For example, would the Dean of Liberal Arts and the Chair of the History Department be considered “permanent” members along with the Library Director? Dean Michael Aakhus and History Chair Jason Hardgrave agreed with this thinking because of the Center’s connection with their positions. Greene said that this would be the kind of language that needs to be in the Center’s By-Laws to clarify the process that is currently being used.

Other suggestions were also made concerning persons to include on the Board in an effort to make its membership more diverse, such as representatives from other areas on campus (perhapsArt), from other intentional communities (like Padanaram), from other relationships with New Harmony (since that is where it began), from the Evansville community, from local government (such as “City Planning”), and even from the “Sustainable Indiana 2016” program. The Center’s Mission Statement should emphasize making a statement and then applying that message in areas such as innovation, community projects, sustainability, and other global issues. Perhaps the Center needs to create a Vision Statement as well.

Johansen arrived at the Board meeting at this point, and she encouraged continuing the discussions about producing the Center By-Laws. She emphasized checking with persons who have more history than she does with the Center. There is no two-year or five-year plan, she said. Harison offered that members could produce that document.

Pitzer said that we are dealing with two things – the Center and its Board. When the Center was begun in the 1970s, there was no History Department. Out of a conference in 1974, there developed the National Historic Communal Societies Association, sponsored by Indiana State University Evansville, which became USI in 1985. Pitzer directed that group with its yearly conferences through 1993, and it was headquartered at the Center beginning in 1976.

Pitzer explained that while the Center does not have to be in the History Department, it does have to have a Director. Dean Aakhus said that although the Center operates with a great deal of autonomy at USI, it is within the History Department, and he supports the Director’s position being filled out of the History Department in the future as well.

Harison stated that the By-Laws Committee needs to determine the next step and who should be involved in it. What should be the instructions, guidelines, and operating principles? Members seemed to indicate there should be more of a history section integrated into the language of the By-Laws – its connection with New Harmony and other historical facts. Does there need to be a separate group working on that matter? Harison suggested reviewing the entire matter at the Board’s spring meeting sometime in May – making it a one-time retreat where a guidelines draft is then given to the By-Laws Committee for their review and finalization over the summer. All were in favor of that suggestion. Connie Weinzapfel suggested enlisting the services of a facilitator to aid the process, and Leslie Townsend was suggested for that role. The date of a spring retreat in New Harmony is yet to be determined.

As an addendum, guest Carol Medlicott, who serves on the Board of the Communal Studies Association (CSA), suggested including the history of the Center’s involvement with CSA over these many years and also with the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC). Medlicott offered that CSA’s Executive Director Kathy Fernandez could possibly help with the language of the By-Laws. Harison said that also included on the agenda during the retreat needs to be length of terms for Board members and clarification of what “Ex-Officio Member” and “Permanent Member” actually mean. Members should also consider any other issues they feel need to be resolved at the retreat.

1. **Report: Communal Studies Association Meeting**

Don Pitzer attended the CSA Annual Conference held October 3 through 5 in Harmony and Old Economy, PA. Pitzer shared some highlights of the conference, including his visiting with 93-year-old Ruth Werner, the first secretary of the CSA, who continues to be very engaged.

Additionally, Pitzer reported recently meeting with Thomas Berkshire along with Jennifer Greene at the Archives. Berkshire wants to know more about communal societies in general so that he can apply their ideas and lessons to his nationwide project. It is to set up retirement communities adjacent to colleges and integrate housing with intellectual opportunities.

According to Pitzer, Michaelangelo Sabatino and Benjamin Nicholson are finishing a book on the architecture of New Harmony to be submitted to the University of Chicago Press. They hope this may be printed during New Harmony’s 2014 bicentennial year with a title like *Forms of Spirituality*. Pitzer also reported that his chapter, “Communes and Intentional Communities,” is to be published in December, 2013, in the book *The Routledge Collection on Alternative Organization: Frameworks, Practices, and Challenges*, edited by Martin Parker and others. Docey Lewis, Don Janzen, and Rachel Wright-Summerton contributed case studies to Pitzer’s chapter. Routledge is a publisher of academic books.

1. **Other Items and Announcements**

Harison reviewed the fact that there were two motions approved at the spring 2013 meeting, which involved creating a section on the Center’s website for Don Janzen’s and Don Pitzer’s retrievable historic and current community information as well as a link to Communal Studies published and unpublished research. He reported that student worker Chris Purk will be working on this project in the coming spring semester. Janzen said he and Pitzer will put together ideas and turn them over to the student worker, updating Board members at the spring meeting.

Next, Harison pointed to the cross-disciplinary flyer advertising the 2014 New Harmony Conference, which was included in each member’s packet. He will distribute copies to the Conference Program Committee, who toured New Harmony in May, and more flyers can be supplied to Board members if so desired. The Conference will center on the three speakers listed, with concurrent sessions each of the two-and-a-half days. Harison expects that panels at the conference will be made up of college faculty and graduate students. Harison has been working out details with Linda Cleek on campus and with others in New Harmony. This conference will be advertised in New Harmony’s Bicentennial information as well. Pitzer also offered some flyers to attendees at the CSA’s Annual Conference in October.

The Center employed three student workers last semester, and Harison is currently interviewing his world history class students for a student to assist us during the spring 2014 semester, again covered by funds provided by the Provost’s Office. It was also noted that student worker John Sureck, funded by an Endeavor! award, did an excellent job assisting in the Archives last semester.

Harison encouraged Board members to check out the Center’s website as well as the Center’s Facebook page.

Other business included the following: Don Janzen told of his new collection of sayings from his grandmother compiled by his mother,*The Damnation Bow-Wows and other expressions of Margaretta Thomas Pickler – Resident of the Falls of the Ohio River Area, 1867 – 1955.* Connie Weinzapfel thanked Janzen for the work he has been doing for New Harmony’s Bicentennial Celebration in 2014.

There being no further discussion or announcements, Harison thanked Board members for their attendance and individual input. The meeting adjourned around 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Thielman, Scribe

Approved as amended,

Jane Johansen, Secretary