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

**October 9, 2015 – 11:30 AM – 2 PM**

**USI – Room UC2205**

**Members Present:** Dr. Don Pitzer (Acting Director), Dean Michael Aakhus, Ms. Jennifer Greene, Dr. Jason Hardgrave, Ms. Marna Hostetler, Dr. Don Janzen, Dr. Carol Medlicott, and Dr. Silvia Rode

**Members Absent:** Dr. Casey Harison (Director on Sabbatical), Ms. Wendy Bredhold, Dr. Jane Johansen, Dr. Susan Matarese, Ms. Connie Weinzapfel, and Ms. Rachel Wright-Summerton

**Guests Present:** Dr. Gregory Brown, Ms. Deanna Engler, Ms. Connie Pitzer, Mr. Ritsert Rinsma, Dr. Michael Strezewski, and Mr. James Wethington

**Administrative Assistant:** Ms. Marilyn Thielman

**1. Greeting and Introductions**

Acting Director Don Pitzer welcomed Board members as well as guests. He also conveyed the regrets of members who were unable to attend today’s meeting for various reasons. Pitzer then expressed disappointment that Rachel Wright-Summerton has decided that she must now retire as a Board member, and he spoke for us all when acknowledging with appreciation Rachel’s decades of involvement with and service to the Center. Pitzer said we have with us today some guests who have agreed to be nominated as new members for the Board. Pitzer then thanked Dean Michael Aakhus for attending this Board meeting before his upcoming retirement. Dean Aakhus assured the group that he plans to continue active service as a Center Board member when he becomes Dean Emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts after June 30, 2016. Pitzer then expressed his wholehearted appreciation for the Dean’s years of service to this point, and all attendees confirmed his feelings with their applause.

Pitzer showed photos of participants at the Communal Studies Association’s recent 40th Anniversary Meeting in Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. They included one from the CSA’s first Conference as well as one of 97-year-old Susan Jackson Keig, a charter CSA member, who designed CSA’s renowned hand logo and attended this year. Also displayed by Pitzer were gifts to the Center of a 2016 Shaker calendar produced by Keig and two multimedia computer discs of Shaker music entitled “Simple Gifts: Great American Folk Song” and “Give Good Gifts: Shaker Music in the 20th Century” from producer Roger Lee Hall.

Pitzer wrote an article describing the origins and early decades of the CSA that is to appear in its journal *Communal Societies* Volume 35, No. 1 (2015) yet this year. It is titled “The Communal Studies Association at Forty: A Personal Retrospect.” Journal editor Carol Medlicott graciously let him include many photographs. Pitzer also thanked Carol, who was present today as a Center Board member, for doing such a wonderful job chairing the Program Committee for the recent Pleasant Hill Conference.

Pitzer also shared some interesting facts from Jane Blaffer Owen’s memoir, *New Harmony, Indiana: Like a River Not a Lake*, which is on the shelves of the Center. He stated that he gave a lecture at Working Men’s Institute (WMI) back in May, 2015, concerning “The Significance of WMI, Arthur Bestor, and Josephine Elliott in Communal Scholarship” and then donated a DVD of his talk to the Center. Don Janzen came in from California at that time for Pitzer’s lecture. Janzen’s WMI lecture on its founder William Maclure is also on a DVD.

Attendees then introduced themselves, both current Board members and our guests. Certain additional information presented by and about one member and our guests is listed below:

\* Ritsert Rinsma has been coming to New Harmony from France for the past fifteen years.

He knew Jane Owen as well as Ralph Schwarz who is now in Pennsylvania. His focus is on French naturalist, artist, and explorer Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, and Ritsert has traveled around the US in an attempt to identify persons in some photos and drawings for a book he plans to publish.

\* Greg Brown is a 1978 graduate of USI. He was on the original Center for Communal

Studies Board. Greg is retired, but had been principal for the Christa McAuliffe

Alternative Middle School, where Pitzer said that some 80% of students, having been

rehabilitated, were successful when they went back to their former middle schools.

\* Michael Strezewski has been working since 2008 on excavations in New Harmony at the

Harmonist redware kiln site. He heads the USI Archaeological Field School from May

through June.

\* Carol Medlicott was the Program Chair for the recent CSA Conference in KY. As the

current Editor of the CSA *Journal*, she said the next issue will feature an article by Don

Pitzer entitled “The Communal Studies Association at Forty: A Personal Retrospective”

as well as one by Michael Strezewski titled “Harmonist Demography and Town Planning

in New Harmony, Indiana.”

\* Deanna Engler and James Wethington are assistants to Jennifer Greene in the Rice

Library Archives.

\* Connie Pitzer, Don’s wife, was a guest.

Michael Aakhus explained that he was fortunate to have been able to visit the Shiloh Family in Sulphur Springs, Arkansas, recently and to help Greene retrieve some forty boxes of their materials for the Communal Studies Collection in the Archives. Aakhus expressed appreciation to Pitzer for all that he has done over the years for the Center. Pitzer’s response was, “It’s a pleasure to sit in this chair again.”

**2. Action on Minutes from Spring 2015 Board Meeting**

Pitzer asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from the spring May 14, 2015, Board meeting. There being none, Silvia Rode moved that the minutes be accepted. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Greene, and all were in favor.

**3. Nominations to Board Membership**

Pitzer explained that this year four Board members agreed to renew for another four-year term. Kudos were expressed to Wendy Bredhold, Don Janzen, Susan Matarese, and Silvia Rode for agreeing to continue their service to the Board. Rachael Wright-Summerton decided to retire after decades of distinguished service on the Board as a representative from the living community of Padanaram near Bedford, Indiana, founded by her father and mother, Daniel and Lois Wright. Dr. Pitzer gave a tribute to Rachel’s long-time commitment to the Center and CSA. He has expressed his and the Board’s appreciation in an email and will follow it with an official letter. Since Rachel has worked diligently to build an archival collection at Padanaram, Pitzer was glad to know her intentions to work closely with Jennifer to see what items might come to the USI Archives.

There are currently eight members on the Board, which is the least number specified by the Center’s new Bylaws. Pitzer called for nominations from the floor for new persons, whose terms

would expire in 2020. There being no nominations, Pitzer asked Jason Hardgrave to assume

the role of Chair while he nominated the following four persons. Where available, vitas of the nominees were distributed. The Bylaws specify “no upper limit of members.”

In making his nominations, Pitzer summarized the relevant credentials for Dr. Joshua Lockyer and Mr. Graham Perry who were not in attendance at the meeting. He then introduced nominees, Dr. Gregory W. Brown and Dr. Michael Strezewski, who described their interest in and qualifications for Board membership.

Hardgrave, in his role as Chair for the nomination process, asked the two nominees present at the meeting to excuse themselves while members discussed their election to the Board. All four nominees were elected. New Board members Brown and Strezewski were brought back into the meeting room and thanked for their willingness to serve. Lockyer and Perry will be informed of their election as new Center Board members.

Chair Hardgrave then stepped aside from his temporary chairmanship, and Pitzer thanked Hardgrave and all members for their confidence in these new Board members.

**4. Action on the New Center for Communal Studies Bylaws**

Proposed minor changes to be incorporated in the final draft of the Center’s new

Bylaws were pointed out by Pitzer. He indicated that the words to be deleted were in

brackets while the new language was shown in capital letters. Members were asked to review

the changes and indicate any questions that they might have before final approval of the Bylaws. Additional comments were made by some members to aid in understanding certain sections, and they are listed under those sections below:

Article I, Section 1: New language was approved.

Article I, Section 2: New language was approved. Jennifer Greene said that she and Casey Harison have determined that the Archives will offer research materials concerning individual intentional communities while the Center will focus on a collection of mostly secondary sources of “subject” or “theoretical” materials. Greene estimated that approximately 90% of the material is currently in the Archival collection, and the other 10% is in the Center.

Pitzer also mentioned the new Lawrence Library, which is located on the lower level of the Liberal Arts Building. Three student interns work with Susan Sauls, Art Collection Registrar, in the Lawrence Library, which is home to USI’s collection of Medieval manuscripts and other artifacts, mostly donated by John Lawrence. Many of these primary sources were produced by monastic communities that practiced community of goods. All are available for student and faculty research.

It was the consensus of the Board that while the Center for Communal Studies Collection is housed in the Rice Library Archives, it is still considered to be the Center’s collection for purposes of soliciting new materials.

Article II, Section 1: New language was approved.

Article II, Section 2, Section 3, and Section 4: Pitzer pointed out that Ex-officio Members are in fact “voting positions,” according to *Robert’s Rules of Order*. Therefore, the language of these three sections was changed so that Board members were no longer designated as voting and “non-voting Ex-officio Members” but rather “all Board Members.” Members approved the new language that will be changed and/or added accordingly.

Article III, Section 1: No corrections were made to current language.

Article III, Section 2 and Section 3: New language was approved.

Pitzer said that an updated corrected copy of the new Center Bylaws will be put into Casey Harison’s hands as he returns from his sabbatical leave at the end of this semester. Silvia Rode then made a motion to approve the Center’s new Bylaws. Jennifer Greene seconded the motion, and all members agreed.

**5. Reports**

Director Casey Harison – Pitzer read a short report from Harison concerning his editorial work on “A New Social Question” which is the pending book from the 2014 New Harmony

Conference on Socialism, Capitalism, and Utopia. Harison said that he is going through proofs with the contributors now. The preliminary website for the book indicates it will be published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing on December 1, 2015. The website is <http://www.cambridgescholars.com/a-new-social-question>.

Jennifer Greene – Her report regarding activities in the Archives is attached to these minutes.

Silvia Rode – Silvia Rode indicated that this was her presentation at the 2015 CSA Conference: “Camp Breckinridge: A Prison Heterotopia.” *Communal Studies Association Conference*. Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, October 2015.

CSA 40th Anniversary Meeting -- Pitzer said that the CSA held its annual meeting at the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, where the organization was founded in 1975. He called on Carol Medlicott, program chair for the conference, to share her thoughts. Medlicott felt the conference went well. There were 125 attendees, with 55 papers presented. Pitzer added that he was pleased to meet Jaya Priya Reinhalter of Kashi Ashram who gave a paper at the conference. Jaya won both the Center’s 2015 Graduate Prize and Research Travel Grant. At the conference, she was given the CSA Starting Scholar Award.

The 2016 CSA meeting will be in Salt Lake City, Utah from October 6 through 8. The subject will be “Anticipating the End Times: Millennialism, Apocalypticism, and Utopianism in Intentional Communities.” Matt Grow, who directed the Center for Communal Studies after Pitzer’s retirement, will be the program chair.

The upcoming annual meeting of the Society for Utopian Studies will be November 5 through 8, 2015, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The International Communal Studies Association annual meeting will be July 1 through 3, 2016, in Tamera, Portugal.

Ritsert Rinsma – Pitzer asked Rinsma to tell more about his projected publication “Eye Witness to Utopia” about New Harmony’s natural scientist Charles-Alexandre Lesueur. Rinsma told the process of his research in New Harmony (beginning with Josephine Elliott) and France from 2001 to the present and his plans to publish the book he has just completed including many of Lesueur’s 1500 sketches.

**6. Other Items and Announcements**

There being no further business, Pitzer thanked everyone who attended today’s Center Board Meeting. He further stated that he looks forward to having our new Center Board members join us, along with Director Casey Harison, at our future Board of Advisor meetings.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 2 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Thielman, Administrative Assistant

mst – 12/9/15