

IRAS NEWSLETTER

Volume 62, Number 1

IRAS 63rd Annual Summer Conference on Star Island:

The “Wicked Problem” of Climate Change:

What is it doing to us and for us? Join us! June 24-July 1, 2017



Though today’s less-than-balmy 8 degree temperature in Portsmouth, NH makes me doubt summer will ever arrive, in reality our conference is only 3.5 months away. Our Chairs, Karl Peters and Emily Austin, and Conference Champion, Paul Carr, are working tirelessly to ensure thought provoking content and an inspiring conference design. To give you a taste of what’s to come, here’s our slate of speakers thus far.

2017 Conference PLENARY DIALOGUE SPEAKERS:

Can World Food Production Keep up with Population Growth?

Soloman Katz, Anthropology and World Food Problems, University of Pennsylvania.

Barry Costa-Pierce, Marine Sciences, University of New England, Maine.

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—Jennifer E. Whitten, editor

Coming to terms with what the “wicked problem” of rapid climate change might do to and for us will take creativity, imagination, and the complex interdisciplinary thinking of organizations like IRAS.

IRAS on Star Island, 2017: The Wicked Problem of Climate Change (continued from p. 1)***Maintaining Hope, Acting for Justice***

Barbara R. Rossing, Biblical Studies, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
Carol Wayne White, Philosophy of Religion, Bucknell University

Creation Spirituality and How the Crisis of Climate Change Challenges Our Species to a New Evolutionary Awakening

Matthew Fox, Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality
Ellen Kennedy, Sacred Circle Dance

Changing Course: How Social Brain Empathy and Politically Viable Technology Can Impact Climate Change.

Bill Shoemaker, Neuroscience, University of Connecticut Health Center
Jim Rubens, Green Energy Investor, former NH State Senator, US Senate Candidate

2017 Conference ADDITIONAL SCIENCE SPEAKERS:***What Are We Doing to Our Climate? What Is It Doing to Us?***

Paul H. Carr Conference Champion, IEEE Life Fellow www.MirrorOfNature.org.

Ocean Climate Change

Robert S. Pickart, physical oceanography, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) <http://arcticspring.org/>

Terrestrial Carbon Transformations

Emily E. Austin, ecosystem ecology and biogeochemistry, University of New Hampshire <http://www.emilyeaustin.com>

Ensuring Ecosystem Services: Innovative and Cooperative Approaches

Jennifer Seavey, Jennifer Seavey Shoals Marine Lab Director, Cornell University and University of New Hampshire <http://marine.unh.edu/faculty-member/jennifer-seavey>

2017 CONFERENCE CHAPLAIN: Mary E. Westfall, Community Church, UCC, Durham, NH.

To REGISTER NOW, go to <http://starisland.org/program/iras> and click on the “REGISTER” link! This link also contains additional useful information about the 2017 IRAS Conference on Star Island, NH.

KALEIDOSCOPE

Dear IRAS Members and Friends,

In recent years, I've thought a lot about how IRAS has made a particular difference in my life and work in the world, and about how that came to be. I see the same happening with others in IRAS.

In my case, a short story about a kaleidoscope might express it best. The world of my childhood contained few toys. My family wasn't poor, but as a preacher's kid and later a seminary president's kid, there were no "extras" either. My mother made most of my clothes.

I don't remember wanting things. Perhaps it was the conservative era of the fifties, or growing up in rural Maine, but the inner world of imagination became a playground to me. I do, however, clearly remember loving three toys I already had: a Howdy Doody puppet, a simple chemistry set, and a *kaleidoscope*. All these served me as tools of *imagination*.

As many writers have expressed, imagination is the capacity to *hope: to visualize, and hope that life – for oneself, for the community, the world, the planet – will, one day, bring peace in the midst of suffering or conflict, patterns of beauty and clarity in the midst of ignorance or doubt. Imagination is the capacity to hope that in the midst of whatever is happening, life continues to be made new by the transforming power of love.*

I believe we can intentionally recall gifts from any life stage or experience, however barren or rich, and hold to those gifts to bless the days and years that follow with hope. The Howdy Doody puppet, the chemistry set, the kaleidoscope disintegrated long ago. But in the spirit of retrieving gifts from the world of imagination and hope, such as my toy kaleidoscope, I now have a small collection of "real" kaleidoscopes. And it is in that spirit that I often imagine IRAS: as though through the lens of a kaleidoscope.

During these past few years of serving as your President, I've experienced, close up, the ever-evolving kaleidoscopic beauty, diversity and relationality that is IRAS. Philosopher Loyal Rue might say that the over-arching IRAS endeavor is one about discovering and living "how things are and which things matter". But IRAS is unique in the way volunteer leaders and participants bring as gifts their *multifaceted* perspectives, talents, and enthusiasm, not only from the academic worlds of science, religion and philosophy, but also from a variety of other professional and artistic endeavors, life paths, and communities of faith. Members and friends bring *richly colored* gifts to the IRAS endeavor from most of the world's named categories of identity such as age, ethnicity, race, religious background, academic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic status, ability.

And many of us, after participating in an IRAS gathering, intentionally hold to *particular* gifts of knowing how things are and which things matter, to bless our lives, or our communities of faith or our work in the world.

I imagine IRAS, in part, as a kaleidoscope of its members' particular colors and shapes – tumbling, interacting, evolving; and from nothing but this, co-creating patterns of knowledge, vision and beauty which are stunningly transformative for the world.

–Barbara Whittaker-Johns, President, IRAS

Are there *particular* times/ways your experience in IRAS has blessed your life - personally, in family or friendship, your faith community, your professional or academic life, or your work in the world? These may be stories suitable for sharing and may offer inspiration to others in the wider community. If you have a story or anecdote you'd be willing to share, consider sending it to Jennifer Whitten, VP for Member Engagement. (gettingmoresettled@yahoo.com).

IRAS MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT GROUP REQUESTS UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE CONTACTS



IRAS is currently creating a list of contacts at universities and colleges with Religion, Science, and/or other programs that connect to our mission. We will

invite these schools to add a web link to our IRAS website. If you have faculty connections, please send relevant contact info to Mark Kuprych at markkuprych@burlingtontelecom.net Useful vitae will include: contact name, title, institution, phone number, email address, USPS address. Thanks!

-Mark Kuprych

THE IRAS NOMINATING COMMITTEE INVITES YOUR SUGGESTIONS

IRAS will need to fill several Council positions via a member vote at the June Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee, chaired by Jane Bengtson, invites IRAS members to suggest nominees for consideration! Leading the work of IRAS through participation in working groups and council meetings, Council members

commit to attending the two Council meetings held each year: one in June, running for two days right before the summer conference (with additional on-island meetings) and our midwinter meeting, typically held in January at a location determined by the IRAS President. In recent years, meetings have been held in

Portsmouth, Chicago, and New York. Please send your suggestions to Jane Bengtson at jane.bengtson@stoel.com. Serving on Council is a great way to connect with and give back to the IRAS community. We at IRAS have many complementary talents, and we need them all to thrive! Thank you.

-Jane Bengtson

REPORT FROM THE SUMMER CONFERENCE PLANNING GROUP

The Summer Conference Planning Group has been focused on finding a theme for the 2018 conference and Beyond. We are happy to announce that the theme for the 2018 conference will be on Artificial Intelligence. More details to come as they emerge. In other news, the VP of Summer Conferences, organized and co-hosted a very successful “science and religion” hospitality event at the annual American Academy of Religion Meeting in San Antonio in November. Other co-hosts were: The Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS); The Institute for the Bio-Cultural Study of Religion (IBCSR); The Zygon Center for Religion and Science (ZCRS); The International Society for Science and Religion (ISSR) and the Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion (DoSER) of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



-Whitney Bauman



**IRAS SUMMER CONFERENCE
SPEAKER AWARDED
EQUIVALENT OF A NOBEL PRIZE**



On January 28, 2017, The Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry appointed **Barry Costa-Pierce** holder of the 2017 Wallenberg Professorship. The Wallenberg is regarded as the equivalent of a Nobel Prize in Agriculture. <http://www.ksla.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Pressrelease-KSLA-Wallenber-professorship-2017.pdf>

Costa-Pierce, a pioneer in aquaculture, will be a dialogue presenter with Solomon Katz at this summer's conference.

**MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND
MATTERS**

At this Summer's Conference on Star Island, there will be some attendees who are there because their way is being paid by the *IRAS Memorial Scholarship Fund*. This is an endowed fund, which means that the principle is preserved and the interest earned each year supports scholarships. The recipients assist by providing support for speakers and conference and council functions. Donations are given for the purpose of honoring deceased IRAS members, conferees, and members of their families.

To date (2017), contributions have been received in memory of the following:

James Ashbrook
Barbara Avakian
Ian Barbour
Carl Bildorff
Edwin Prince Booth
Mike Brewer
Sanborn Brown
Ralph Burhoe
Warren Busse
Esther Cox
Eugene d'Aquili
Beth Davis
Henry Everett
Tom Fangman
John Fryer

Scout Fuller
Ward Goodenough
Joan Goodwin
Dana Greeley
Dorothy Griswold
Harlan Griswold
Norman Hall
Hudson Hoagland
Betty Lau
Normand Lauredeau
Bernard Loomer
Nicole Lopresti
Roy Morrison III
Frances Nesbitt
Ton Olson
Bill Orme-Johnson
Lyman Page
Carol Peters
George Riggan
Kenneth Roberts
Richard Schlegel
Sally Schlegel
Karl Schmitz-Moorman
Harlow Shapley
Harold K. Shilling
Bob Sorensen
Phil Sturges
Winnie Tomm
George Volckhausen
Paul Walsh
Georgia Wilson
H. vanRenssalaer Wilson
Willie Winternitz
Myra Zinke

All donations are welcome. If you'd like to make a donation in someone's memory, their name will be added to this list. Contact IRAS Treasurer, David Klotz, at daklotz@gmail.com

WANTED: YOUR MEMORIES FOR THE IRAS MEMORIAL BOOK

To IRAS Members and Friends,

I'm writing with the blessing of our Historian and Archivist, **Marj Davis, who invites you to send her *any* publicity, your own written personal memories, photos, or other material about IRAS members or friends who have died** for inclusion in the IRAS Memorial Book. There is no time frame around the dates of what you might send since if it duplicates material she already has, she simply won't use it; and, if a person is already remembered in the book, your material might add to what's there. Send material to her at mhdavis283@aol.com or 30 Barn Door Hills Rd. Granby, CT 06035.

Why now? you might ask . . .

Well, some of you may have noticed, in years past, Marj and her spouse Karl Peters *lugging* two heavy loose-leaf tomes onto Star Island each conference week, placing them in the hotel lobby for perusal by conferees, and then *lugging* them onto the ferry at the end of the week. These gradually growing volumes constitute the IRAS Memorial Book - our current collection of material about IRAS members and friends who have died, all lovingly assembled by Marj. Some of the material goes back decades.

As we move further into a technological way of being IRAS, the Memorial Book is being scanned and digitized. It now will be carried to the island on a small flash drive, and made available for viewing during the conference week-for the poignant joy of remembering those whose lives have contributed to our beloved community.

Although *lugging* volumes of the memorial material will become a thing of the past, the original loose-leaf binders are expected to be housed on-island in Vaughn Cottage – a small library, museum and archival collection on Star Island.

(vaughncottage.omeka.net) It is possible that an electronic version of the Memorial Book will be available to those who would like one.

As is our custom, during the Annual Summer Conference we will continue to hold a service to remember the lives of members and friends who have died – especially within the previous year or two. **You are encouraged to let the current Conference Co-Chairs know of those who might be recalled during that Memorial Service.**

The community of IRAS is built, in part, by nurturing its memories. IRAS folks gather in smaller events throughout the year, but the primary time and place of the embodied community is only one week on Star Island. We arrive there from many different locations. Some are not able to arrive every year, or at all. We don't always know those we have lost, or when, even. Therefore it matters that we introduce ourselves to each other, even after the embodied life of a person has passed.

Reminders to contribute to the Memorial Book will continue to be offered, along with gratitude to Marj for her creation of this way of remembering who we are.

*-Barbara Whittaker-Johns,
IRAS President*



IRAS FUNDRAISING ARENAS

IRAS is looking in new directions with our fundraising efforts this year. We are seeking to strengthen our financial underpinnings for both ongoing programs and newly emerging focuses. Here are some places to donate:

☒ Annual Fund. A gift to the IRAS Annual Fund will support the ongoing work of IRAS throughout the year.

☒ Shapley-Booth Fund. A gift to the Shapley-Booth Fund will enhance our ability to bring scholars each year who broaden our conversation and deepen our relationships within the fields of both religion and science. **A matching challenge is being offered by Karl Peters for the Shapley-Booth Fund.** Gifts to this fund will be matched dollar for dollar up to a total match of \$3,000. Match funds are still available to double the impact of your gift to this fund.

☒ Financial Assistance Fund. IRAS wants to be better equipped to engage those who cannot afford the cost of a week at our Star Island summer conferences.

Building on a significant initial gift and our successful first annual auction, your gift today can help grow our Financial Assistance Fund. **A matching challenge is being offered by Jane Bengtson for the Financial Assistance Fund.** Gifts to this fund will be matched dollar for dollar up to a total match of \$3,000. Match funds are still available to double the impact of your gift to this fund.

☒ Memorial Scholarship Fund. Bringing student scholars is key to the continued relevance of IRAS. The Memorial Scholarship Fund—with gifts given in honor of past IRAS members—brings two college or grad students to our summer conference each year.

☒ Sturges Music Fund. Each year the Star Island summer conference is enriched with the musical talent that makes IRAS more than just another academic conference. Giving to the Sturges Music Fund helps our music program thrive.

☒ Future’s Fund. IRAS has established a “Future’s Fund” to receive significant legacy donations of \$10,000 or more. Currently the fund has over

\$50,000. Our hope is that such gifts will enable IRAS to move into new areas and partnerships including off-island symposia for younger scientists, teachers, and scholars in metropolitan areas with several university and college campuses.

These funds seek your support. Please consider making a donation today. *You may write a check and send it directly to our IRAS Treasurer, David Klotz, 82 Goose Lane, Coventry, CT 06238-1213. Or you may contribute to IRAS online by clicking on the DONATE button at*

www.IRAS.org. Please indicate which fund or funds you would like your contribution to support [online in the “special instructions” box].

Our fundraising efforts since last June at the summer conference have resulted in the following gifts:
Shapley-Booth \$1,750. Financial Assistance \$4,007 (which includes \$1,650 raised at the IRAS conference auction). Memorial Fund \$500. Annual Fund \$4,045. For a total of \$10,565.

Thank you!

Call for Member News:

If you’ve read this far, you’ll have noticed that this is a hearty newsletter already. In the near future, we’ll be adding more frequent, smaller newsletters where we hope to feature more member news and stories. Have you had a recent publication or presentation, a job or location change, a marriage, a new child, or a newly added bungee jumping hobby? Are there events you’d like to share? Please send your news to: gettingmoresettled@yahoo.com.

***FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO ATTEND
IRAS SUMMER CONFERENCE***

☒ While our Financial Assistance Fund is young and relatively small, IRAS is now able to offer some financial assistance in an effort to make the Star Island conference more affordable. Grants of up to \$225 are available. Please contact our conference registrar, Marion Griswold, mbgriswold@yahoo.com, if you are interested.

Other sources of assistance and discounts include:

☒ 30% discounts on room and board to anyone registering for the full week's IRAS conference who has not attended a Star Island Conference in the last three years ☒ 30% discounts on room and board to anyone who is new to Star Island and belongs to a science/environmental organization, congregation/religious organization, arts organization, or historical organization

☒ Discounts for former Pelicans (Star Island employees) ☒ Multi-Conference discounts ☒ \$50, \$100, or \$200 credits for returning Shoalers who bring new conferees to Star Island (credit is

based on the number of people you refer). These discounts (which may be accepted in addition to the above IRAS Financial Assistance Fund aid) are sponsored by the Star Island Corporation. <http://starisland.org/discounts/>

☒ Two college or graduate students are given full scholarships to our summer conference each year. These scholarships are offered through our Memorial Scholarship Fund. If interested, see the IRAS website, <http://www.iras.org/fellowshipscholarships.html>. **Apply by March 31.**

☒ The Griswold Scholarship: IRAS offers a partial scholarship for each annual Summer Conference to an individual over the age of 55 who is a first-time attendee to an IRAS conference. The stipend currently covers only the recipient's conference registration fee (\$225 for an IRAS member; \$325 for a non-member). <http://www.iras.org/fellowshipscholarships.html>. **Apply by April 10.**



IRAS SESSION AT AAAS, 2017

The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS), in partnership with the Parliament of the World's Religions, hosted an open pre-conference session the morning of February 16th, 2017 in advance of the American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS) annual meeting: a critical discussion of *The "Wicked Problem" of Climate Change: What is it Doing to Us and for Us?* The exchange was chaired and hosted by Dr. Solomon Katz, director of the Krogman Center for Child Growth and Development at the University of Pennsylvania and long-time IRAS member, and organized by Dr. Maynard Moore, founding partner of CommunityNexus Consulting, LLC. The panel was well attended by over 100 participants and included a panel of scientists, a panel of religious experts, and a question and answer period.

Science presenters included: Dr. Emily E Austin, Soil Biogeochemistry, University of New Hampshire; Dr. Daniel Distel, OGL Research Professor, Marine Science Center, Northeastern University; Dr. Michele Gelfand, Psychology, University of Maryland; Dr. Ellen Messer, Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy, Tufts University; Dr. William Shoemaker, University of Connecticut Health Center, Neuroscience Graduate Program; and Dr. Eric Jones, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health, Department of Epidemiology, Human Genetics and Environmental Sciences. There followed a panel of presenters from religious fields: Dr. Larry Greenfield, Executive Officer, Parliaments of World's Religions; Dr. John Grim, Yale University, Co-director of Forum on Religion and Ecology; and Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker, Yale University, co-director of Forum on Religion and Ecology.

--Emily Austin



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