



**Habitability for Your Cosmic Future:
AstroAnthropology Meets AstroEthics**

Program and Schedule

The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science

69th Annual Conference, June 23–June 30, 2024

Star Island, New Hampshire

CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Habitability for Your Cosmic Future: AstroAnthropology Meets AstroEthics
69th Summer Conference of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science

Astrobiology, astronomy and planetary science — investigating Earth and local planets as well as planets orbiting other stars — invite us to consider life in cosmic context. This conference will weave together diverse interdisciplinary threads from the natural and social sciences and the humanities to consider the place and purpose of humanity in a context in which Earth might not be our only home and in which we may not be alone. Our plenary speakers (leading scientists, religionists, and ethicists) will draw on cutting-edge thinking in astrobiology, including emerging thought on habitability and astro philosophy and theology to consider many questions, including:

- How would expanding humanity into outer space affect culture, arts and many other aspects of human civilization?
- What impact would contact with alien life, or even alien civilizations, have on human religions? Are ancient doctrines deep enough to grapple with the mind-boggling vastness of space?
- Would our biology and anthropology apply to alien life? What does it mean to be “alive”? Would aliens be “intelligent” and “spiritual” in ways we could relate to?
- Can we develop a concrete astroethics: moral principles in planetary perspective? Would our familiar moral anthropologies need to become astroanthropologies to engage new kinds of beings?
- Would earth-sourced colonists—to Mars and beyond—be so changed as to become alien? Would our ethics need to become “astroethics” to prepare people for planetary journeys? How might religion help and hinder the process?
- What are the implications of “commercial” space exploration? We invite all to engage in creative spiritual and moral speculation on a fast-approaching future and fundamental issues that we confront in the present.

Ted Peters, Conference Cochair

Jennifer Wiseman, Conference Cochair

Maynard Moore, Conference Cochair

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Welcome Friends!

I am excited to welcome you to the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS) 69th Summer Conference, Habitability for Your Cosmic Future: AstroAnthropology Meets AstroEthics, where astrobiology, astronomy, and planetary science come together to invite us to consider life in a cosmic context.

This year also marks IRAS' 70th anniversary! In the words of astronomer Harlow Shapley recounting that first conference in his book, *Science Ponders Religion*:

On Star Island, a rocky and treeless member of the Isles of Shoals a few miles out to sea from the shores of Maine and New Hampshire, a group of some two hundred explorers and analysts have in recent years held week-long summer meetings to ponder on the inborn nature of man (sic), his goals, and the place in space, time, and biological evolution, his meaning to the world, and the world's meaning to him... "We are citizens of the universe," one Star Islander reminds us (1960, v).

Again, this week, we come together to explore what it means to be "citizens of the universe." Harlow Shapley, who determined Earth's position in the Milky Way Galaxy, would enjoy this week's lively informative presentations and conversations. What a great honor to his memory that we look to the stars this week.

This week, I invite you to form new friendships and/or rekindle old ones, to sit on the porch and enjoy the view, to walk the island and discover the beauty, and to participate in as much or as little of our programming as you choose. Eight years ago, I attended my first IRAS conference and became a member of IRAS and a Shoaler for Life. I invite you to as well! I hope IRAS, Star Island, and the knowledge shared this week become part of you.

Peace and Welcome,
CJ Love, Ph.D.
President of IRAS

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THE STORY OF IRAS

In the late 1940s the American Academy of Arts and Sciences organized a Committee on Science and Values to address topics relating contemporary scientific knowledge to fundamental human concerns about life's morals and meanings. The Committee, which included astronomer Harlow Shapley, neurobiologist Hudson Hoagland, geologist Kirtley Fletcher Mather, biologist George Wald, and Ralph Wendell Burhoe, the executive secretary of the Academy, stated that "we believe that ... the survival of human society depends on the reformulation of man's world view and ethics, by grounding them in the revelations of modern science as well as on tradition and intuition."

Several from this committee accepted an invitation to bring their views to an interfaith group at the Coming Great Church Conference on Star Island in the summer of 1954 and subsequently formed the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science. Others involved in the establishment of IRAS included Brand Blanshard, Edwin Prince Booth, Dana McLean Greeley, Donald Szanthy Harrington, Henry Murphy, Lyman Rutledge, and Malcolm Sutherland.

Since 1954 IRAS has held an annual conference on science, values, and religion, with 62 of those conferences held on Star Island. IRAS has also conducted—on its own or in collaboration with other groups—conferences at universities and theological schools and at meetings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Academy of Religion.

In 1965 IRAS joined with the Meadville Theological School of Lombard College (later Meadville/Lombard Theological School) to establish a journal: *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*. During the past quarter century, *Zygon* has been the chief international voice for the scholarly community in science and religion and has greatly strengthened the influence of the IRAS-CASIRAS approach to relating religion and the sciences.

PURPOSE OF IRAS

IRAS is a multidisciplinary society of persons who seek to understand and reformulate the theory and practice of religion in the light of contemporary scientific knowledge, and to provide a forum for discussing issues relevant to that goal. The IRAS Constitution states the formal purpose as follows:

- (1) to promote creative efforts leading to the formulation, in the light of contemporary knowledge, of effective doctrines and practices for human welfare;
- (2) to formulate dynamic and positive relationships between the concepts developed by science and the goals and hopes of humanity expressed through religion; and
- (3) to state human values in such universal and valid terms that they may be understood by all peoples, whatever their cultural background or experience, in such a way as to provide a basis for worldwide cooperation.

Various other statements of the goals and purposes of IRAS have also been articulated over the years. For example, there is one in the back of each *Zygon* which states, "IRAS is an independent society of scientists, philosophers, religion scholars, theologians, and others who want to understand the role of religion in our dynamic scientific world."

The IRAS Council, at its 2003 midwinter meeting, adopted the "Campion Statement," so-called because it originated from discussions at the Campion Center in Massachusetts at the 2002 midwinter meeting. The Campion Statement reads as follows:

We at IRAS take the natural world seriously as a primary source of meaning. Our quest is informed and guided by the deepening and evolving understandings fostered by scientific inquiry.

From here, our quests for meaning take us in divergent directions. For some, the natural world and its emergent manifestations in human experience and creativity are the focus of exploration. For some, understandings of the natural world are interwoven with understandings inherent in various religious

traditions, generating additional paths of exploration and encounter. As a result, we articulate our emerging orientations with many voices, voices that are harmonious in that we share a common sense of place and gratitude.

We acknowledge as well a shared set of values and concerns pertaining to peace, justice, dignity, cultural and ecological diversity, and planetary sustainability. Although we may differ and hence debate on how these concerns are best addressed, we are committed to participating in their resolution.

In 2015 at the Annual Meeting, the following Statement of Purpose, which emerged from the renewal work, was adopted by the members:

IRAS cultivates a community of informed and respectful inquiry and dialogue at the intersections of science with religion, spirituality, and philosophy in service of global, societal, and personal well-being.

IRAS is a nonprofit membership organization. Governance is by a volunteer Council whose members are elected from the entire membership. New IRAS members and tax-deductible contributions are always welcome.

IRAS ON STAR ISLAND

Star Island is within the waters of N'dakinna, the traditional lands and waterways of the Abenaki, Pennacook and other related Wabanaki Peoples past and present. We acknowledge and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

Star Island, first settled by Captain John Smith in the early 1600s, is situated in what was known as the best fishing grounds in the Colonial world. Today one can still see the lobstermen setting their traps. A small museum and island tours allow one to recapture this early human history; and tours of the local flora and fauna, tide walks, and a marine biology lab help one appreciate the local environment.

Because it is ten miles offshore from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Star Island's temperature is usually ten degrees cooler than on the mainland. It thus became an ideal resort setting for one of the premier late-nineteenth-century hotels on the east coast. Today the hotel, along with several cottages and motel-type units, is a conference center run by the Unitarian-Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ; these two religious organizations have formed the Star Island Corporation. Although IRAS is not affiliated with any particular religious organization, we have enjoyed the hospitality of the Star Island Corporation since our first IRAS conference in 1954.

The nineteenth-century hotel and other facilities provide both the charm and the amenities of that period. Rooms are provided with wash basins and water buckets, and in most cases the toilet is down the hall. The Star Island management and its staff of mostly college students—called Pelicans—are first rate in meeting the various needs of guests from infants to octogenarians. A highlight of the week is the Pelican Talent Show—a delightful extra from the hard-working staff. And in recent years IRAS conferees have held their own talent show on the final night of the conference.

Star Island and other islands in the Isles of Shoals are excellent examples of the rocky New England coast. There are no roads, no cars, no bicycles, and no TVs. But there are rocks, bushes, grasses, nesting sea gulls, crashing ocean waves, sometimes fog horns, and sometimes crystal-clear night skies to explore through telescopes with some of our professional and amateur astronomers (IRAS's second president was astronomer Harlow Shapley). There are opportunities for swimming, kayaking, tennis, and board games. And the Star Island Book Store and Gift Shop offer books related to the conference theme and other items to remember the week on the island.

People who come to IRAS conferences from a variety of academic and professional fields, as well as many well-educated "lay persons." There is active dialogue in lectures, discussion groups, conversation on the porch overlooking the harbor and on the rocks, and at the social hour before dinner. For those interested, there are opportunities to meditate and worship together in the stone chapel on a high point of the island, at the gazebo, or in the reflective evening candlelight services.

Those who have been coming for a long time to IRAS conferences believe that the natural setting, the island history, and the people provide a unique opportunity for rigorous, meaningful dialogue regarding religion and values in relation to contemporary science.

GENERAL CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Announcements – Because we will be somewhat dispersed during meals, announcements (including changes to the program schedule) will be made at the beginning of the morning plenary lecture and at the evening session. Look for announcements in the *Star Beacon* and on the chalkboard.

Appledore/Shoals Marine Laboratory Tour and Duck Island Cruise--The Vaughn Cottage Curator accompanies you to Appledore Island where you learn about Celia Thaxter and fishing village-era history, visit Celia's Garden, and tour the Shoals Marine Laboratory, which Star Island operates jointly with Cornell University. The return trip cruises around Duck Island. Appledore does not have paved roads and mobility-impaired individuals may have difficulty negotiating the terrain. The trip takes two hours. The cost is \$25/adult and \$20/youth. Sign up at the Writing Desk in the Hotel Lobby. Meet at the Well House (on the Front Lawn), Tuesday by 2:15 P.M.

Banquet – The banquet will be held Saturday evening. We will present IRAS awards that evening. Dress runs from casual to a bit formal.

Behind the Scenes Tour – This interactive tour takes conferees “behind the scenes” through the kitchens, laundry, staff dining areas, and other areas of the island operation. Ask questions and chat about how the island is run as you walk. Meet at the Well House on the Front Lawn, Wednesday at 2:00 P.M.

Beloved Community Workshop – Star Island's Beloved Community Project manager, Rev. Christana McKnight, will lead a workshop on the work of Star Island's Beloved Community Project and the specific work they are doing around representation and contextualizing our history. Elliott, Wednesday, 3:00–4:00 P.M.

Bird Walk – Early mornings are a quiet time on Star, and a time of peak activity for many species of birds. Binoculars, bird guides, and birding checklists are available for use. Meet at the Marine Lab, Tuesday at 6:00 A.M.

Botany Walk – The Island Naturalist will conduct a tour of the vast island flora, including a discussion on edible and medicinal plants native to the Shoals. Meet at the Marine Lab, Thursday at 4:00 P.M.

Candlelight Services – A long-standing Star Island tradition, the conference program day closes with a short service of reflection in the Chapel. Following the evening program, conferees gather at the end of the porch to form a procession, carrying candle lanterns as the villagers of long ago carried their whale oil lamps up the same winding path. Inside the chapel, the lanterns hang on brackets and illuminate the chapel. In inclement weather, the candlelight service is held in Elliott. For the list of this year's presenters, see the “People” listings on page 29.

Chalk Board – Besides the *Star Beacon* and Announcements, the schedule for the day (with any last-minute changes) is posted in the Oceanic lobby on a chalk board. This is an easy way to remind yourself what is happening and when.

Chapel Services – The daily chapel services at 8:30 A.M. are an integral part of the week's experience and tie in to the other intellectual activities taking place throughout the week. **Rev. Matilda Rose Cantwell** has a thought-provoking week of services planned.

Conference Photo – The conference photo takes place on the Oceanic front steps at a day and time to be announced. David Klotz is the photographer and, as in preceding years, he will email a Dropbox link for the (high-res) photo to everyone after we get home.

Farewell Party – An informal farewell party will be held in Newton on Saturday night after the Talent Show, an important part of which is to use up any refreshing substances left over from Social Hour.

Geology Walk – Learn about the fascinating geological processes that have shaped the Isles of Shoals into the islands they are today. Meet at the Marine Lab, Monday at 4:00 P.M.

Ghosts and Graveyards Tour – Take a spooky tour of the island's cemeteries, led by the Vaughn Cottage curator. Meet at Vaughn Cottage, Friday at 7:30 P.M.

History Tour – This interactive tour provides an overview of the history of Star Island and the Isles of Shoals from the 1600s through the present. Learn also about the prehistoric era when Native Americans lived on the islands, as long ago as 4000 BCE. Meet on the front porch, Monday at 1:30 P.M.

Intergenerational Activities – From 3:30-5:00 P.M. on Thursday and Saturday, join the intergenerational activities and games on the front lawn. Bring your inner child.

IRAS Work – IRAS is a community with a life that extends throughout the year. We take the opportunity of being together on Star Island to catch up with one another and to undertake the business that must be done. In addition to the IRAS Annual Meeting and Council Meetings, there are five Working Groups: Member Engagement, Organizational Relationships, Summer Conferences, Administration, and Finance. All IRAS meetings are open to any interested person, whether or not you are a member of IRAS. We will welcome you. Meeting times will be announced and posted on the chalk board.

Island Systems and Sustainability Tour –Tour the water facilities, power plant, solar array, garden, wastewater systems, and resource recovery center. Meet at the west end of the Front Porch, Thursday at 2:00 P.M.

Late-night activities – Some folks head to bed early, others hang around the front porch or the snack bar for good conversation. Movies, dancing, game playing, and other activities often emerge throughout the week. Do what suits you best.

Lobstah – Wednesday evening you are invited to a special lobster dinner in the dining room. Tickets must be purchased in advance at the Front Desk. An additional charge (\$18) will be added to your room and board bill.

Low-Tide Walk –Explore tidal processes, intertidal zones, and the animals and organisms found in each. Specimens are often collected and brought back to the Marine Lab. Day and time to be announced.

Memorial Service – A memorial service for IRAS members who have died during the past year will be held in the Chapel on Wednesday at 2:45 P.M. Edmund Robinson will lead us in remembering and celebrating. Contact Edmund if you would like someone to be remembered at the service.

Pelican Show – This variety show put on by Pelicans for the conferees traditionally features a number of musical acts and skits. The Pel Show will be held outside on the Marshman stage, Thursday 8:00–9:00 P.M.

Pelicans vs. Conferees Softball Game – Conferees are pitted against the Pelican squad in this long-standing tradition. All are welcome to play! The game uses low-flight softballs and is “slow pitch.” Softball field, Friday, 3:30–5:00 P.M.

Recreation – Star Island has many opportunities for recreation: talking, thinking, napping, reading, walking, and playing. Star Island’s inviting setting offers rich opportunities to renew, refresh, and nurture body, mind, and spirit. Recreational activities abound, including rowing and kayaking, swimming, arts and crafts, a softball game against the Pelicans, and various Island tours. Games, puzzles, and sports equipment (tennis rackets, basketballs/softballs/glove/bats, frisbees, cornhole and horseshoes) can be borrowed at the Front Desk. Be sure to check the chalkboard in the Oceanic lobby for daily activities.

Rutledge Marine Laboratory – The Marine Lab provides a home for numerous crabs, fish, and other sea creatures, offering a science education experience for all ages. Open 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. every day.

Shapley-Booth Lectures – Fellowships to honor the memory of the first two presidents of IRAS, Edwin Prince Booth and Harlow Shapley, are awarded to the best proposals in response to the conference call for papers. Proposals are evaluated blind by a three-person, anonymous jury. In addition to being recognized, Shapley-Booth Fellows receive financial assistance from the Shapley-Booth Fund for their room and board and for some travel expenses.

Showers – Showers are available beneath the lobby, by signing up at the Front Desk. Conferees are asked to limit showers to roughly every other day. Towels and soap are available outside the shower rooms. Accessible/gender-neutral restrooms with showers are located just off the lobby and in Cottage

A, available for those who need them. There is also a rinse-off shower located at the end of the pier for use after a swim.

Silent Auction – Bid early and bid often at our IRAS Silent Auction (during Social Hour in Newton), to benefit our Conference Grant Fund.

Social Hour – Takes place at the end of afternoon activities, from 5:30–6:30 P.M. in Newton for an hour of libations, snacks, socializing, and, often, music. Alcohol is provided and depends upon your donations. Please donate generously as you are able. Contact **Mark Kuprych** (Social Hour Coordinator) for ways you can help.

Star Beacon – The *Star Beacon* is an IRAS tradition. This **conference newspaper** appears at breakfast each morning with up-to-date information on the conference and its participants. It provides opportunities for you to respond to lectures and the conference theme, challenge ideas, publish poetry, commentary, and other forms of artistic expression, including humor, all at the discretion of the editor, **Emily Austin**, and as space is available. Contributions from our younger conferees often grace the pages. Send an email to starbeacon2024@gmail.com for publication in the Beacon. There will also be a Star Beacon box at the Oceanic Hotel Lobby side desk for handcrafted art or brief (150 words) analog submissions.

Star Gazing – The telescope comes out on clear nights after Candlelight. Check with **Dave Klotz, Dan Solomon**, or the announcement board to see if and where we'll be observing.

Sunset Cruise—Enjoy a spectacular Star Island sunset aboard the Utopia during a 1-hour cruise around the Isles of Shoals. Cost is \$30/adults, \$15/youth. Meet at the dock at 7:45 P.M. on Monday. Sign up beforehand at the Writing Desk in the Oceanic lobby.

Talent Show – The Talent Show is on Saturday evening following the banquet, starting at 7:45 P.M. All are invited to participate. Sign up with **Pauline Candaux** (Talent Show Coordinator).

If you have any **concerns, questions, or suggestions** about the conference, please bring them up with Conference Cochairs **Ted Peters** or **Jennifer Wiseman** or Conference Coordinator **Abby Fuller**.

BELOVED COMMUNITY PROJECT

The Star Island Beloved Community Project is a journey the Star Island Corporation has begun as an organization to create a more inclusive and intentional community, to help spread more empathy and understanding in the world, and to become a more welcoming place for all people. We recognize and affirm that many have been on this journey for a long time, and we are excited to listen and learn as we continue on this important journey.

The term “Beloved Community” was popularized by Martin Luther King Jr. It describes a society based on justice, equality and love for all people. According to the King Center: “*Dr. King’s Beloved Community is a global vision in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. ... Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood.*”

How do we find our path toward King’s vision? This is a question that we will ask ourselves throughout this journey. We started with this question: How does our beloved Star Island community fall short of King’s vision? And perhaps more importantly, what could we do about it? Star Island has created a new position, Island Minister/Beloved Community Project Manager, to help shape Star as a place that welcomes all. A team of Shoaler musicians composed a new Grand March Song. Financial grants for conferees are now highlighted during the registration process. *The Journey Toward the Beloved Community: A Guide for Conference Leaders*, available to all, offers many suggestions for creating a culture where new people feel more at ease and for programming to hold conversations on equity, justice, and community (<https://starisland.org/beloved-community-project/>).

IRAS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The IRAS Memorial Scholarship Fund honors deceased IRAS members, conferees, and members of their families. The income from the fund supports full room and board for up to two student scholars each year. The names of those remembered are added to a memorial list.

Scholarship applications are made to the chair of the scholarship committee, presently Jane Bengtson. Consideration is given to students who are currently pursuing a degree, with preference given to those who are first-time attendees at an IRAS conference, and whose interests are congruent with the purposes of IRAS.

It is expected that scholars will benefit from the intellectual experiences gained by attending sessions and interacting with conference speakers and IRAS leaders. Scholars are also asked to provide some assistance to those running the conference under the guidance of the Conference Coordinator.

To date, contributions to the Memorial Scholarship Fund have been received in memory of the following people:

Carol Rausch Albright	Henry Everett	Leslie Kawamura	Karl Schmitz-Moorman
James Ashbrook	Larry Fagg	Betty Lau	Harlow Shapley
Barbara Avakian	Tom Fangman	Normand Laurendeau	Harold K. Shilling
Peter Avakian	John Fryer	Bernard Loomer	Mary Skipp
Ian Barbour	Scout Fuller	Nicole Lopresti	Bob Sorensen
Luther Bengtson	Roger Gillette	Leslie Lowry	Philemon Sturges
Carl Bildorff	Ken Gjemre	Roy Morrison III	Winnie Tomm
Edwin Prince Booth	Ward Goodenough	Frances Nesbitt	George Volckhausen
Charlotte Brewer	Joan Goodwin	Ton Olson	Paul Walsh
Mike Brewer	Jeanie Graustein	Bill Orme-Johnson	Ruth Wathen-Dunn
Sanborn Brown	Dana Greeley	Lyman Page	Weiant Wathen-Dunn
Ralph Burhoe	Dorothy Griswold	Carol Peters	Lily White
Warren Busse	Harlan Griswold	Norm Richardson	Georgia Wilson
Esther Cox	Norman Hall	George Riggan	H. van Renssalaer Wilson
Eugene d’Aquili	Neva Hefner	Kenneth Roberts	Willie Winternitz
Marilou d’Aquili	Phil Hefner	Richard Schlegel	Dana Woodbury
Beth Davis	Hudson Hoagland	Sally Schlegel	Marjorie Young
Marj Davis			Myra Zinke

Memorial donations to this endowed fund are appreciated.

ARCHIPELAGOS: CONFERENCE YOUTH PROGRAM

Archipelagos is IRAS' youth program. We also sponsor IRAS Intergenerational Events and invite all conferees to join us for these opportunities, which will be announced in the Star Beacon and on the chalkboard.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS AND TIMES

Monday Morning: All youth and their parents or guardians meet on the front lawn near the sundial at **9:20** (right after chapel) for a brief orientation with group leaders.

Monday through Saturday Mornings: From 9:15–12:15, youth will meet in their age-groups. Sometimes they'll join together for multi-age youth activities. During this time, IRAS is responsible for the youth and they must be signed in and signed out.

To help make our program safe and successful:

- Please ensure that your kids wear sunscreen, have bug spray, wear sturdy (preferably closed toe) shoes, etc.
- Please bring your kids to group at 9:15 and sign them in. Those over 12 years of age may sign themselves in, provided you also **text their youth staff leaders and Jennifer Whitten** in a group chat (phone numbers will be provided).
- If for any reason your child will not be attending or will be late for the morning group (family fishing trip, illness, overslept), please **text their youth staff leaders and Jennifer Whitten** in a group chat (phone numbers will be provided).
- If your child is leaving early, you will need to sign them out (if they're older, this may be accomplished by text).
- At 12:15, youth staff will walk both the older and younger groups to the Oceanic porch. Please meet them on the porch no later than 12:20 and sign them out (unless they're in the oldest group and you agree that they can sign themselves out at 12:15).

Afternoon Serendipity Program: Activity locations may change, so check the Archipelagos page in the Star Beacon and watch the chalkboard and youth announcement board to see times, locations, and scheduled activities for our afternoon Serendipity programming.

Youth are not required to be signed in or out during this time, and Archipelagos staff are not responsible for keeping track of your child's whereabouts. If your children are old enough to come by themselves, great! If they are in the youngest age groups, they may need you or another adult family member/friend to stay with them. It depends on the child. Adults are also welcome to participate. Activities are listed in the schedule printed on the back of the Orange Book.

Youth Social Hour: From **5:15–6:55, Monday–Saturday,** IRAS youth leaders and volunteer adult conferees host a youth social hour on the Dragon Playground. Youth must be signed in and out. There will be popcorn and lemonade. **We will need one youth leader and two adult volunteers each day.** Please sign up on the sign-up sheet on the "writing desk" in the Oceanic lobby. You do not have to have a child in the program in order to help with the youth social hour!

Evening Serendipity Program: From **7:30–8:45, Sunday–Wednesday,** IRAS will offer all-age evening activities for children, youth, and intrepid adults. Youth must be signed in and out. On Sunday night the activity will be Candy Bingo. We choose our bonfire night based on the weather, per Star Island guidance—it's not safe if there's too much wind. **Therefore, the night of the bonfire may change.** Please check the youth announcement board and the Archipelagos Star Beacon page for evening activities, locations, and timing.

Intergenerational Events: These include a conference-themed INTERPLANETARY ESCAPE ROOM Adventure, a chance to cheer on our duct tape boat race participants and be awed by our bottle rocket spacecraft as you indulge at the ice cream social, and tie-dying (space is limited by shirts and dye). The Escape Room description can be found in the Orange Book at Thursday afternoon.

SAFETY

All youth staff undergo SORI checks and are required to sign an acknowledgement and agreement to abide by IRAS' "Policy and Procedures Addressing Child Abuse" and "Recommended Goals for Youth and

Youth Leader Safety.” All conferees can read a copy of the “Policy and Procedures Addressing Child Abuse” at the Writing Desk and immediately following this section.

Our primary rules for youth—and for adults, of course!—are *Be Safe and Be Kind*. ☺

Since (to the best of our knowledge) our youth are human beings, conflicts occasionally may arise. Our staff help the youth program participants address these to the best of our and their ability. We will find your child’s parent/guardian if we need your guidance, since you know your child better than we do. If your child is struggling with anything that could impact their week, please tell their group leaders and Jennifer Whitten—and share any ideas that will help them have a wonderful time on Star Island. Please also communicate any pertinent health issues or other needs.

Best of Starlight,

Jennifer E. Whitten, Program Coordinator

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

STAR ISLAND

Letter to all Registered Conferees for the IRAS Conference

Dear Conferee,

The Star Island Corporation and conference staff work very hard to keep the island safe for all conferees, especially for our children. Attached, you will find a copy of our Policies and Procedures Addressing Child Abuse.

New Hampshire law mandates that you report any suspected child abuse/neglect. While on Star Island, you are to go *directly* to the Star Island Corporation’s Grievance Officer by asking for him at the front desk. The grievance officer is trained in how to determine the next steps.

It takes a community to keep our children safe. We appreciate your support!

Thank you,

Jennifer Whitten, Archi Pelagos Youth Staff Coordinator
on behalf of the IRAS Conference

IRAS POLICY AND PROCEDURES ADDRESSING CHILD ABUSE 2022

Preface: The IRAS Conference shall maintain an environment in which all children are free from child abuse. All persons associated with the conferences are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide a safe and nurturing atmosphere for children and adolescents. Child abuse is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Any member of the IRAS community who engages in behaviors that are defined as child abuse by state and federal laws will be in violation of this policy. Further, retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint or assisting in the investigation pursuant to this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

1. Child abuse is defined, in the New Hampshire Child Protection Act. [NH RSA 169-C: 3, II and XXVII]:

“‘Abused child’ means any child who has been:

- (a) Sexually abused; or
- (b) Intentionally physically injured; or
- (c) Psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems generally recognized to result from consistent mistreatment or neglect; or
- (d) Physically injured by other than accidental means.”

“‘Sexual abuse’ means the following activities under circumstances which indicate that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm: the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children. With respect to the definition of sexual abuse, the term ‘child’ or ‘children’ means any individual who is under the age of 18 years.”

1.1 NH law defines a child as any person who has not reached his or her eighteenth birthday [Chapter 169-C: 3]

Under NH law not only professional caregivers of children but also “...**any other person having reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall report the same...**” [Chapter 169-C: 29]

- 1.1.1 Responsibilities: As care providers and the host of care providers for children, the staff, volunteers, and conferees of the IRAS Conference have a very serious responsibility for the health and well-being of children
 - 1.1.2 Reporting: If any staff member, volunteer, or conferee suspects that a child has been or is in danger of being abused while attending an IRAS conference, it is the responsibility of the staff member, volunteer, or conferee *to immediately report his or her concerns to the Grievance Officer of the Star Island Corporation.* The Grievance Officer is the Manager or his designee. This applies if the abuse appears to come from another child or from a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the welfare of the child while on Star Island.
 - 1.1.3 Discipline: No child shall ever be disciplined by the use of any physical method including shaking, spanking, and slapping by any staff member or volunteer. Verbal reprimands shall be calm, yet firm, and shall not include destructive criticism. If a child is disruptive, a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the welfare of the child while on Star Island shall be informed immediately.
2. The Grievance Officer: According to the policy of the Star Island Community, the Manager will annually designate him/herself or appoint a senior staff person of the Star Island Corporation as the Child Abuse Grievance Officer who will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all child abuse complaints. In the event the complaint is against the manager who is also the Grievance Officer, the alternate Grievance Officer will hear the complaint. In the event the complaint is against the Grievance Officer when not the Manager, the complaint will be heard by the Manager.
 - 2.1 The Grievance Officer working with the Youth Coordinator, Current Chairs or their designees will ensure that the matter is investigated through the following process:
 - 2.1.1 The Grievance Officer along with the Youth Coordinator and/or the Current Chairs or their designees will guide the charging party through the process of making an oral report of the child abuse or the Grievance Officer working with the Youth Coordinator and/or Current Chairs or their designees will him/herself/themselves make such report to the Bureau of Children, Division for Children, Youth, and Families. Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with NHRSA 169-C: 29 which states “**any...person having reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall report the same...**” and NHRSA 169-C:30 states “An oral report shall be made immediately by telephone or otherwise, and followed within 48 hours by a report in writing, if so requested, to the bureau.”
 - 2.1.2 The Grievance Officer working with the Youth Coordinator and Current Chairs or their designees will take whatever action is necessary to ensure the child’s safety and they will guard against subjecting the child to multiple interviews.
 - 2.1.3 Privacy and confidentiality: In the course of taking any action, the greatest degree of privacy and confidentiality possible shall be maintained.
 - 2.2 The Grievance Officer along with the Youth Coordinator and Current Chairs or their designees may gather additional information as deemed necessary to protect the welfare of the child and ensure his or her safety and that of other children and adults. The Grievance Officer along with the Youth Coordinator, Current Chairs, or their designees may impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including expulsion from the conference and/or denial of the right to attend future IRAS Conferences.
 3. Protection of the Parties: Retaliation against any person who has filed a complaint of child abuse or cooperated in an investigation regarding a complaint of child abuse is unlawful and will not be tolerated.
 4. *To be eligible to serve as a Youth Leader a SORI check must be completed.*
 5. Policy Dissemination: In accordance with the law, this policy shall be given by the Chairs or their designated Youth Coordinator to all Youth Staff when they apply.
 6. *Every registered family or individual shall receive a letter before the conference explaining that we have a child abuse policy and that copies will be available on Island during the Conferences to anyone requesting them.*

7. The name of the Child Abuse Grievance Officer for the Star Island Corporation can be learned by asking at the front desk on island or by contacting the Star Island Corporation Office at 603-430-6272 or by mail at 30 Middle St., Portsmouth, NH 03801.

LEGAL REFS:

Chapter 169-C, New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated.

Adopted: November 4, 2000	Revised November 15, 2003	Revised 2016
Revised November 3, 2001	Revised July 7 & 19, 2004	
Revised November 2, 2002	Revised July 16, 2006	

HARASSMENT POLICY

POLICY AND PROCEDURE ADDRESSING DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL AND OTHER HARASSMENT 2022

Preface: The IRAS Conference shall maintain an environment in which all persons are free from sexual or other harassment. All persons associated with the Conference are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from discrimination and harassment. Discrimination and sexual and other harassment will not be tolerated. Any member of the IRAS community who engages in these behaviors will be in violation of this policy. Further, retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation pursuant to this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

1. Harassment refers to unreasonable conduct or behavior, which is personally offensive or threatening, impairs morale, or interferes with the work effectiveness of members of the IRAS community and relates to *race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, physical or mental disability, national origin, or ancestry* or other protected category. Examples of harassment include conduct or comments that threaten physical violence; offensive, unsolicited remarks; unwelcome gestures or physical contact, display or circulation of written materials, items or pictures degrading to any members of the above-mentioned groups; and/or verbal abuse or insults about or directed at any individual because of their relationship in any of the groups listed above which has the purpose or effect of unnecessarily interfering with an individual's participation in the IRAS conference or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where:
 - 1.1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's participation in IRAS conference activities.
 - 1.2. Submission to, or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting participation in IRAS conference activities.
 - 1.3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or participation in IRAS conference activities or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
 - 1.4. The following unwelcome conduct may also constitute sexual harassment, whether intended or not:
 - 1.4.1. use of sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's own or another's sex life, comments on an individual's body, comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies or prowess;
 - 1.4.2. displaying and/or circulating sexually suggestive objects, printed or electronic materials (including social media, direct messages, etc.), pictures or cartoons;
 - 1.4.3. unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
 - 1.4.4. inquiries into one's sexual experience; and
 - 1.4.5. discussion of one's sexual activities.

2. The Grievance Officer: The Chief Executive Officer of the Star Island Corporation will annually designate themselves or appoint a senior staff person as the Grievance Officer who will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all discrimination and harassment complaints. Alternate Grievance Officer(s) may also be designated. **[Note: The current Grievance Officer is the Island Manager, John Bynum, jbynum@starisland.org.]** In the event the complaint is against the Grievance Officer when not the Chief Executive Officer, the complaint will be heard by the Chief Executive Officer. In the event the complaint is against the Chief Executive Officer, the complaint shall be heard by the President of the SIC Board of Directors or their designee.

- 2.1. Any member of the IRAS community who believes that they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment should report the incident(s) to the Grievance Officer*. A parent, guardian or any person who believes that a child has been subjected to harassment of any kind may file a complaint on behalf of the child. Anyone (employees, conferees, etc.) can raise concerns and make reports of discrimination or harassment without fear of reprisal.

Any member of the IRAS community who becomes aware of possible discrimination or harassment must promptly advise the Grievance Officer who will handle the matter in a timely and confidential manner, to the greatest extent possible.

- 2.2. When a complaint is made, the following process will be used to reach a disposition which balances the interests of all parties with the primary goal of protecting the safety of all in the IRAS community. If the Grievance Officer or the Chief Executive Officer believes the circumstances require investigation by an independent outside investigator, they may delegate the responsibility for investigation to such an individual, provided they inform the Board President or, when they are unavailable, the Board Vice President of their intention to do so.

The Grievance Officer will investigate the matter through the following process:

- 2.2.1. When the aggrieved is a minor and there is an allegation of child abuse, the Grievance Officer will guide the reporting party through the process of making an oral report of the child abuse or the Grievance Officer will themselves make such report to the Bureau of Children, Division for Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with NHRSA 169-C:29 which states "any...person having reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall report the same..." and NHRSA 169-C:30 which states "An oral report shall be made immediately by telephone or otherwise, and followed within 48 hours by a report in writing, if so requested, to the bureau."
 - 2.2.2. When the aggrieved is an adult, the Grievance Officer will confer with the affected party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statement of the facts.
 - 2.2.3. The Grievance officer will also meet with the accused party in order to obtain their response to the complaint.
 - 2.2.4. The Grievance Officer will use their discretion in determining whether there are other witnesses who should be interviewed, the order in which such interviews should occur, and to conduct said interviews for the purpose of gathering facts and reaching factual conclusions.
 - 2.2.5. Privacy and confidentiality: In the course of taking any action, the Grievance Officer shall maintain the highest degree of privacy and confidentiality as possible under the circumstances. Under no circumstances will the Grievance Officer promise confidentiality.
 - 2.2.6. The Grievance Officer will keep a written record of information gathered throughout the process of investigating the complaint, and shall complete a written record of their findings.
 - 2.2.7. The Grievance Officer, if someone other than the Chief Executive Officer, shall provide a written record of findings to the Chief Executive Officer, or, if appropriate, the President of the Board of Directors.
- 2.3. After reviewing the record, the Grievance Officer will decide the next appropriate action. The Grievance Officer may gather additional information as deemed necessary to resolve the matter formally or informally. With the consent of the reporting party, the Grievance Officer may mediate a resolution between or among the parties.

Thereafter the Grievance Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, shall impose any sanctions deemed appropriate. If a staff member is found to have violated this policy, the Grievance

Officer may, without limitation, impose a warning, suspension or termination.

If a volunteer or guest is found to have engaged in conduct or activities contrary to this policy, the Grievance Officer may, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including but not limited to, barring that person from further involvement with the Star Island Corporation and/or being present on the island, either permanently or for a period of time.

3. Retaliation: Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports discrimination or harassment or provides information during an investigation of such behavior, or witnesses or has reliable information about such behavior.
 4. Retaliation against any person who has filed a complaint of discrimination or harassment or cooperated in an investigation regarding a complaint for discrimination or harassment is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Complaints of retaliation will be separately investigated, and appropriate remedial action will be taken.
 5. Policy Dissemination: This policy shall be given to all new staff upon appointment via the Personnel Handbook and shall be distributed annually to all staff and conference chairs/leaders for communication to conferees.
 6. Annual Review: This policy shall be reviewed annually by the SIC Board of Directors.
 7. Copies of this policy shall be referenced on our website, in our Program Catalog, and in Better Living on Star Island; included in the Personnel Handbook; and promoted through conference leadership.
- * The CEO has appointed the Island Manager as the Sexual Harassment Grievance Officer and the Backup Island Manager as the Alternate Grievance Officer. The Grievance Officer or Alternates may be reached through SIC's Portsmouth Office (telephone: 603-430-6272; email: office@starisland.org; mail: 30 Middle Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: DAYS AND TIMES, ABSTRACTS, BIOSKETCHES

IRAS Conferences include several different kinds of presentations and activities as described in the General Conference Information section on page 4. What follows below is a detailed schedule for each day, broken out for morning, afternoon, and evening. See also the weekly schedule on the back cover of this program book.

LIVE-STREAMING INFORMATION

Chapel services, the plenary sessions, and some paper presentations will be live streamed, so you can watch them online on your personal electronic device from anywhere on the island that receives adequate wifi reception.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM SCHEDULE

CHAPEL SERVICES

Matilda Rose Cantwell

Chapel 8:30–9:15 A.M.

Our week of chapel services will begin with an exploration of spiritual and religious traditions whose cosmologies are based on and/or inclusive or astrological and/or astronomical elements. We will ponder what material, anthropological, or historical contexts might have been or are more conducive to

the centrality of these motifs as guiding principles. Historically, what kinds of societies, pre- or post-agricultural, might identify the sacred as being physically transcendent or elevated, literally “in the sky” or far beyond. What segments of current societies are drawn toward astrological views and why, and what, if anything, do these spiritual systems have to contribute to the most vexing problems of late-stage global capitalism and climate change, as well as the national crises of mental health and “deaths of despair”? I will offer some

thoughts on these questions, and submit the hypothesis that “transcendence and imminence” or the alignment of the universal with the internal “self” as manifested in some of the eastern traditions (Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism) is a critical framework for addressing these challenges, and that the emerging fields of astroethics and astrotheology have important resources to offer.

Midweek we will take a break from the cerebral and participate in a contemplative music and meditation-based service, as well as a homily offered by Reverend Christana, Island Minister, and look for connections between the important work of the *Beloved Community Project* on Star and some of our themes.

The second half of the week we will look at astrological and astronomical elements present in the Abrahamic faiths in particular, but will be primarily dialogic: in conversation with the plenary sessions and lectures, building on themes and digging deeper onto the moral and ethical aspects of the material that intrigues us. We in the UCC are called “Unitarians considering Christ.” This humorous turn of phrase in fact describes my theology quite accurately, however, so I suspect I will be in good company as we explore these questions in a “thin place” while the ocean wind gently rattles the chapel windows and the occasional gull reminds us of our inextricable connection to the planet we inhabit and the impulse to imagine “the beyond.” “Considering Christ” could mean the perspective between unity—we are all one, the divine is everywhere—and trinity—the divine as present in and through relationship.

(*There will be an optional support group at a time TBA for those whose have difficulty with the prohibition of any mention of Space X and all things related to Elon Musk in Chapel. With deference to the importance of free speech I ask that this guideline be adhered to as a condition of Chapel participation.)

BIOSKETCH

Matilda Rose Cantwell serves as College Chaplain and Director of Religious and Spiritual Life at Smith College, providing individual and group spiritual care, and shepherding the community through times of joy and struggle. Prior to her ordination in the United Church of Christ, she worked as a therapist and community organizer with under-served and unhoused populations and led outdoor and creative writing groups for youth. Her ministry has included developing an innovative spiritual formation group for children and teens and outreach in rural communities. Matilda has a Bachelor’s Degree in Religious Studies with a minor in English from Lewis and Clark College, a Master’s in Social Work from Smith College, and a Master’s in Divinity from Yale University. Matilda enjoys

reading and writing essays and poetry, and her sermons and worship services draw from various faith and wisdom traditions. Her academic interests are faith and psychoanalysis, transformative justice and prison abolition, and she likes to be mobile, whether on bike or on foot. Matilda lives in Northampton, Massachusetts with her spouse Angela and her two boys Olin (17) and Haical (13). She is a former IRAS Shapley-Booth Scholar, and served as minister of the week for the Star Gathering Two conferences in 2018, 2019, and 2021. She is a third-generation IRASian and is delighted to be on the Island with her children, niece and nephews, sister and brother-in-law, and her mother, Marion Griswold. She is the granddaughter of Harlan and Dorothy Griswold, who were active in IRAS in the 1970s and 80s.

CONFERENCE DIALOGUE GROUPS

The dialogue groups meet every morning at 11:00 following the morning plenary. The plenary speaker will have 75 minutes (9:30–10:45 a.m.) for the presentation, which will conclude with a brief period for “questions of clarification.” The plenary speaker will also provide a Question of the Day, which will be related to the presentation, and with which the dialogue groups will initiate discussion. The convener of the dialogue group (including 12–15 conferees), after initial get-acquainted introductions, will read that question to the group and ask for comments. This is just a way to start the conversation, and the group will have 75 minutes to ask other questions and to make comments on what was said in the morning talk. Toward the end of the session, the convener will reintroduce the question of the day, and be prepared to bring the group response back in the evening for the plenary speaker to respond to the group’s comments or a deeper question. The evening plenary dialogue will be approximately one hour (8:00–9:00 p.m.) and will allow the speaker to respond to each of the dialogue groups in turn. On Saturday morning, all of the plenary speakers will participate in a roundtable to engage one another, and the dialogue group conveners will also be permitted to ask any speaker a further question after all presentations have been heard. This session will last until lunch on Saturday. In the afternoon, each dialogue group will have the option of convening once more to discuss follow-up with colleagues and discussion groups back home, or to pose any serious suggestion for follow-up to the IRAS Council for further information or action.

CONFERENCE MUSICIAN

We are very fortunate to have with us all week our conference musician, Gregory Brown, who will join us on several occasions and in various contexts,

including Chapel in the mornings, and with short selections occasionally in Elliott prior to evening plenaries. Then on Friday evening, Mr. Brown will be performing a program of solo classical guitar music. The chosen selections will include music inspired by the sea, his love for Spanish classical and flamenco music, as well as his own compositions. Some of these selections will be music from his most recent album “Fire and Rain,” recorded at the legendary Sun Studios in Memphis TN, with music from his reissue “Sojourns in Solitude” on Soman Records (France), released 18 years ago.

BIOSKETCH

American performer, composer and recording artist Gregory C. Brown has released over 25 CDs either under his own name or in various other projects. His most recent album, “Fire and Rain” was released September 2023 and was recorded at the famous Sun Studios in Memphis, Tennessee. He has performed across the US, Canada, and Europe, including St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin, Ireland. He has taught guitar professionally for over 25 years, including at Mary Baldwin University and other private institutions. He is currently teaching privately in his hometown of Charlottesville, Virginia and at Bridgewater College. Greg will be making his Carnegie Hall debut February 17, 2025 as part of their Gala. Gregory completed his master’s in music composition at the Vermont College for Fine Arts in 2022. He has a bachelor’s in business from City University in Bellevue, Washington with a specialty in music industry and is a graduate of the Music, Video and Business program at The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale. Brown is a member of the Guitar Foundation of America, the Charlottesville Classical Guitar Society, the College Music Society, Chamber Music America, and the Society of Composers, Inc. Greg’s musical interests move beyond the borders of the US, across Europe and into Asia; Greg cites such diverse influences as Beethoven, Eddie Van Halen, Paganini, and the countless composers of traditional Spanish Flamenco music. His music can be heard on TV, film, video games, and radio stations around the world and has even been transcribed into Braille. Greg’s recordings can be purchased or streamed on most major platforms.

SCIENCE FICTION HOUR

Science fiction is an integral part of the substantive presentations at this Conference. The medium for these presentations is film, and this component is presented in three parts during the first three days of the conference. The afternoon sessions are presentations followed by a full-length film that carries forward the theme of each afternoon’s presentation after Candlelight.

See Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 3:45 p.m. and at 10:00 p.m. for descriptions of each session.

Our resource person behind these selections is author and filmmaker David Brin.

David Brin, author, artist, playwright, futurist, and 2024 Alumnus of the Year at Caltech, holds a PhD in astrophysics and space science (1981) and is best known for shining light—plausibly and entertainingly—on technology, society, and countless challenges confronting our rambunctious civilization. His best-selling novels include *The Postman* (filmed in 1997), plus explorations of our near future in *Earth* and *Existence*. Other novels are translated into 25+ languages. His short stories vividly explore speculative ideas. Brin’s nonfiction book *The Transparent Society* won the American Library Association’s Freedom of Speech Award for exploring 21st century security, secrecy, accountability, and privacy concerns. As a scientist, tech consultant, and world-known author, he speaks, advises, and writes widely on national defense and homeland security topics, astronomy and space exploration, SETI and nanotechnology, future/prediction, creativity, and philanthropy. *Urban Developer Magazine* named him one of the four world’s best futurists, and he was appraised as the “#1 influencer” in Onalytica’s [Top 100 report](#) of artificial intelligence influencers, brands, and publications.

YOGA OF FORGIVENESS

Whether you’re the perpetrator or victim, the feeling of hurt is often very deep and pervasive. It almost always extends to everything that defines our identity, including family, country, gender, race, and religion. Through the Yoga of Forgiveness, we will learn how to address hurt in all its hues and colors in order to live in harmony with ourselves and others without the burden of guilt, victimhood, indifference, or denial.

There will be sessions on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoon titled “Truth and Reconciliation at Every Step of Life.” See the entries on those days for descriptions of these sessions.

BIOSKETCH

Sehdev Kumar is an author, poet, and professor emeritus of environmental studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada, specializing in and lecturing on bioethics, the history of cultures and civilizations, environmental ethics, and the dialogue between science and religion. For more than a decade, Dr. Kumar has conducted workshops and seminars on the Yoga of Forgiveness, Freedom from Fear, and the Power of Dreams in several countries. He is the author of several books including *The Vision of Kabir*, *7000 Million Degrees of Freedom*, *Lotus in the Stone*:

Explorations in Dreams & Consciousness. His forthcoming book is *Angels in Black Holes: Love, Hope & Redemption*. He currently lives in Auroville – a spiritual community in India with 3000 people from 62 countries. He is currently on a 3-month and 8-countries lecture and workshop tour, sharing verses of Kabir & Rumi and exploring ways for promoting global peace.

SUNDAY EVENING

WELCOME

Maynard Moore

We will introduce the speakers and the program of the conference, followed by an introductory lecture.

HABITABILITY FOR YOUR COSMIC
FUTURE: ASTROANTHROPOLOGY MEETS
ASTROETHICS

Ted Peters

Elliott, 7:45–9:00 P.M.

ABSTRACT

See the Conference Statement on the inside front cover.

BIOSKETCHES

Ted F. Peters is a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Emeritus Professor of Systematic Theology and Ethics at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Graduate Theological Union. Ted serves as co-editor of the journal, *Theology and Science*, on behalf of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences in Berkeley. He also serves on the Advisory Council of METI (Messaging Extraterrestrial Intelligence). Ted also writes fiction, espionage thrillers featuring a female inner-city pastor, Leona Foxx. He received a BA from Michigan State University, an M.Div. from Trinity Lutheran Seminary, and an MA and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Among his many publications, those most relevant to our Conference are *Astrobiology: Science, Ethics, and Public Policy* ed. (2021); *Astrotheology: Where Science and Theology Meet ETI* ed. (2018); *God in Cosmic History* (2017); *UFOs—God’s Chariots?* 2nd ed. (2015); and *The Evolution of Terrestrial and Extraterrestrial Life: Where in the World is God?* (2008).

Maynard Moore has been involved in the science and religion dialogue for 20+ years, through the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, & Religion (DoSER) program sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and also in an on-going dialogue group in the Washington Theological Union. He currently serves as vice

president on the IRAS Council. During 2001–2002 he coordinated a series of sixteen formal sessions at the National United Methodist Church in Washington DC that involved prominent scientists, including seven Nobel Laureates, among them Dr. Charles Townes, Dr. Julius Axelrod, and Dr. William Phillips. Maynard maintains active memberships in the Center for Process Theology at Claremont Graduate Seminary in Oregon, the Wesleyan Theological Society, the Churches’ Center for Theology and Public Policy at Wesley Seminary, and serves as President of WesleyNexus, Inc. the primary science & religion organization in the United Methodist Church (UMC). He is a sixty-year ordained member (retired) of the Baltimore-Washington UMC Annual Conference and teaches a regular adult education class in Science, Religion & Society at Metropolitan Memorial UMC in Washington. He has completed work for two graduate degrees from Southern Methodist University, an M. A. from the University of Chicago Divinity School, and the Ph.D. in Adult Education at the Union Graduate Institute and University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Maynard lives in Bethesda, Maryland with his wife Paula who is founder and Principal Conductor of the interPLAY Orchestra at Strathmore Center for Music and the Arts.

MONDAY MORNING

LIFE IN THE COSMOS: THE BIG PICTURE

Seth Shostak

Elliott, 9:30–10:45 A.M.

ABSTRACT

Is humanity about to finally turn sci-fi into reality, and spread beyond the planet of its birth? Yes, we’ve sent robotic probes to several of the other worlds of our solar system, but it seems likely that this is merely the first step in the diffusion of our species into nearby space. But what are the implications of crossing the “final frontier”? Will doing so somehow mitigate the threats of overpopulation or the consequences of limited natural resources? And what’s the *long-term* future of our species? Sure, we will continue to send people and probes to nearby worlds, but what will be the domain of humans in one or two centuries? And finally, what is the likelihood that *Homo sapiens* will be a consequential and long-term player in the cosmos?

BIOSKETCH

Seth Shostak is the senior astronomer at the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California. He has an undergraduate degree in physics from Princeton University, and a doctorate in astronomy from the

California Institute of Technology. For much of his career, Seth conducted radio astronomy research on galaxies, and has published approximately 60 papers in professional journals. During more than a decade, he worked at the Kapteyn Astronomical Institute, in Groningen, The Netherlands, using the Westerbork Radio Synthesis Telescope. He also founded and ran a company producing computer animation for TV. Seth has written nearly 500 popular magazine and Web articles on various topics in astronomy, technology, film, and television. He lectures on astronomy and other subjects at various academic venues, and gives approximately 60 talks annually at both educational and corporate institutions. Seth has been a Distinguished Speaker for the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. He was also Chair of the International Academy of Astronautics' SETI Permanent Committee for a decade. He is the host of a one-hour weekly radio program on astrobiology entitled "Big Picture Science." Seth has edited and contributed to nearly a dozen books. His first popular tome, *Sharing the Universe: Perspectives on Extraterrestrial Life* (Berkeley Hills Books), appeared in March 1998, followed by *Cosmic Company* (Cambridge University Press) in 2002. He has also co-authored an astrobiology text, *Life in the Universe* (Pearson), and his latest trade book is *Confessions of an Alien Hunter* (National Geographic). In 2004, he won the Klumpke-Roberts Award for the popularization of astronomy.

DIALOGUE GROUPS

Various, 11:15–12:15

MONDAY AFTERNOON

ORIGINS THROUGH SAMPLE RETURN SPACE MISSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR ASTROANTHROPOLOGY AND ASTROETHICS

Harold C. Connolly, Jr.

Elliott, 1:45–2:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

"Second star to the right, straight on 'til morning", a quote from J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, suggests a simple path through the cosmos to reach a destination. A path to our own origins, and that of life in general, (a fundamental issue to all science, philosophy, and religion) cannot be charted so easily. One method to develop constraints on our origin is by the investigation of the asteroid and cometary material delivered to Earth by robotic sample return space missions. The importance of the results from the analysis of these pristine, 4.567-

billion-year-old rocks, even compared with our knowledge from analog meteorites, are often a challenge to relate outside the scientific community they pivot from. The community that studies origins through the analysis of space rocks is small but has nevertheless driven billions of US dollars' worth of space exploration by three different nations, creating employment for 100's of people. Yet it is a fact that little cross disciplinary communication occurs to relate findings from sample return missions to form inclusive views on origins through exploring religious, ethical, or philosophical implications. Most efforts fall to relating findings and generating implications within the area of the natural/physical sciences, but our world is much more than those sciences. In this session, we will review the major findings of sample return missions, their implications, and provide a framework of how and why it is necessary to develop a path forward that encompasses so much more than can be provided by the natural/physical sciences. Fundamental to all of science, philosophy, and religion is the origins of Earth, its water, and life.

BIOSKETCH

Harold C. Connolly Jr. is founding chair and professor within the Department of Geology in the School of Earth and Environment at Rowan University. He is a research associate at the American Museum of Natural History. He also holds the titles of Mission Sample Scientist (MSS) and Co-Investigator for NASA's New Frontiers 3 asteroid sample return mission, OSIRIS-REx. As the MSS, he is responsible for coordinating and conducting a global team of scientists who test hypotheses designed to constrain the origin and evolution of asteroid Bennu through analyses of the sample delivered to Earth by the spacecraft on September 24, 2023. Professor Connolly is a classically trained geologist who specializes in the petrology and petrography of meteorites and asteroid samples, also applying geochemical techniques to understand the formation of these oldest rocks in our collections. His research focuses on communicating across disciplines, including astrophysical modeling, to produce comprehensive views of the earliest stage of the Solar System's origin. Professor Connolly is a Co-Investigator on JAXA's Hayabusa2 space mission as part of the team that investigated sample from asteroid Ryugu delivered by that spacecraft to Earth on December 5, 2022. Professor Connolly has been a visiting professor Hokkaido University and the University of Tokyo, both in Japan. He is a fellow of the International Meteoritical Society, is cofounder of the mineral Krotite, and has an asteroid named after him, 6761 haroldconnolly. Professor Connolly is a practicing Buddhist in the Nalanda tradition for over 30 years and is currently a member of the

Philadelphia Chenrezig Tibetan Buddhist Center and the Princeton Buddhist Meditation Group. He enjoys cooking, surfing, experiencing different cultures (especially Japanese, Tibetan, Indian, and French), classical music, and going to the opera!

YOUTH SERENDIPITY PROGRAM

Archipelagos Staff

Front Porch, 1:45–3:15 P.M.

Ice cream making and crafts.

MIGHT EXTRATERRESTRIALS BE INTELLIGENT SOULS?

Paul Carr

Elliott, 1:45–2:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

Before Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake in 1600, he envisioned the existence of exoplanets. First discovered in 1995, could they have extraterrestrial beings with intelligent souls? Evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr believed that single-cell life would be common in the cosmos but intelligent life rare. Astronomer Carl Sagan interpreted the Drake Equation as predicting intelligent life. Its absence could be that they destroyed themselves quickly. About 65 million years ago, a temperature drop made dinosaurs extinct. Mammals now predominate. We are better adapted to cooler climates. Might dinosaurs replace us as our climate warms? Climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe's recent book is "Saving Us." The world's religions differ on whether animals have immortal souls. Would religions agree on extraterrestrial souls?

BIOSKETCH

Paul H. Carr, BS, MS, MIT; Ph.D. Brandeis, Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) Fellow, led the AF Research Laboratory Branch that developed the low-cost Surface Acoustic Wave (SAW) filters used in cell phones and radar. After he retired in 1995, the Templeton Foundation awarded him grants for the science and religion courses he taught in the philosophy department at U Mass Lowell. This inspired his book *Beauty in Science and Spirit* (2006). He championed the 2017 IRAS Climate Change Conference and received the 2018 IRAS Academic Fellow Award. He has published over 90 papers in scientific journals including *Zygon* and has 10 patents. His web page is www.MirrorOfNature.org In 2023, he published *Loves in My Life: Spirituality, Science, Family*, with 85 illustrations, on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

SCIENCE FICTION HOUR, PART 1

Elliott, 3:45 P.M.

Part 1 is a focus on Visions of Earth: Present and Future: lurid or simplistic? Diversity as you have never contemplated; odes to civilization; the other as alien; personhood and your unique path forward.

YOGA OF FORGIVENESS, PART 1

Sehdev Kumar

Newton West, 4:30–5:30 P.M.

Dynamics of Hurt, Revenge, and Alienation: Families, Institutions, Countries: What is it that hurts us and makes us suffer, seek revenge, or walk away? In this session, we will explore a number of such cases from many cultures and from many periods in human history to develop a deeper understanding of the nature and role of hurt as part of our cultural evolution and the human condition.

MONDAY EVENING

EVENING PLENARY

Seth Shostak and Ted Peters

Elliott, 8:00–9:00 P.M.

ABSTRACT

The Dialogue Groups initiate the discussion.

SCIENCE FICTION HOUR, PART 1 CONTINUED

Elliott, 10:00 P.M.

The featured film is "Gattaca."

TUESDAY MORNING

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BODY IN SPACE, AND WHAT CAN THIS TELL US ABOUT LIFE ELSEWHERE?

Mark Shelhamer

Elliott, 9:30–10:45 A.M.

ABSTRACT

During extended time in space (months to years), the human body is impacted in multiple ways. Almost every body system is affected – bones, muscles, cardiovascular, cognitive, and more. Some of these changes are natural and appropriate responses to the characteristics of space; the body sheds structures and processes that it no longer needs in low gravity. Some changes seem counterproductive under any circumstances, such as altered immune responses. These physiological (and

also psychological) effects have been measured and tracked for over many years, and countermeasures to many of them are under development. We do not know how these physiological changes will manifest on longer missions, such as a three-year journey to Mars and back. This presents an operational problem that must be addressed in order to maintain high levels of health and performance in extended space flights. These effects also engender ethical issues: how much risk is acceptable, and who gets to decide? In the case of much longer missions in the course of becoming a space-faring species, it is possible that these physiological changes in space would preclude a return to Earth (for example, debilitating loss of bone structure). There is a more fundamental aspect to these body changes: what might these effects tell us about alien species? As an example., with some understanding of how gravity influences the distribution of fluids within the body, and the consequences of altering that distribution, we might conjecture as to the morphology of organisms that evolved and developed in alternate gravity environments. Carrying this one step further: how might space-related influences on the morphology of the body be reflected in the thought processes of the affected organism? In other words, how does the body shape the way we think? Understanding how extraterrestrial environments affect the body, and how the body impacts the way we think, might provide us with insights into the possible “thought processes” of alien life.

BIOSKETCH

Mark Shelhamer is on the faculty of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine where he started as a postdoctoral fellow in 1990. He has bachelor’s and master’s degrees in electrical engineering from Drexel University, and a doctoral degree in biomedical engineering from MIT. At MIT he worked on sensorimotor physiology and modeling, including the study of astronaut adaptation to space flight. He then moved to Johns Hopkins where he continued the study of sensorimotor adaptation with an emphasis on the vestibular and oculomotor systems and nonlinear dynamics. From 2013 to 2016 he served as Chief Scientist for the NASA Human Research Program at Johnson Space Center. In that role, he oversaw NASA’s research portfolio for maintaining health and performance in long-duration spaceflight. This portfolio spans a range from physiology to psychology, including planning of medical systems and effects of radiation. Since returning to Johns Hopkins, his research has continued in the area of sensorimotor function, which includes experiments on ISS astronauts as well as crews of commercial orbital space flights. He also has a research program devoted to the multi-system and cross-disciplinary interactions that contribute to personal and mission resilience in

spaceflight. He is the author of *Nonlinear Dynamics in Physiology* and co-editor of *Systems Medicine for Human Spaceflight*.

DIALOGUE GROUPS

Various, 11:15–12:15

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

GALAXIES, STARS, PLANETS, AND LIFE: EXPLORING OUR FRUITFUL UNIVERSE

Jennifer Wiseman

Elliott, 1:45–2:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

Modern telescopes are unveiling an incredible universe, with over 200 billion galaxies, each teeming with billions of stars, gaseous nebulae, and presumably planets. The universe is also active, with new stars and planetary systems continually forming, old stars transforming, and galaxies merging. I will present some of these amazing astronomical discoveries and images, with an eye toward how the universe, as seen through the “time-machine” of astronomy, has changed over cosmic time to become more capable of hosting planets and life. Then we’ll take a look at the recent explosion of discovery regarding planets outside our solar system in our own galaxy. These “exoplanets” span a huge range of characteristics, and they hold the key to understanding life on Earth and the possibility— with philosophical and theological implications— of life beyond.

BIOSKETCH

Jennifer Wiseman is an astrophysicist, author, and speaker. She studies the process of star and planet formation in our galaxy using radio, optical, and infrared telescopes. Wiseman studied physics at MIT; as an undergraduate she discovered the comet 114P/Wiseman-Skiff. She then earned a Ph.D. in astronomy at Harvard University and continued her research as a Jansky Fellow at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory and as a Hubble Fellow at the Johns Hopkins University. She has worked with several international observatories and is currently a senior astrophysicist at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. In addition to research in astrophysics, Wiseman is also interested in science policy and public science engagement. She served as a U.S. Congressional Science Fellow and an elected Councilor of the American Astronomical Society. She is an elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, where she is also Director Emeritus of the program of Dialogue on

Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER). Dr. Wiseman is also a Fellow of the American Scientific Affiliation, a network of Christians in Science. She enjoys giving talks to churches, schools, and civic groups on the excitement and inspiration of astronomy and scientific discovery, and she has appeared in many public science and media venues. She grew up on a small farm in the Ozark Mountains of rural Arkansas and loves animals, forests, night skies and exploring nature.

YOUTH SERENDIPITY PROGRAM

Archipelagos Staff

Front Lawn, 1:45–3:15 P.M.

Intergenerational Tie-Dye

SCIENCE FICTION HOUR, PART 2

Elliott, 3:45 P.M.

Send in the clones; theology in the mix; what about surrogates? A case of conscience; *Towing Jehovah*.

YOGA OF FORGIVENESS, PART 2

Sehdev Kumar

Newton West, 4:30–5:30 P.M.

Nature of Memory, Skirmishes and Wars: What is that we remember, recall, brood over, and feel tormented by... And how? In this session, we will explore the necessity of forgetting, letting go, re-writing our history, and experiencing the sumptuous flow of the river of life again. We will draw examples from individual lives and our communities and nations.

TUESDAY EVENING

EVENING PLENARY

Mark Shelhamer and Jennifer Wiseman

Elliott, 8:00–9:00 P.M.

ABSTRACT

The Dialogue Groups initiate the discussion.

SCIENCE FICTION HOUR, PART 2 CONTINUED

Elliott, 10:00 P.M.

The subject is presented in the film "Moon."

WEDNESDAY MORNING

EXTRATERRESTRIAL METAPHYSICS IN PROCESS PERSPECTIVE: IMPLICATIONS OF OUR ANTHROPOCOSMIC NATURE

Andrew M. Davis

Elliott, 9:30–10:45 P.M.

ABSTRACT

Metaphysics may be a peculiarly Earth-bound endeavor, but the nature of its insights necessarily extend beyond Earth. While this has yet to be widely explored by philosophers and theologians, our burgeoning space age, coupled with the luring and likely sense that we inhabit a "biological universe," encourages this more deliberate effort. This presentation draws from the neglected resources of process metaphysics as a tradition of cosmic philosophical and theological reflection that is well suited to this task. Drawing from Whitehead, Teilhard, and a variety of other figures both internal and adjacent to the process philosophical tradition, it argues that metaphysics must begin from the fundamental conviction that human existence is an anthropocosmic fact of nature and thus harbors ontological depths which are expressed in various intensities throughout the universe (Part I). Contrary to the dead ontology of mechanistic materialism, which renders the emergence and possibility of human and extraterrestrial life wholly inexplicable, process metaphysics supports an evolutionary ontology of organic life (Part II), creative experience (Part III), and aesthetic value (Part IV), each with wide-ranging implications beyond Earth. Moreover, it belongs to process philosophical exotheology in particular to compliment this ontology with a relational theological vision wherein God is conceived as the primordial embodiment of life, mind, and value for the universe. Such an exotheology not only addresses final metaphysical riddles for any extraterrestrial metaphysics; it also axiologically justifies the existence of sheer extraterrestrial plenitude (Part V).

Key Words: extraterrestrial metaphysics, process philosophy, Alfred North Whitehead, Teilhard de Chardin, anthropocosmic, panexperientialism, living ontology, exotheology, cosmological plenitude.

BIOSKETCH

Andrew M. Davis is an American process philosopher, theologian, and scholar of cosmological wonder. He is program director for the Center for Process Studies at Claremont School of theology where he researches, writes, and organizes conferences on various aspects of process-relational thought. An advocate of metaphysics and meaning in a hospitable universe, he approaches philosophy

as the endeavor to systematically think through what reality must be like because we are a part of it. He is author, editor, and co-editor of several books including *Mind, Value, and Cosmos: On the Relational Nature of Ultimacy* (Lexington, 2020); *Process Cosmology: New Integrations in Science and Philosophy* (Palgrave, 2022); *Metaphysics of Exo-Life: Toward a Constructive Whiteheadian Cosmotheology* (SacraSage, 2023); and *Astrophilosophy, Exotheology, and Cosmic Religion: Extraterrestrial Life in a Process Universe* (Lexington, 2023). Follow his work at <https://www.andrewmdavis.info>.

DIALOGUE GROUPS

Various, 11:15–12:15

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

YOUTH SERENDIPITY PROGRAM

Archipelagos Staff

Front Porch, 1:45–3:15 P.M.

Rinse tie-dye, face painting, temporary tatoos, friendship bracelets.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Edmund Robinson

Chapel, 2:45–3:30 P.M.

SCIENCE FICTION HOUR, PART 3

Elliott, 3:45 P.M.

What about alternative styles of life? Friends in the mix; cyber-kids who may outgrow us; transforming worlds; transcendence beyond machines.

YOGA OF FORGIVENESS, PART 3

Sehdev Kumar

Newton West, 4:30–5:30 P.M.

Power of Forgiveness: From Victim to Savior: In this session, we will explore the Power of Now, and how to prepare ourselves to receive the gift of Freedom and “the Present of the present” through forgiveness in its myriad expressions. Through breathing exercises and meditation practices, we will learn how to reorient our attention and intention by moving into a joyous field of acknowledgment, truth, reconciliation, and forgiveness. We will explore how to move from feeling like a helpless victim to becoming a savior by helping other victims, particularly children. We will discover how such a step is at the heart of spiritual transformation, and how we learn to move from self-centeredness to

the Center of the Self, experiencing the Grace of the Divine.

ZYGON RECEPTION

Newton West, 5:30 P.M.

Held during Social Hour to provide an update on the status of *Zygon*.

WEDNESDAY EVENING

EVENING PLENARY

Andrew Davis and Jennifer Wiseman

Elliott, 8:00–9:00 P.M.

ABSTRACT

The Dialogue Groups initiate the discussion.

SCIENCE FICTION HOUR, PART 3

CONTINUED

Elliott, 10:00 P.M.

We conclude with the film “Alien Nation.”

THURSDAY MORNING

TAKING UP SPACE: THE IMPACT OF HUMANS ON SPACE AND SPACE ON HUMANS

Lucas Mix

Elliott, 9:30–10:45 A.M.

ABSTRACT

Are we alone? This question can be asked of space. Is there intelligent life beyond Earth? It can also be asked of time. Is there intelligent life before and after the present now? Astrobiology weaves space and time together with natural selection, using physical environment and convergent evolution to chart an expected path, not just for Earth life, but for all life in the universe. Biologists resist the developmental view of evolution, with reliable progress toward species goals. They embrace, however, the regularities of group interactions: stable strategies for conflict and cooperation. Theologians, too, can resist progressive narratives of cultural development while recognizing long-term trends that arise in populations as they expand in size and complexity. This “astroecology,” calling attention to environment and networks of interaction, provides a footing for predictions of religion, anthropology, and ethics as humanity goes to the stars. There will always be neighbors. Thus, it will always be timely to ask “who is my neighbor?” and to respond with love.

BIOSKETCH

The Revd. Dr Lucas John Mix works at the intersection of biology, philosophy, and theology. Drawing on a doctorate in evolutionary theory (Harvard, 2004), his academic work follows the categories we use to define life. He has written several books on life—*Life in Space: Astrobiology for Everyone* (Harvard 2009), *Life Concepts from Aristotle to Darwin: On Vegetable Souls* (Palgrave 2018), and *The End of Final Causes in Biology* (Palgrave 2022)—as well as many popular and academic works on science and faith. He has worked extensively with NASA astrobiology on interdisciplinary communication in the search for life beyond Earth. A priest in the Episcopal Church, he also has experience as a college chaplain and pastor and serves as an officer in the Society of Ordained Scientists. As Program Manager for Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science, he now facilitates science-engaged theology discussions, with a focus on Senior Leadership Conferences and the Science for Seminaries program (eclasproject.org). In 2021, he was the NASA/Library of Congress Blumberg Chair in Astrobiology, where he investigated the relationship between going to space and going to heaven.

DIALOGUE GROUPS

Various, 11:15–12:15

THURSDAY AFTERNOON

A GAIAN PERSPECTIVE ON HUMANITY'S PERMANENT CONNECTION TO EARTH

Erik Assadourian

Newton West, 1:45–2:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

In *War of the Worlds*, after a successful invasion, the war machinery of the Martians quickly falls quiet. It was Earth itself that defeated its invaders, drawing on the single-celled defenders that life is primarily made up of. While there is a growing belief/delusion that humans can travel to the stars (and thus escape our rapidly sickening world), it is important to understand that we are a part of Gaia—not separate—and in all probability couldn't survive on new worlds, even if we could find one with a breathable atmosphere and life. This paper will explore that, drawing on scientific literature, science fiction, philosophy (e.g., Loren Eiseley's *The Cosmic Prison*), and the Biosphere II experiment. It will then point out that while we cannot transcend the larger Gaian holobiont we're part of, space does offer two opportunities. First, humans now can play an active role in planetary defense—not from invading aliens,

but from life-ending asteroids that might hit Earth. While humans may not be exceptional (after all, other animals have language, culture, and tool use), we are the first and only species that could serve as defender to the living planet we're part of—and this is a unique and beautiful role we should embrace and develop. Second, humans could spread the basic building blocks of life to uninhabited worlds to help seed new living planetary beings. While not spreading ourselves, we could serve as Gaia's fruiting bodies, helping life spread throughout the universe. Shifting the focus of our space research and activities to support those two roles (along with studying and healing Gaia) would be a far better role of planetary science.

BIOSKETCH

Erik Assadourian is a sustainability researcher, writer, and communicator. During 16 years with the Worldwatch Institute (2001–2017), Erik co-authored more than a dozen books, co-directed two book projects, and directed four, including *Transforming Cultures: From Consumerism to Sustainability* and *EarthEd: Rethinking Education on a Changing Planet*. He designed one eco-educational board game, *Catan: Oil Springs*, and one attempted reality TV show, *Yardfarmers*. Erik is now the director of The Gaian Way, an ecospiritual organization founded in 2019, that works to reconnect people with the living Earth they are part of and dependent on. He writes a weekly Gaian Reflection, organizes online Gaian community events, and leads a local Gaian Guild in Connecticut. The Gaian Way's most recent project is the Cycles of Gaia eco-educational poster and school curriculum.

YOUTH SERENDIPITY PROGRAM

Archipelagos Staff

Front Lawn, 1:45–3:15 P.M.

Flag Rugby.

THE IMPROBABLE, INEVITABLE EVENT: DISCLOSURE OR CONTACT?

Patrice Curtis

Elliott, 2:45–3:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

In 2021, a Pew Research survey found that more than half of religious Americans' "best guess" is that "intelligent life exists on other planets" (Lau 2021). What impact might contact with alien life have on human religions? The comprehensive work by Ted Peters and recent scholarship from several other theologians has utilized astrotheological or exotheological frameworks to assess the systematic, Thomist, process theology, Islamic, and Catholic implications of extraterrestrial (microbial) life on

human religions. They have concluded that the discovery of alien life can be theologically integrated. Additionally, scholars have argued that Judaic and Islamic theologies can integrate such a discovery. At the same time, Buddhism and indigenous communities represent other traditional beliefs that historically acknowledged the potential of nonhuman intelligence. Upon the premise of theological integration, I will use the frame of lived religion within practical theology to explore how theological integration might impact religious practice: The practices of those seeking nonphysical contact with nonhuman intelligent life (NHIs) may suggest how official disclosure of NHIs in a distant future might influence the religious practices of traditional religions.

BIOSKETCH

Patrice K. Curtis was raised by a parent fascinated with anomalous phenomena and one who was an aerospace (rocket) engineer; Patrice is currently working on a doctor of ministry at the Iliff School of Theology, exploring how astro/exotheology might create radically inclusive lived religious practices within Unitarian Universalism. An ordained UU minister, Patrice has served several congregations from the Pacific Northwest to the South. Prior to ministry, she worked as a former humanitarian aid practitioner and a congressional foreign policy analyst, living in Africa and Eastern Europe and traveling widely for consultations. She is a meditation practitioner, having studied MBSR, Zen, and Tibetan Buddhism, and is trained as a meditation teacher. A published author, she holds a master's degree in international affairs, a master's degree in divinity, and undertook post-graduate studies at Oxford University in anthropology and refugee studies—where she became an avid Liverpool FC fan.

BOOK DISCUSSION

Rodney and Margery Dixon

Elliott, 3:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

The Hidden Words by Baha'u'llah was given to humanity in 1858. This was five years before the beginning of his public ministry in 1863. Within this text there is both establishment of continuity with all previous religions, and the affirmation that all proceed from the self-same source. It is predominantly a codification of personal morals and ethical behavior consistent with the essence of all religions. The world at large seems to lack a unified ethical code and such a common standard would be useful prior to considering possible contact beyond this earthly globe. Baha'i Sacred Text provides a vision for transforming human society from its

historically material/animal-based orientation to a more fully spirit based civilization. This session will include a Book Talk, a brief contextual presentation followed by small group discussions of the text and its premise. Ideally most participants could have read this short text prior to the workshop. It is available free on-line for either reading or downloading at <https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahaullah>.

BIOSKETCHES

Rodney Dixon holds a BS in chemistry from Drexel University and an MS in analytic chemistry from Howard University. Following graduate school, he worked in lithium battery development with a multinational defense company. After eight years he became a teaching lab manager and adjunct professor at Towson University. Officially retired, he continues as an adjunct professor, and has designed a new introductory course on Batteries and Fuel Cell Technology to be offered this fall. Rodney has been a member of the Baha'i community since 1975, serving in a variety of administrative capacities.

Margery E. Dixon first came to Star Island with her family in 1962, becoming an under-age Pelican in 1969 when her parents became island staff. She has studied in a variety of colleges and universities in both Denmark and the US. Parental responsibilities interrupted her formal education, yet she retains a strong interest in learning. A Baha'i since 1971, she has served in various capacities in the US and abroad.

INTERGENERATIONAL EVENT: INTERPLANETARY ESCAPE ROOM

Archipelagos Staff

Pink Parlor, 3:30–5:00 P.M.

ABSTRACT

An escape room is a game in which a team of players discover clues, solve puzzles, and accomplish tasks in one or more rooms in order to accomplish a shared goal. It's your team versus the clock, with a good chance of losing the game if you don't work together! In this escape room, you will face challenges posed by extraterrestrial beings and the limitations of your own very terrestrial selves. The teens are building this escape room for you. Join us and learn your strengths and limits. Will your new astroanthologies save you? *Are you so changed that you've become alien? Most importantly, will you be stuck in your spaceship or on a far, not very habitable planet, forever?*

WERE THERE DINOSAURS ON THE ARK?

Michael Ruse

Newton West, 4:30–5:15 P.M.

ABSTRACT

Answering this question is my retirement project. I ask it in the ecumenical spirit that characterizes IRAS, because it is a question of some importance to Creationists. They have written several books on the topic. If there were dinos, where are they now? Tempting though it may well be, it is not an adequate answer simply to point at the speaker.

BIOSKETCH

Dr. Michael Ruse is professor emeritus at the University of Guelph, in Ontario, Canada, where he taught from 1965 to 2000. He is also the retired Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Program in the History and Philosophy of Science at Florida State University, where he taught from 2000 to 2020. He is a Guggenheim Fellow, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, a Gifford Lecturer, and the recipient of four honorary degrees. He is the founding editor (1985) of the journal *Biology and Philosophy*. Today, he is co-editor of the Cambridge *Elements* series in the Philosophy of Biology. His seventy books include *The Gaia Hypothesis: Science on a Pa-*

gan Planet (Chicago), *Darwinism as Religion: What Literature Tells Us About Evolution* (Oxford), *On Purpose* (Princeton), (co-authored with Edward Larson) *On Faith and Science* (Yale), and *Why We Hate: Understanding the Roots of Human Conflict* (Oxford). Just published are *Understanding the Life Sciences: The Christianity-Evolution Relationship* (Cambridge) and (co-authored with Michael Reiss) *The New Biology: The Battle between Mechanism and Organicism* (Harvard).

THURSDAY EVENING

EVENING PLENARY

Lucas Mix and Ted Peters

Elliott, 8:00–9:00 P.M.

ABSTRACT

The Dialogue Groups initiate the discussion.

PELICAN SHOW

The Pelicans

Marshman Stage, 8:00–9:00 P.M.

The Star Island Pelicans are the wonderful young adults who staff the island during the summer. This variety show put on by Pelicans for the conferees traditionally features a number of musical acts and skits. The show generally culminates in a performance by the Pelican Chorus, led by the Music Director.

SPECIAL TELECAST: PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Elliott, 9:00–11:00 P.M.

FRIDAY MORNING

CAN THERE BE MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN EXTRATERRESTRIALS? AN INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Shoaib Ahmed Malik

Elliott, 9:30–10:45 A.M.

ABSTRACT

Given the increasing interest in extraterrestrial intelligent life (ETI) among theologians in recent years, this study explores the following question: Would the existence of ETI conflict with Islamic beliefs in any way? This work follows the article by C. A. McIntosh and Tyler Dalton McNabb, *Houston, Do We Have a Problem? Extraterrestrial Intelligent Life and Christian Belief*. They identify six potential points of conflict between Christian belief and ETI. This study looks at those same six concerns from the perspective of Islamic theology. The six issues include (1) incompatibility with theism, (2) the Islamic scriptures, (3) central doctrines of Islam, (4) the Islamic tradition, (5) how ETIs may exacerbate the problem of evil, and (6) conflict with the Islamic narrative. In resonance with the conclusions of McIntosh and McNabb, it is argued that none of the identified issues raise significant concerns for the Islamic faith. However, while the findings may be similar, points of overlap and dissimilarities between the two religious traditions are identified.

BIOSKETCH

Shoaib Ahmed Malik is lecturer in science and religion at the University of Edinburgh. With a PhD in chemical engineering from the University of Nottingham and another in theology from the University of St Mary's, Twickenham, Shoaib stands at the crossroads of science and religion. His monograph work, *Islam and Evolution: Al-Ghazālī and the Modern Evolutionary Paradigm*, was acclaimed as the foremost academic contribution to the field of science and religion, receiving recognition from the International Society for Science and Religion (ISSR) in 2022. He holds the position of trustee at the ISSR and serves on the editorial board of *Theology and Science*. Shoaib also assumes the role of chief editor for Palgrave's newly launched Islam and Science book series and encyclopedia, further enriching scholarly discourse at this interdisciplinary crossroads.

DIALOGUE GROUPS

Various, 11:15–12:15

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

AFTERNOON PLENARY

Shoaib Malik and Ted Peters

Elliott, 1:45–2:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

The Dialogue Groups initiate the discussion.

YOUTH SERENDIPITY PROGRAM

Archipelagos Staff

Oceanic Lobby, 1:45–2:30 P.M.

Tea Party and Board Games.

Pier, 1:45–3:15 P.M.

Tea Party and Board Games.

EXPLORING EMERGING ETHO-SYSTEMS:
ANSWERING THE CALL OF NEIGHBORLY
BEING FROM INFINITY AND BEYOND

Brandon Ambrosino

Elliott, 2:45–3:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

Ethics begins in encounter. As Judith Butler writes in *Giving an Account of Oneself*, “I am my relation to you,” ambiguously addressed and addressing, given over to a ‘you’ without whom I cannot be and upon whom I depend to survive.” We are called, that is, into ethical personhood by those who disrupt us. Every instant of our lives, we are interrupted by encountering Others, human as well as non-human. When these disrupting Others enter our world, they put us under obligation to act neighborly toward them. But who counts as a disrupting Other? Humans haven’t always been generous about answering this question on planet earth—but what about when we open it up beyond our solar system?

J. Baird Callicott has pointed out that “Ecology changes our values by changing our concepts of the world and of ourselves in relation to the world.” Our ecosystems, then, are our *etho*-systems: the habitats in which our habits are formed, in which we, embodied ethical agents, come to be. *We world* (verb) differently in different worlds. Leading scientists believe we will soon discover intelligent life beyond our planet, which means our world is about to massively expand. When that happens, when unimaginable life forms call us into new ethical being, will we be prepared to become neighbors to the strangers encountering us? To prepare humans for these likely meetings, human ethics should begin developing along trajectories that push beyond earth-centrism and towards what Ted Peters has called the “galactic common good.”

Questions of who and what are worthy of moral consideration must be answered more generously, and inflexible normative data-based theories must be teased open to allow humans the opportunity to respond to the unknown with the playful grace of a jazz musician. As our world expands to include new worldings, the *etho*-systems that we inhabit must become thicker if we are serious about making good on our neighborly obligations to all the Others who encounter us.

BIOSKETCH

Brandon Ambrosino holds a PhD in theology and ethics from Villanova University. His dissertation—*Flamingos, Flirts, and Flea Markets: Theo-Ethical Notes on Camp*—teases out the moral and theological implications of camp. Like many aspiring academics with new PhDs, Brandon’s work is kind of all over the place. In the last year, he’s written on Psalm 82 and New Materialism; dental ethics; drag Christology; and infertility. The common theme throughout his work is his ornery knack to (in the words of Susan Sontag) dethrone the serious. In addition to his academic career, Brandon is also an award-winning journalist, and has written for Politico, BBC, *Boston Globe*, *New York Times*, *Globe & Mail*, *Smithsonian*, and many other outlets. He was the first reporter to break the news of Jerry Falwell’s ties to the Miami Hostel and the so-called pool boy. Brandon currently writes a Theology For Kids column for *US Catholic Magazine*, and is back in school studying bioethics at Loyola University’s Stritch School of Medicine. In his free time, he and his husband enjoy traveling to Disney World, watching films starring Dame Judi Dench, and hunting for vintage Pyrex and squeak toys.

YOUTH SERENDIPITY PROGRAM

Archipelagos Staff

Pier, 2:30–3:15 P.M.

Tea Party and Board Games.

IRAS ANNUAL MEETING

Elliott, 3:30 P.M.

All are welcome, IRAS members and nonmembers alike.

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO INCREASE
THE RESILIENCE OF FOOD SYSTEMS
AMONG OMNIA, NATIONS
PARTICIPATING IN INTERRELIGIOUS
ACTION TO ADAPT AND ALLEVIATE THE
TRANSNATIONAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE
CHANGE NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Sol Katz

Newton West, 4:30–5:15 P.M.

ABSTRACT

The potentials of interreligious action teams to successfully improve the food system in nations that need new levels of cooperation and action to solve food system problems is a comprehensive goal of the work of OMNIA. The approach is to assess, analyze, and synthesize new solutions to problems in national and regional food systems undergoing rapid climate change within the context of the added assistance of interreligious action groups to impact and enhance secular sources of action. Over the last year we worked to develop a comprehensive way for the nation of Sri Lanka to respond to the call from the UN International Court of Justice to provide evidence of the impact of climate changing GHG on the future of the food system capacities of Sri Lanka that could also be used as a guide for determining the same effects in other nations served by OMNIA including Nigeria, Togo, Liberia, Uganda, and Kenya in SubSharan Africa and Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka in Asia. Tom O'Donnell has presented at IRAS and at the Parliament of the World's Religions conferences in the past, and Barry Costa Pierce (Norway and Maine) has participated in this food system work. In addition, Barry Brenton, Preety Gadhoke and Steve Finn have participated in our previous work on the topic. Furthermore, a larger team from Philadelphia including Jon Deutch, May and Paul Wise, and at Hamilton College New York State including Zoe Katz and Max Majireck, and from Ghana including Osei Kwarteng and Thomas Reuter of Australia have assumed leadership roles.

BIOSKETCH

Dr. Solomon (Sol) H. Katz is emeritus director and professor at the Krogman Center for Child Growth and Development at the University of Pennsylvania. He is also a leading expert on the anthropology of food and served as Editor in Chief of the *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture* (2003), which received many major awards including the Dartmouth Medal. His work in the field of science and religion spans more than forty years, with leadership in IRAS, in which he served as president from 1977–79 and 1981–84, president of CASIRAS (1988–2001), and associate editor and co-chair of the

Joint Publication Board of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*. He also served as secretary of Section H Anthropology of the AAAS and serves on several AAAS-wide committees including the Division of Science, Ethics, and Religion. Sol served as a Trustee of the Parliament of the World's Religions from 2003–2011 and is an elected fellow of the International Society of Science and Religion. He is an advisory board member of the Ocean Genome Legacy Marine Biodiversity Center of Northeastern University 2014–present. He also serves as the Chair of the American Anthropological Association Task Force on World Food Problems from 2007–present.

FRIDAY EVENING

CONCERT

Greg Brown

Elliott, 7:45 P.M.

Mr. Brown will be performing a program of solo classical guitar music. The chosen selections will include music inspired by the sea, his love for Spanish classical and flamenco music, as well as his own compositions. Some of these selections will be music from his most recent album "Fire and Rain," recorded at the legendary Sun Studios in Memphis TN. as well as music from his re-issue "Sojourns in Solitude" on Soman Records (France), released 18 years ago.

SATURDAY MORNING

INTERACTIVE SUMMARY DISCUSSION

Plenary Speakers

Elliott, 9:30–11:00 A.M.

DIALOGUE GROUPS

Various, 11:15 A.M.–12:15 P.M.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE,
WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITY'S
FUTURE

Linda Groff

Elliott, 1:45–2:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

It is part of the human spirit to always push back boundaries and explore the unknown. One of the great unknowns today is whether we humans are alone in this vast universe or whether the universe is

populated with life, including intelligent life? Arguments pro and con on this subject will all be explored. This presentation is intended to be somewhat provocative and controversial, based partly on emerging trends. We will consider different Arguments:

- Scientific Views on Searching for Intelligent Life in the Universe: Negative & Positive
- Arguments for Going to Space; Fermi Paradox; SETI; Search for Exoplanets
- Views Based on Indigenous Cultures and Ancient Civilizations' Ties to Different Star Systems
- Views Based on Modern UFO Sightings, Government Changing Policies & Reports on UAPs
- Views Based on Science Fiction as an Intuition of Things to Come

In Part II: How Will the World's Governments, Religions & People Respond—IF Intelligent ET Life in the Universe is Confirmed?

And In Part III: Implications for Future Human Evolution of Intelligent ET Life in the Universe

Despite these US Government denials, various citizen groups have shown a real interest in UFOs, with various efforts to get governments (US and others) to "disclose" what they know.

BIOSKETCH

Linda Groff has two MAs and a Ph.D. in International Relations (from the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy); she taught fulltime at Cal State Dominguez Hills for over 40 years (and is now an Emeritus Professor); she taught courses for years, did conference presentations, and published articles on global futures, peace, intercultural/interfaith, and consciousness topics; she chaired a Political Sci Dept. and also a Behavioral Science Program at different times; and has taught at other universities in the US, Canada, Austria, & Japan. Dr. Groff is quite aware of the scientific method, but as a longtime futurist, she is also open to emerging trends and believes this is one to explore further. She wants this presentation to add another interesting perspective to this year's IRAS theme. She has published about 90 articles, with two books forthcoming: one a holistic peace book; the other a holistic, global, evolutionary futures book. She also writes poetry periodically.

YOUTH SERENDIPITY PROGRAM

Archipelagos Staff

Front Lawn, 1:45–3:15 P.M.

Field Games and Carnival Games.

RELIGIONS AND CONTACT WITH THE OTHER: EXOTHEOLOGY AND PREDICTING FUTURE PARADIGM SHIFTS FROM HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS WITH RADICAL ALTERITY

Francis Flannery

Elliott, 2:45–3:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

Religions have transformed through encounter with new cosmological models at least four times: in the Mediterranean world of the 3rd c. BCE; in Europe of the 15th–16th centuries; during the age of colonialism as indigenous cosmologies encountered settler paradigms; and in the last century, as astronomical models have evolved again to include multiple galaxies and the expanding universe. These transformations and creative hybridities offer a predictive key for the future of religions post-alien contact.

BIOSKETCH

Frances Flannery is an interdisciplinary scholar, expert in apocalyptic studies, and professor of religion at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA, where she teaches courses in religion and ecology, religion and culture, intelligence analysis, and apocalypticism and biblical studies. She is an innovative researcher with many publications, including *Apocalyptic, Violence, and Socio-Political Imaginaries* (in progress), *Understanding Apocalyptic Terrorism: Countering the Radical Mindset* (2016), *The Bible and Political Debate* (2016), and *Biblical Wisdom Then and Now* (2021). She is also cofounder of BioEarth (501c3), a non-profit that fosters societal and ecological resiliency in the face of climate crisis, with active projects from Washington state to the Democratic Republic of Congo (www.bioearthcommunity.com). As part of BioEarth's *One Billion for Peace Pledge* tour, introduced in summer 2022, Flannery has been invited to lecture on peace studies throughout the U.S.A. and around the world, including in Dublin, Ireland (the Trinity College Longroom Hub, Irish School of Ecumenics, and St. Patrick's Cathedral), Lisbon, Portugal (the University of Lisbon), the DMZ between N. and S. Korea and the 2023 Korea Global Forum for Peace Education in Seoul, Korea, and Star Island (IRAS).

INTERGENERATIONAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL AND BOTTLE ROCKET LAUNCH

Front Porch and Lawn, 3:30–4:30 P.M.

RECENT DECISIONS FROM THE SUPREME
COURT AND IMPLICATIONS

Ted Laurensen

Elliott, 4:15–5:30 P.M.

ABSTRACT

In its 2023–2024 term, by the time of this presentation the Supreme Court will have issued a number of critical decisions that affect every state, community, and individual. This annual review by Ted Laurensen serves us well as an information overview and allows us to develop some forthcoming strategies which we can take back to our specific communities.

BIOSKETCH

Ted Laurensen has served IRAS for more than thirty years in a variety of roles, including three terms as president. He has practiced law for almost 50 years, both in New York City and the Bay Area,

and now resides on the West Coast in semi-retirement. He maintains a keen interest in contemporary judicial trends and decisions, but he likes to think that his intellectual interests have no boundaries, and include attention to moral and political philosophy, psychology, science fiction, and methods employed in hard science research.

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION
ORGANIZING

Newton West, 4:30–5:30 P.M.

SATURDAY EVENING

IRAS TALENT SHOW

Elliott, 8:00 P.M.

As is our custom, we close our week with a bang-up talent show. Sign up beforehand at the writing desk in the Oceanic lobby.

PEOPLE

2024 Conference Planning

Ted Peters	Conference Cochair
Jennifer Wiseman	Conference Cochair
Maynard Moore	Conference Cochair
Abigail Fuller	Conference Coordinator
Marion Griswold	Registrar

Conference Facilitators

Archi Pelagos Staff	Jennifer Whitten, Coordinator
	Sylvie Letendre, Kirsten Carr,
	Hélène Gaudet, Emily Carr-Osborne,
	Diane Hill, Juliane Gaudet
Auction Coordinator	Jennifer Whitten
Candlelight Coordinators	Emily and Katharine Houk
Conference Chaplain	Rev. Matilda Rose Cantwell
Memorial Service	Edmund Robinson
Program Book (Orange Book)	David Klotz
Social Hour Coordinator	Mark Kuprych
<i>Star Beacon</i> Editor	Emily Austin
	email address: starbeacon24@gmail.com
Stargazing	David Klotz and Dan Solomon
Talent Show Coordinator	Pauline Candaux
Star Island Annual Fund Representatives from IRAS	
	Amy Pooley and Ruth Orme-Johnson
Shapley-Booth Fellows	Erik Assadourian
	Harold Connolly
	Frances Flannery
Sturgis Music Fellow	Gregory Brown

Conference Cosponsor

Isles of Shoals Association, UU, Inc.

Candlelight Presenters

Sunday: Sehdev Kumar
Monday: McGhee & Ruth Orme-Johnson and Dolly Ferver
Tuesday: Erik Assadourian
Friday: Brandon Ambrosino

IRAS Officers

Carolyn J Love	President
Jane Bengtson	Vice Chair to the Council
Maynard Moore	VP Administration
Marilyn Brien	VP Membership Engagement
Jennifer Whitten	VP Summer Conferences
Constance Bertka	VP Organizational Relationships
Dan Solomon	Secretary
David Klotz	Treasurer

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Kim Brien	Arthur Petersen
Roger Brown	Stephen Ragsdale
Calvin Chatlos	Lisa Solomon
Marjorie Dixon	JD Stillwater
Willem Drees	Mladen Turk
Dolly Ferver	Gayle Woloschak
Marion Griswold	

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Solomon Katz	Vice President
Ted Laurenson	Vice President
Karl Peters	Vice President
Barbara Whitaker-Johns	Vice President

Advisors

Jane Bengtson	Parliamentarian
Arthur Petersen	Zygon Editor

Others with Official Responsibilities

Griswold Scholarship	Marion Griswold
Internet	McGhee Orme-Johnson
Membership Coordinator	Dan Solomon
Newsletter	Carol Orme-Johnson
Nominating Committee	Abby Fuller
Student Scholarships	Jane Bengtson
Webinars	Maynard Moore

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, we are grateful for every person who was on Star Island this week, for whatever reason and of whatever age. Your presence among us is appreciated. Much of the work of making a successful event possible is done by those who are unseen—kitchen staff, grounds keepers, babes in arms, carers for children—to name but a few.

Second, we are grateful for every person who was not with us this week, but who contributed over the past year in ways that made this week possible.

Third, we are grateful for all persons who participated in any of the events of the week. To the best of our ability, we did this for you. Without you our work would have been sterile. With you we have lift-off.

Fourth, we are grateful for each person who spoke, dialogued, presented, and facilitated. Your stimulating leadership moves us.

Fifth, we are grateful for the present generation of Star Island staff, both permanent and temporary. You have made our life easy and contributed to our success in ways we cannot measure.

Finally, we are thankful for all of the generations of those who over many decades have kept both IRAS and Star Island alive as a source of love, courage, and faith.

Ted Peters, Conference Cochair
Jennifer Wiseman, Conference Cochair
Maynard Moore, Conference Cochair

69th Annual IRAS Conference – Sunday, June 23 through Sunday, June 30, 2024

	Activity	Sunday 23	Monday 24	Tuesday 25	Wednesday 26	Thursday 27	Friday 28	Saturday 29
7:00 A.M.	Polar Bear Swim		Polar Bears (Brrr!) meet on Dock					
7:45 A.M.	Breakfast (DR)							
8:30 A.M.	Chapel		Rev. Matilda Rose Cantwell					
9:30 A.M.	Morning Plenary (E) Youth Program 9:15–12:15		Shostak	Shelhamer	Davis	Mix	Malik	Summary w/Speakers
10:45 A.M.	Coffee Break	Coffee Break (FP)						
11:15 A.M.	Dialogue Groups	Dialogue Groups						
12:30 P.M.	Lunch (DR)							
1:45 P.M.	Papers (E) Youth Serendipity Program, 1:45–3:15	Boat Leaves Portsmouth Dock 2:25 P.M.	Connolly	Wiseman Plenary until 3:30 P.M.		Assadourian	Malik & Peters Plenary	Groff (E)
2:45 P.M.	Papers (E)		Carr		Memorial Service (CH)	Curtis	Ambrosino	Flannery
3:45 P.M.		Mandatory Fire & Water Orientation (3:35 P.M.)	Science Fiction Hour (E)	Science Fiction Hour (E)	Science Fiction Hour (E)	Intergenerational Activities (PP) 3:30–5:00 P.M. Book Discussion (E)	IRAS Annual Meeting 3:30–4:30 P.M.	Ice Cream Social (FP) and Bottle Rocket Launch (FL), 3:30 P.M.
4:30 P.M.			Free University Kumar (NW)	Free University Kumar (NW)	Free University Kumar (NW)	Free University Ruse (NW)	IRAS Council Meeting (SP) Free University Katz (NW)	Laurenson (E) 4:15 Climate Change Action (NW)
5:30 P.M.	Social Hour (E) Youth (DP)		IRAS Auction opens			Zygon Reception		IRAS Auction closes 6:00 P.M.
6:30 P.M.	Dinner (DR)					Lobster at 6:15		Banquet
7:30 P.M.	Youth Evening Program	Candy Bingo (Snack Bar)	Glow Night Games (FL)	Bonfire & S'Mores (TBD)	Werewolf (PP)			
7:45 P.M.	Evening Plenary (E)	Welcome Peters	Shostak & Peters	Shelhamer & Wiseman	Davis & Wiseman	Mix & Peters Pel Show, 8:00 P.M.	Brown Concert	IRAS Talent Show
9:15 P.M.	Candlelight (CH) meet on FP	Kumar	Orme-Johnsons	Assadourian		Presidential Debate (E) 9:00–11:00 P.M.	Ambrosino	
10:00 P.M.	Late Night Activities		SF Film (E)	SF Film (E)	SF Film (E)	Stargazing		Farewell Party (Newton)
Various	Special Events Low-Tide Walk and Star Gazing days and times TBD		History Tour (FP) 1:30 P.M. Geology Walk (ML) 4:00 P.M. Sunset Cruise (D) 7:45 P.M.	Bird Walk (ML) 6:00 A.M. Appledore Tour & Duck Island Cruise (WH) 2:15 P.M.	Behind the Scenes Tour (WH) 2:00 P.M. Beloved Community Workshop (E) 3:00 P.M.	Island Systems & Sustainability Tour (FP) 2:00 P.M. Botany Walk (ML) 4:00 P.M. Pelican Show (MS) 8:00 P.M.	Pelicans vs. Conferees Softball Game (FL) 3:30–5:00 P.M. Ghosts & Graveyards (VC) 7:30 P.M.	

Location abbreviations: CH (Chapel), D (Dock), DP (Dragon Playground), DR (Dining Room), E (Elliott), FL (Front Lawn), FP (Oceanic front porch), ML (Marine Lab), MS (Marshman stage), NW (Newton west), OL (Oceanic lobby), PP (Pink Parlor), SP (Sandpiper), VC (Vaughn Cottage), WH (Well House)