

INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF LINN COUNTY

MINUTES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

March 20, 2014

**Members present (11):** Rodney Bluml, Tom Capo, Charles Crawley, Alan Fletcher, Susan Liddell, Cedric Lofdahl, Brenda Mitchell, Hassan Selim, Todd Thalblum, Joan Thaler, and Jen Yukl

**Guest (1):** John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas

**OPENING & INSPIRATION**

President Todd Thalblum called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Brenda Mitchell led the inspiration, sharing the history and lyrics of “For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table” – a hymn written in 1998 by Shirley Erena Murray. Ms. Murray writes this about her reasons for writing this hymn: “...I couldn't find anything to reflect a broad overview of human rights in any hymnbook. You can see that I have used some of the very basic ideas of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – the right to shelter, safety, food, and later, the right to a job, to freedom of speech and worship. I've tried to put them in a context which relates directly to the Gospel, but without excluding those who are not of the Christian faith...” This is a powerful hymn for human rights and justice. The text echoes the IRC mission “to promote understanding and respect for one another, and to work with the community for the spiritual, moral, and civic welfare of Linn County.”

To view more of what Brenda shared about the history of this hymn and a performance of it, see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYQus85djK8> .

You can view the complete lyrics at [http://www.hymnary.org/text/for\\_everyone\\_born\\_a\\_place\\_at\\_the\\_table](http://www.hymnary.org/text/for_everyone_born_a_place_at_the_table) or [http://www.hopepublishing.com/media/pdf/hset/hs\\_242.pdf](http://www.hopepublishing.com/media/pdf/hset/hs_242.pdf) (PDF with lyrics and sheet music).

**CR CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION / CR FIRE DEPARTMENT**

John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas (CRCRC executive director) addressed us again this evening to ask for our input about the controversy in the media over a decal on one fire truck's rescue bucket. The decal portrays a shadow figure with a shepherd's staff standing next to a firefighter. A line from Psalm 23 is written below. The CR Fire Department and CRCRC are looking into either making the image more inclusive or removing it. John-Paul asked for our thoughts since we represent a wide variety of faith traditions. The consensus of IRC members present was to remove the decal.

*[See Other Business regarding the April 23 Summit organized by CR Civil Rights Commission. Some discussion occurred at the beginning of our meeting and when John-Paul addressed us, but concluded in Other Business.]*

**OFFICERS' REPORTS**

Minutes of February 20, 2014: Motion by Joan Thaler to approve as submitted  
– Second by Tom Capo – Carried.

Treasurer's Report – Alan Fletcher: written financial report was provided

“Receipts and Disbursements – January 1, 2014 thru March 20, 2014”

Cash balance as of 3/20/14: \$16,467.71 [Checking = \$1,690.77 / Money Market = \$14, 776.94]

- Tom Capo asked if Linn County Food Bank had received and cashed the check of \$894.36 from the 2013 Thanksgiving service. Alan stated that they had.
- We still have no record of an interest earnings check from the Greater CR Community Foundation.
- It was noted that Cedric needs someone to locate a sponsor for the costs of our transcribing service.

Motion by Brenda Mitchell to accept the 3/20/14 Treasurer's Report  
– Second by Charles Crawley – Carried.

## Committee Planning Update

Financial committee was formed / Chart reflects changes made via email contacts and in this meeting.

2014 IRC Committees			
<b>Community Relations</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Communications</b> <i>no chair yet</i>	<b>Finance</b>
Brian Daugherty (chair)	Charles Crawley (co-chair)	Rodney Bluml	Alan Fletcher (chair)
Cedric Lofdahl	Allen Fisher (co-chair)	Tom Capo	Brenda Mitchell
Martha Rogers	Susan Liddell	Ashok Chawla	Joan Thaler
Hassan Mahmoud Selim	Jim Siegling	Brenda Mitchell	
Taha Tawil	Todd Thalblum	Bill Mulcahey	
	Joan Thaler	Jen Yukl	

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Community Relations Committee

1. **Children of Abraham:** Hassan Selim, for Brian Daugherty, reported that Brian has been in contact with Robin Kash. Robin is in the process of getting his own Web page back up; if able, he is willing to record our programs. Brian has forwarded the following dates and times to Robin. If unavailable, Robin has a contact who can record – for a fee. Robin will make available copies of our earlier programs that he has recorded.

Events for Children of Abraham:

- May 4 – *How Each Religion Sees the Other* – at Temple Judah
- August 24 – *Schools of Thought: Differences Within Each Tradition* – at the Mother Mosque
- November 2 – *Concepts of God* – at St. George Eastern Orthodox Church

*[Speakers at all events: Fred Shaheen, Taha Tawil, and Todd Thalblum]*

2. **Ethical Perspectives on the News / Sundays, 11 am on KCRG, Channel 9:**

Cedric Lofdahl provided copies of the current program schedule. On the leaflet, please note 4/3 and 5/4 topics should be switched. This has been done on the list below.

*Beyond the Headlines: A Closer look at Iowa's At-Risk Youth (3/23); Unionizing College Football Players (3/30); Stand Your Ground (4/6); The Keystone Pipeline (4/13); The Politics of Pregnancy & Death (4/20); Free Enterprise & Religious Belief (4/27); Our Response to the Ukraine/Russia Situation (5/4); The Culture of Poverty (5/11)*

3. **University of Religion:** No update

### Event Committee

1. **Holocaust Memorial, “Lest We Forget” – Monday, April 7 (7pm) – at St. Mark’s Lutheran, 8300 C Ave. NE in Marion:** Rodney Bluml, Tom Capo, Tim Hyatt, Susan Liddell, Brenda Mitchell, Joan Thaler, and Jen Yukl volunteered assistance with readings and/or lighting candles. Todd Thalblum will email specifics to those who volunteered. A full list of events where Holocaust survivor, Cesare Frustaci, will be speaking during the week of April 6<sup>th</sup> can be found at <http://holocausteducate.org/event/88/>. Other locations include Coe, Mt. Mercy, and Kirkwood.
2. **Thanksgiving Service – Monday, Nov. 24 (7pm):** Susan Liddell reported that Unity can host.
3. **Annual Meeting** – Hassan Selim will ask the Islamic Center to accommodate this meeting.

### Communication Committee

1. **Website status:** Tom Capo reported that he and Jen Yukl met with Stuart Williams on March 1 about what has been set up. Site is ready to launch, but needs updated information. We also need to review what we want to post and possibly hire someone to aid with regular postings. Brenda Mitchell noted that Ashok had offered to do some of this. Hassan Selim made the suggestion to add a Facebook link for events. Decision made that Tom would launch the site in the next few days, so that people can view what is needed.
2. **Newsletter:** We have not released an issue since November 2013. Tom noted the need to revisit format and content. Email delivery vs. ground mail was also brought up. Charles Crawley stated that receiving a hard copy is “harder to ignore” and may be one reason to continue ground mail delivery. Jen announced that Mary Lee Folkedahl-Meehleder is willing to assist someone with

one more newsletter (if in old format) but has to resign from work with this layout, as well as printing labels and maintenance of our database. [Jen has current database and is adding email addresses and verifying ground addresses from membership forms that come in.]

3. **Committee meeting:** Jen will email committee members about possible date and time.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **April 23 Summit / CR Civil Rights Commission:** Todd Thalblum reported that the email vote of March 11-12 was in favor (with a few abstentions) of endorsing the CRCRC's research to identify gaps (who is being left out of our community's success) and their plan to work toward possible solutions. A key event in this project is the April 23 summit.

**Summit: Building Inclusive Communities, One Neighborhood at a Time**

**Wednesday, April 23 (8:30 am to 4:30 pm) – Cedar Rapids Convention Complex, Double Tree**

[Information and registration details at [www.cedar-rapids.org/civilrights](http://www.cedar-rapids.org/civilrights)]

Tom Capo announced that we have been given a 50-minute speaking slot. Decision made that Rodney Bluml and Tom Capo will represent us in this presentation. Todd Thalblum will give a blessing at the beginning of the event. IRC members will receive a special rate of \$5 (vs. \$50). Register online with code that was announced.

2. **Bylaws – Discussion & Vote:** Synopsis of Todd Thalblum's proposal to amend bylaws led to...
  - Motion by Cedric Lofdahl to amend the IRCLC Bylaws at Article VIII, Numbers 3 & 4, changing the title of the "Program Committee" to "Event Committee" and "Publicity and Promotion Committee" to "Communication Committee" – Second by Jen Yukl...After continued discussion, there was an amendment to Cedric's motion.
  - Motion by Brenda Mitchell to amend the previous motion by adding that we remove the phrase in Article VIII, Number 4 that reads "provide members with welcome packets" – Second by Joan Thaler...

The amended motion was passed.

3. **Guest at next meeting:** Tom Capo announced that a new organization that works to aid victims of domestic violence and sexual assault would like to give a 5-10 minute presentation.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS of other events in Cedar Rapids**

1. **Prairiewoods annual event – "Rooted in Compassion: Cosmology, Eco-Justice, and Empathic Wisdom" – March 28 (7 – 9 pm) and March 29 (9 am – 3:30 pm):** Event location – Double Tree Register at [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) / Speakers: Marc Ian Barasch and Drew Dellinger
2. **Intersections – next civil dialogue & luncheon – Friday, April 4 (11:45am–1pm):** See <http://interfaithallianceiowa.org/events/intersections/> for details about registering for lunch.
3. **Jesus Seminar – "Re-framing Christian Scriptures" – April 4 & 5:** People's Church Register at <http://www.westarinstitute.org/events/cedar-rapids/>
4. **Experience the Word Come to Life – a Presentation of The Saint John's Bible – May 2 through June 8:** Prairiewoods / Details and hours at [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org)
5. **Healthy Congregations Facilitator Training – Thurs., May 29 & Fri., May 30 (9am–5pm):** Unity of CR Register by May 15 at [www.MarthaCreek.com](http://www.MarthaCreek.com)
6. **Extraordinary Leadership in Healthy Congregations – Saturday, May 31 (10:30am–4:30pm):** Unity, 3791 Blairs Ferry Rd NE / Love offering; no registration required / More info at [www.MarthaCreek.com](http://www.MarthaCreek.com)
7. **"The Work" of Byron Katie, Living in Joy – Loving What Is – Sunday, June 1 (Noon to 3pm):** Unity of CR No registration required; donation / More info at [www.MarthaCreek.com](http://www.MarthaCreek.com)
8. **Spring Eco-Programs at Prairiewoods:** See [www.Prairiewoods.org](http://www.Prairiewoods.org) for program information.

## **Next Board Meeting: Thursday, April 17 (7:00 pm) at the Ecumenical Community Center**

Ashok Chawla will give the inspiration on April 17.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm: Motion to adjourn by Brenda Mitchell – Second by Joan Thaler – Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Yukl, Secretary