

The 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society  
**Thoreau's Revolutions**  
July 9-13, 2025  
**Presenter Bios & Abstracts**



**Abdulqader Alabdali** is a PhD candidate in American Literature at the University Texas at Dallas.

*Fuller's Transcendental Revolution*

This paper positions Margaret Fuller as a revolutionary Transcendentalist, critiquing Emerson's self-reliance for ignoring women's relational needs and redefining it to address gender, race, and class inequities. Linking women's rights with abolitionism, she envisions interdependent autonomy, challenging patriarchy and advocating transformative justice beyond Emerson's individualism.



**Albena Bakratheva** is Professor of American Literature at New Bulgarian University, Sofia, author of various books and articles on nineteenth-century American Literature, and translator of Thoreau's, Emerson's, and Fuller's major works in Bulgarian.

*Thoreau's "Peaceable Revolution" and the Eastern European "Velvet Revolutions" of the Late Twentieth Century*

This presentation explores Thoreau's impact in both the US and Europe in 1968, as well as two decades later when "Civil Disobedience" became the slogan of all the peaceful revolutions in Eastern Europe which led to the end of the socialist regime. In the late 1980s Eastern Europe rephrased Civil Disobedience as the Velvet Revolution and subsequently transformed the face of this part of the world.



**Michael Berger** is a writer, teacher, and student of Sufism.

*A Hidden Treasure Longing to Be Known: Thoreau's Earth Through A Sufi Prism*

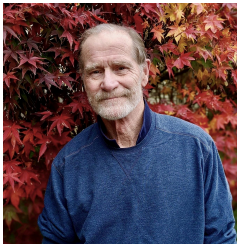
This presentation explores how Thoreau's ecological mysticism shares many analogous concepts and tendencies with certain schools of Islamic Sufism. I will explore how Thoreau's emphases on stewardship, earthly beauty, and the nuances of phenomenal life find powerful resonances in Sufi concepts of hospitality, multiplicity, imagination, and memory—a connection that will help enhance and expand the spiritual and theological implications of Thoreau's work.



**Robin C. Bonner** teaches English Composition as a Senior Adjunct at Montgomery County Community College, in Blue Bell PA.

*Henry David Thoreau as Revolutionary Torch Bearer for the Humans as Nature Movement*

This presentation explores Thoreau's relationship with Nature as well as his revolutionary philosophy about humans as part of Nature. What's more, it traces Thoreau's influences, including Romantic poet William Wordsworth, biologist Charles Darwin, and others, and notes those he himself influenced, from naturalist John Muir to current-day environmental writers such as Bill McKibben, Suzanne Simard, and Richard Powers.



**Jeffrey Boutwell** is an independent scholar, retired from a career in public policy, and author of *BOUTWELL: Radical Republican and Champion of Democracy*, a biography of his family member and 19th century statesman, George Boutwell.

*Thoreau, the Propagation of Seeds, and Slavery*

This presentation explores Thoreau's use of Darwin's principles of evolution and natural selection as they affect both agricultural and human development. Coming as it did on the eve of the Civil War, Thoreau's address to the 1860 meeting of the Middlesex County Agricultural Society had a profound impact in rebutting the assertion that enslaved African Americans were a separate, inferior species.



**Lois Brown** is Foundation Professor of English and Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy at Arizona State University.

*White Hot Rage: Thoreau, John Brown and Revelatory Resistance*

The capture and execution of John Brown in 1859 galvanized Henry David Thoreau and fueled his unapologetic antislavery protests and outspoken advocate for justice. This presentation explores Thoreau's deliberate responses to racialized injustice and considers how his understanding of civic outrage and necessary revolutions evolved.



**Peter Coviello** is Professor and Head of English at the University of Illinois-Chicago, where he specializes in American literature and queer theory.

*Fishers of Men: Perversity, Carnality, Thoreau*

This talk takes up Thoreau's place in the tumultuous history of American sexuality. It pays especially close attention to his wrought vision of carnality, and of the body as scene of both discipline and intoxicating dissolution.



**Frank Cronin** is a retired professor from Austin Community College who is focusing in retirement on his work as a board member of DarkSky Texas.

*Franklin and Slavery: A Man of his Time, a Man Ahead of his Time*

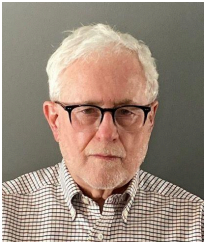
This presentation explains Benjamin Franklin's journey from slaveholder to abolitionist. I delve into the influences in America and Europe that shaped Franklins' change of heart and mind.



**Kate Culkin** is a professor of history at Bronx Community College and the author of *Emerson's Daughters: Ellen Tucker Emerson, Edith Emerson Forbes, and their Family Legacy* (2025).

*"The Revolutionary Spirit of '75 Blazed up in the Bosoms of these Long-Suffering Women": Louisa May Alcott and Ellen Tucker Emerson on the Centennial of the Battle of Concord and the Suffrage Movement*

This paper compares Louisa May Alcott's and Ellen Tucker Emerson's depictions of and responses to the celebration of the Centennial of the Battle of Concord in 1875. It argues pro-suffrage Alcott's and anti-suffrage Emerson's depictions form part of their larger advocacy for or against votes for women and examine how both invoked Concord's revolutionary history to make their case.



**Richard Cunningham** is a retired Visiting Professor of English at Framingham State University, and his current interest is discovering connections among the lives of Henry David Thoreau and Thomas Merton.

*Thoreau's Revolutionary Approach to "Idiot's Glee"*

This presentation explores how Thoreau lived the concept of “idiot’s glee,” the feeling of sheer madness joy at the world. Thoreau’s life offers a set of practices for others to follow in order to be drawn into this joyful life path and to connect to the “clear stream at the bottom of the abyss.”



**Ted David** is a retired professor of law and taxation at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey and former member of the Society’s Board of Directors.

*Marcus Aurelius and Henry David Thoreau; revolutionary thoughts, 2000 years old*

Marcus Aurelius and Henry Thoreau share amazingly similar ideas about the purpose and objective of life though they lived almost 2000 years apart. Both were revolutionaries, one in the meadows and hills of Concord the other on the battlefields of the Roman Empire.



**Rachael DeWitt** is a postdoctoral fellow at Washington University’s Center for the Humanities.

*Reading Thoreau Beyond the Gender Binary*

This presentation explores Thoreau’s contradictory attitudes toward gender by finding connections between his writing and the women’s writing of his day. With these connections in mind, Thoreau emerges as an environmental thinker capable of the kind of boundary traversal that we find so useful when grappling with today’s social and environmental crises.



**Cristie Ellis** is Associate Professor of English and Director of Environmental Studies at the University of Mississippi.

*Thoreau's Ecoerotics*

This paper will examine the eroticism of Thoreau’s writing about nature, and its relation to his non-normative ideas about sexuality. I will also discuss how his work contributes to the larger history of nineteenth-century “ecoerotics,” or, the belief that sensuous engagement with the nonhuman world is vitalizing and contributes to human flourishing.



**Scott Ennis** was a paratrooper in the U.S. Army, and an endurance athlete who has completed the Boston Marathon and the Ironman Triathlon. A dedicated sonneteer, Scott has written more sonnets than Shakespeare, and his full name even forms the anagram Sonnettics.

*Emerson and AI*

A presentation on how Ralph Waldo Emerson’s revolutionary ideas about individualism, creativity, intuition, and interconnectedness resonate in the rapidly developing “revolution” of artificial intelligence (AI).



**Shan Gao** is an associate professor in the Department of Philosophy at Soochow University and the editor-in-chief of the book series with Springer titled *Nature Aesthetics: Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Dialogue*.

*Emerson's Aesthetic Revolution*

In this paper, Shan Gao will address the metaphysical foundations for aesthetic revolution in Emerson. When addressing the aesthetic revolution in Emerson, she will also make a comparative study with Zhuang Zi, who also completes aesthetic revolution in his lifetime.



**David H. Gordon** is Assistant Teaching Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University Maryland.

*A Walking Revolution: Thoreau's Mountain Excursions*

While Thoreau is mostly known for walking the woods of Walden, he also made numerous trips to the mountains of Western Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. This presentation will explore where Thoreau walked, his manner and purpose in walking, and then argue that his walks, and walking in general, are an essential component of a Green revolution.



**Sarah Gothe** lives in a tiny house and spends time writing, walking, and hoeing beans.

*Thoreau's Childfree Life as Revolution*

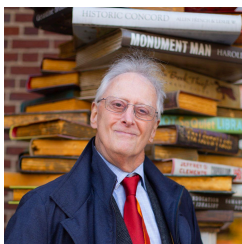
This presentation explores how a childfree life allowed Thoreau to be exceptionally rich in solitude and presence with the more-than-human world. I speculate Henry's personal freedom of not having children allowed for more robust journaling, travel, jail time, non-convention, and an enduring legacy of genius.



**Carol Graham** is an Avid Listener, Learner, Practitioner and Educator of Thoreau's Teachings, describes the poet, illustrator and author.

*Thoreau's Affinity for Nurturing Living Things*

This presentation hopes to inspire attendees to understand how Thoreau nurtured, supported and respected all living things and to incorporate examples of Thoreau's nurturing practices into their daily lives throughout their lifetimes.



**Robert A. Gross**, James L. and Shirley A. Draper Professor Emeritus of Early American History, University of Connecticut, is the author of *The Minutemen and Their World*, rev. and expanded edition (2022), and *The Transcendentalists and Their World* (2021).

*Thoreau's Loyalist Inheritance*

This presentation will do what the title indicates: set forth the Loyalist politics during the American Revolution of Thoreau's forebears in the maternal line, the Jones family of Weston, Massachusetts, and will inquire into the potential influence, of any, of that heritage on his view of liberty, the individual, and dissent.



**Stephen Hahn** is professor emeritus, William Paterson University; member of the executive council of the William Carlos Williams Society and of the editorial advisory board of the *William Carlos Williams Review*.

*Making Thoreau Safe for Democracy: The U.S. Information Service Presents the Case*

This presentation examines a publication of the United State Information Service titled “Henry David Thoreau: Gentle Protestor” as an example of strategic communications regarding writers and culture figures in the 1950s-1060s, taming and domesticating the revolutionary potential of Thoreau's writings.



**Karla Hailer** is a retired 5th/6th grade classroom teacher who writes fiction under several pen names and has a penchant for tiaras.

*Just One Victory: How Thoreau's Quiet Revolution Changed the World*

This presentation looks at how, when Henry David Thoreau spent a night in jail, he had no idea how that one small victory would echo through the years to follow. In a world where it feels like nothing we do makes a difference, I would invite the audience to see how one small, seemingly insignificant, victory now could inspire all of us and make a difference and can change the world.



**Richard Harris** teaches American Literature at North Carolina’s Charlotte Latin School, where he helped his students form a Transcendental Club and publish a newsletter titled *The Sundial*.

*The Environmental Ethos of Abbey’s Aravaipa Canyon Allusions to Thoreau and Fuller*

This presentation explores allusions to Thoreau and Buckminster Fuller, Margaret Fuller’s visionary grandnephew, in an anecdote from *Down the River*, by Edward Abbey. I suggest that Abbey’s meditation is a revolutionary construal of land valuation that concludes with an understanding of Thoreau’s view of education as experiential and reconstructive. Visiting a natural place can awaken our senses to the redemptive mystery of existence and inspire a conservationist ethos composed of a multicentrist environmental ethic.



**Sandra Haupt** is a recently retired high school math teacher from Concord Carlisle High School.

*Thoreau, Gandhi and Indian Independence*

This presentation explores Henry David Thoreau and the Indian Independence movement. The political thought and activism of Mahatma Gandhi drew inspiration from *Civil Disobedience*, a work shaped by Thoreau’s understanding of the Bhagavad Gita.



**Richard Higgins** is a writer. He's the author of *Thoreau's God*, about Thoreau's iconoclastic spiritual vision, (University of Chicago Press, 2024) and *Thoreau and the Language of Trees* (University of California, 2017).

*Thoreau’s Inner Revolution*

As Concord began to celebrate its role in the Revolution during the 1820s and 1830s, Thoreau thought his neighbors had trapped themselves in social norms and pursuits that enslaved them, and that they were thus not truly free. Political freedom for Thoreau was but a means to achieve moral and spiritual freedom—freedom from materialism, racism and religious doctrines and institutions that bound the spirit, rather than expanded it. What America needed was a second, more internal revolution to achieve this inner freedom.



**Scott Holland** is Professor Emeritus of Theology & Culture at Bethany Theological Seminary in partnership with the Earlham School of Religion.

*Thoreau's Theopoetics as Ecopoetics: A Revolutionary Rhetoric of Worldly Holiness*

Returning to the first Thoreau biography in which William Ellery Channing presents Thoreau as "the Poet-Naturalist," this presentation will explore how Thoreau employed his own poetics of both the spiritual and the natural, heeding Emerson's call in "The Poet." The result is a new ecopoetics beyond a Puritan, Unitarian or Transcendentalist metaphysics.



**Lewis Hyde's** edited edition of Thoreau's essays will be published by Milkweed Editions this fall.

*"Resistance or Disobedience?" the history and fate of Massachusetts' 'Personal Liberty Laws.'*

In the decades before the Civil War, Massachusetts enacted a series of laws meant to guarantee the civil rights of free Blacks and fugitive slaves. The story of these "personal liberty" laws is worth recalling in the present moment when once again the state finds itself resisting the reach of federal power.



**Lynn Hyde** is a public historian and historic preservationist, formerly of Boston, currently the executive director of Historic Whidbey in Washington State.

*The Sisters of West Street: Nexus of Boston Reform*

This presentation will explore the coincidental 1840s residence of two sets of sisters on Boston's one-block long West Street: the transcendentalist Peabody sisters and the abolitionist Weston sisters. Although their homes served as headquarters for movements that, in the 1840s, had not yet converged, their social worlds were closely intertwined.



**Don Jewler** of McLean, Virginia, serves on the Board of Directors of The Thoreau Society and brings his enthusiasm for Henry David Thoreau as well as more than 25 years experience in non-profit association communications, public relations, and publications.

*A Tale of September 2, 1824, When Thoreau and General Lafayette Crossed Paths: What Sparked the Spirit of Independence in These Two Revolutionaries?*

This presentation explores events and people in the young lives of Henry David Thoreau and General Lafayette that may have inspired their revolutionary spirit and examines the qualities that General Lafayette shared with Thoreau. On that September 2, 1824, afternoon in Concord, the aged champion of righteous causes, General Lafayette, looked back at his remarkable triumphs, while young Henry turned his gaze to the road ahead.



**Marc Jolley** is Director of Mercer University Press and Senior Lecturer in Philosophy and Great Books at Mercer University.

*Walden as a Declaration of Independence*

This presentation explores the idea that Thoreau's Walden may be read as his personal declaration of independence. His words and his life gives flesh to this idea in what he believed and what he did.



**Dr. Jared Kass** is a Visiting Scholar, Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital; and a Professor Emeritus of Counseling Psychology, Lesley University.

*Taming the Machine in the Garden: Roots of Humanistic Approaches in Education and Psychology—as Articulated by Leo Marx and Carl Rogers—in Thoreau’s Investigations of Nature, Society, and Self.*

This presentation discusses two humanistic educators who have received insufficient attention in Transcendentalist scholarship: Leo Marx (American Studies, Amherst, MIT) and Carl Rogers (Counseling Psychology, University of Chicago). Their work provides a dynamic link between Thoreau and psychoeducational approaches that prevent people from becoming unreflective tools of the technologies and machine-like systems which have become increasingly destructive forces in our society.



**Kathleen Coyne Kelly** is Professor of English at Northeastern University and editor of the *Concord Saunterer*.

*Thoreau and the Landscapes of War*

I discuss Thoreau’s musings on local landscapes of war, found artifacts, and Amos Doolittle’s drawings of the “Concord Fight” of 1776 in the context of heritage tourism: why do battlegrounds have such allure—why, when we are *here*, do we love to imagine

being *there*?



**John J. Kucich** is a professor of English at Bridgewater State University and currently serves as president of the Thoreau Society; he is the author of *Unsettling Thoreau: Native Americans, Settler Colonialism and the Power of Place* (2024).

*Thoreau and the Revolutionary Indigenous Landscape*

Thoreau’s call, in “Huckleberries,” for every town to set aside a commons for “instruction and recreation” is a revolutionary part of his legacy – one everywhere apparent in New England, and often marked by the legacy of settler colonialism. This presentation will explore how the complications of this legacy continue to the present by focusing on the story of the Nashobah Indian Plantation, where the Musketaquid tribe moved after selling their land that became Concord and the focus, in recent years, of a fascinating revitalization movement.



**Amelia Lafont** is a Senior Attorney for education-related civil rights matters, mentored in the legacy of the original *Brown v. Board of Education* team by Mr. John W. Walker of Arkansas.

*Revolutionary Transcendentalist Schools for America: Let's Simplify Our Practices and Elevate Our Purposes* This presentation engages with America's long tradition of philosophies of democratic education, and transcendental virtues of integrity, self-reliance, community,

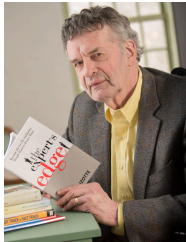
and love for nature, in a search for how to better prepare students for present and future success in occupational, personal, and civic spheres, in the world they are now inheriting. Let's look at the Basic Education Law of Finland and the Alternative Schools Act of Puerto Rico through a comparative law analysis to create a framework for a new body of legislation for a 21st century transcendentalist democratic education system.



**Eric D. Lehman** is Associate Professor of English at University of Bridgeport and the author of 22 books, including *New England Nature*, *New England at 400*, and *Becoming Tom Thumb*.

*Walden: A Game and the Paradox of the Digital Revolution*

This presentation explores how digital environments like the one in *Walden: A Game* can add meditative and learning experiences for players, while paradoxically delivering a less satisfying experience than the natural world. Can revolutionary media bring Thoreau's world across the digital divide?



**Ken Lizotte** CMC is Chief Imaginative Officer (CIO) of emerson consulting group inc. and author of 11 books including a focus on the business mind of Henry David Thoreau, coming fall from HarperCollins Leadership.

*The 13+ Careers of Henry David Thoreau*

Although Henry was known for many jobs and careers especially writing, surveying, pencilmaking, teaching and carpentry, yet his work life stretched beyond these five best-known occupations to a total of over 13 more! This session will explore these lesser-known careers and challenge participants as a group to identify all of them.



**Yafang Luo** is a Ph.D. candidate in the English Department at Penn State University, with a focus on nineteenth-century American literature.

*(Re)inventing a Language of Wilderness: Thoreau's Writing as/for the Natives*

This presentation examines Thoreau's philological study of Native languages. I argue that as Thoreau documents, imitates, and reinvents the language of wilderness embedded in Indigenous traditions, the poet enacts a poetics of wilderness where our relationship with Nature and others is radically reimagined.



**Carol Maciel** is an educator and graduate student at Starr King School for the Ministry, whose journey started through independent research of American Thought.

*Untarnished Successions: Henry David Thoreau's Revolutionary stance towards human perpetuity*

What if human reproduction wasn't obvious, but a deliberate path bound to higher purposes? Thoreau's revolutionary stance challenges mindless perpetuation, urging multiple generations to rethink legacy, succession, and the very future of humanity.



**Catherine Magi** is Executive Director of the Cook County (MN) Historical Society and an independent historian specializing in history of John Brown's Raid.

*Fire-Eaters, Puritans, & John Brown: Thoreau's Revolutionary Wordplay on the Eve of Civil War*

This presentation offers a deep dive into the language of Thoreau's *Plea for Captain John Brown*. I will examine word choice in the historical context of a nation on the eve of Civil War, comparing and contrasting with the contemporary political speech of pro-secession, pro-slavery Southern "Fire-Eaters."



**Ross Martin** is Head Preceptor in Expository Writing at Harvard College.

*On Emerson's Revolutionary Ecstasies: Hematological Exuberance and Anti-Slavery Thinking*

My talk extends recent vitalistic trends in Emerson studies to discuss life as overabundance from a cardiovascular standpoint, revealing a scientific impetus for Emerson's anti-slavery thinking. Augmenting Emerson's scientific abolitionism with archival evidence, I showcase his study of Emanuel Swedenborg—the scientist turned mystic—whose hematology crosses anatomical boundaries so that the inward intensity of individuality must release itself through an utmost ecstasy according to the heart's emancipatory force.



**Jake McGinnis** is Assistant Professor of Humanities and Director of Sustainability Studies at Graceland University.

*Excursions in the Anthropocene: Henry David Thoreau, Greta Thunberg, and the Revolutionary Potential of Travel Writing*

This presentation considers Thoreau's legacy for contemporary revolutions, specifically the twenty-first-century climate movement. Ultimately, I argue that while *Civil Disobedience* provides a crucial model for direct action, activists such as Greta Thunberg also draw from the method of Thoreau's excursions, including the radical potential for lived experience and deliberate, unsettling storytelling to shake up our sense of the world.



**Eric Miller** is a dedicated life member of the Thoreau Society, where he is affectionately known as “the guy who lived in the tent” during a year-long fellowship in Boston, when he also recreated Thoreau's Walk to Wachusett, kayaked the Concord River, climbed Mount Monadnock, and *maybe* slept at the famed Walden house site.

*Thoreau, Revolution, & Lincoln Connected through Space*

This presentation explores four major comets that connect Thoreau to profound moments in history and nature, bringing a deeper understanding of how these rare astronomical events left their mark on him and those around him. These events serve as windows into how the natural world influenced Thoreau's philosophy and are reminders of how shared celestial phenomena can connect us.



**John Hanson Mitchell** is an American author with a backlist of twelve books, six of which, collected together as "The Scratch Flat Chronicles", examine the interrelationship between human cultures and nature by discussing the land use history of a single square mile of agricultural land northwest of Boston.

*Robin Hood and Henry Thoreau Take a Walk in the Wood: The historic struggle to preserve common lands*

This presentation is a review of the age-old struggle to preserve common land by using the legend of Robin Hood and the writings of Henry Thoreau. Robin Hood, who scholars now characterize as the first radical environmentalist fought to preserve the common lands of Sherwood Forest; Henry Thoreau's position on common lands can be summed up in a single phrase: "In wildness is the preservation of the world."



**Barbara Mossberg**, a specialist in American Studies for over 50 years, teaches and writes on the role of poetry and language arts in civil and human rights, war and peace, and the environment. As a Fulbright Specialist and Professor of Practice, Clark Honors College, University of Oregon, Mossberg explores the power of language "to engage our hunger and develop our capacity to matter utterly to our world."

*"Tell Them About Hope:" A Teacher's Account of Revolutionary Learning Inspired by Thoreau*

Who here has not changed because of Thoreau? We each are testaments to the power of his prose to inspire new life. I cannot teach, lecture, write, lead, consult, or be interviewed, without the foundational words of an iconoclastic revolutionary. This address probes the mechanisms of transformational leadership by focusing on my experience giving prompts and assignments based on Thoreau's words.



**China Mullinax** is a part-time editor for pre-medical school students and a homeschool teacher to a 7th grader.

*More Than a Shared Love of Nature: Thoreau's Counterculture Influence on Gary Snyder*

This presentation explores Thoreau's and poet Gary Snyder's empathic connection to nature and the counterculture influence Thoreau had on Snyder's life, leading to his environmental activism in the 1960s. Thoreau's transcendental perspective contributed to Snyder's evolution, and despite difficulties suffered throughout both their lives, each man became champions for their natural environment.



**Alissa O'Brien** is an Artist, Natural Science Illustrator, Writer, and Thoreau Society member having an exhibition of nature inspired pyrography art at Walden Pond in 2026.

*Fronting Essential Facts, is in Fact, Essential!*

This presentation shares how Thoreau's experiences with finding meaning and discovering essential facts proved my choice to live life deliberately meaningful and essential. This presentation explores how living life deliberately is essential for individuals discovering their own importance and how each deliberate life is important and essential to bring about needed change for life as a whole.



**Atsuko Oda** is Professor Emerita of English at Mie University, Japan.

*Erasmus Darwin's Vestiges in Emerson's "Compensation"*

Erasmus Darwin's motto, *E conchis omnia*, or "everything from shells" offered Emerson a useful index to his interest in the evolutionary theory of life. His reference to "natural history of calamity" in "Compensation" could be read in this context.



**Henrik Otterberg** wrote his PhD on Thoreau's aesthetics. He serves as the bibliographer of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* since 2016.

*The Contrarian: Antithesis and Anthesis in Thoreau's Style*

This presentation considers Thoreau's frequent and skillful use of negative rhetoric among his works, especially in setting up the virtues of nature as against the depravities and deficiencies of civilization.



**Brad Parker** graduated from B.U. in 1968 in American History & Civilization. He worked at the Thoreau Lyceum from 1983 to 1993 and performed as Thoreau at Walden in the 1990s. He later spent seven years teaching English in Japan. He has published a biography of Jack Kerouac, as well as a book about Edgar Allan. Poe.

*Thoreau's Sexuality Re-examined: From his "era of Revolution" to the Modern Era of the Reconstruction of Sexuality & Queer Theory*

This presentation will draw on Walter Harding's understudied essay on Henry's sexuality and present my own research further developing the subject.



**Steven Phillips** is a retired writer and creative director for film, media installations and staged productions, with graduate degrees in film production as well as literature and American Studies. He teaches philosophy, political theory, and American History and Literature to adult learners at Lifetime Learners Institute, Connecticut State Community College Norwalk.

*The Producer in the Garden and the Anarchist in the Beanfield.*

This presentation explores Thoreau's uses of his beanfield both as arena and metaphor for the constant renewal of revolutionary possibility within a burgeoning wage economy. It suggests that Thoreau, who represents himself not as "the owner of the beans, but rather their steward," implicitly undermines Lockean foundations of capitalism and the property rights that undergird it, not least Locke's concept of *vacuis locis* and its legitimizing of expropriation and colonization.



**Richard Piccarreto** works in public history in Concord, MA and is the Membership Coordinator for The Thoreau Society. He lives in Stow, MA.

*"It lives too fast." Henry Thoreau and the Revolution of the Railroad*

This presentation explores how the arrival of the Fitchburg Railroad in Concord in Henry's time had all the hallmarks of a revolution: force, mass mobilization, sweeping change, and violence. Vast, permanent changes came not only to the woods and fields of Concord, but to the individual as well - no matter how near to or far from the new 'roads' they lived.



**Beverly D. Pittman** teaches cardiovascular disease prevention in the African American community, and she is a member of the Thoreau Society Board of Directors.

*You Say You Want a Revolution? The Revolution WILL Be Televised, and the Revolution Will Be Live!*

This presentation explores the continual progress that African Americans have made in their fight against racism in the United States. I suggest that these achievements have been in line with Thoreau's Civil Disobedience, in particular from the mid-sixties to the present.



**Donna Marie Przybojewski** is a former Junior High Language Arts Educator, the author and illustrator of 8 children's books on Henry David Thoreau, and Thoreau Stem partner at St. Benedict Catholic School where she serves as a Thoreau and outdoor classroom educator.

*How Thoreau Revolutionized Education at St. Benedict Catholic School*

This presentation will share the manner in which Thoreau revolutionized education at St. Benedict Catholic School since 2016 to the present. I will elaborate on the manner in which students and teachers immersed themselves in the learning process through collaboration and activity-based lessons across grade levels and disciplines.



**Brent Ranalli** edits the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* and is the author of *Common Wealth Dividends: History and Theory*.

*Henry Thoreau, Thomas Paine, and Maldistribution of Land and Wealth*

This presentation explores fair sharing of common wealth as a solution to problems of economic and social inequity.



**Gary Ricketts** is an independent scholar who lives in Shaker Heights, OH

*Revolutionizing the American Romantic Hero: Thoreau's 'Beanfield' as an Exemplum Virtutis."*

Thoreau's adaptation of Emerson's topoi in the "American Scholar" permits him to shape *Walden* as a settlement narrative where the speaker (like the biographical Thoreau) overcomes the limitations of Emersonian idealism by transacting pragmatically in nature rather than relying solely on representative discourse. Thoreau's daily interactions with nature emblemizes Emerson's "Man Thinking" who holds his "office" on Walden Pond; in "Bean-field," Thoreau evokes "the past" or "books" in the social manner of Virgil's *Georgics* or its precursor Hesiod's *Days and Ways* to animate virtuous living through agricultural work.



**Tammy Rose** is a PhD student in Experience Design at Bentley University; this is the 6th presentation she has done for the AG.

*"A Concord Parade"*

It's a Parade Day in Concord, MA and everyone is invited! Join in this live reading and walk along the parade route with all your favorite spirits of Concordians past. Following the roughly 45-minute reading and short walk in Monument Square, will be a discussion of revolution past and present and how ideas of freedom, resistance, justice, and hope resonate across history.



**Jeffrey H. Ryan** is a Maine-based adventurer, author and historian who has been fascinated with Thoreau since age 14, when his mother handed him her childhood copy of *Walden*.

*Building Thoreau's Cabin*

This presentation explores how Jeffrey fulfilled a 50-plus decade dream of building a replica of HDT's cabin in the Maine woods to become his writing studio. He will share his thoughts regarding the goal of self-sufficiency in a modern world and other revelations the project brought to light.



**Matt Schumacher** teaches Writing and Humanities at Clackamas Community College and has published seven collections of poetry.

*The Thoreauvian Sun: Muse, Mythos, and Revolutionary Prime Mover*

This presentation explores Thoreau's prescient and inspiring visions of the sun and stars. I suggest the heavenly spheres in Thoreau's prose and poetry should be considered prime movers of gravitas, sources whose essential firelight illuminates a revolutionary utopian future.



**Elizabeth S. Scofield** is an independent scholar and researcher located in Northern California.

*Henry David Thoreau, Richard Henry Dana Jr., & Manifest Destiny as an aftereffect of the Revolution* This presentation explores the contrast of thought between Henry David Thoreau and Richard Henry Dana Jr. regarding their individual viewpoints on the western enlargement of the United States. Highlighting this contrast will open up new areas of discovery within the literary works of both of these men.



**Ryan Smedberg** is a psychotherapist and school social worker practicing in Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

*Mind and Soul in the Delaware River Valley: A Reading of Thoreau*

This paper explores the implications of Thoreau's revolutionary act of dwelling upon the mind and soul through a personal reflection on my own acquaintance with the Delaware River Valley between New Jersey and Pennsylvania.



**Richard Smith** is a Public Historian who has written or edited eleven books for Applewood Books/Arcadia Publishing.

*Every Humane And Intelligent Inhabitant of Concord; Thoreau's Two Revolutions*

This presentation will explore how the Battle of Concord of April 19, 1775 influenced Henry Thoreau's abolitionist activism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Thoreau couldn't help but compare the events that started the American Revolution with the social and political issues of his day, particularly slavery, and he believed it was his duty as a Concordian to stand up to tyranny and inequality like the Minutemen of 1775.



**Suzanne Smith** is a Lecturer on Engineering Sciences at the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

*Thoreau and the Rhythm of Moral Revolution*

In the natural world, the greatest revolutions are both the least perceptible and the most vital, but is this also true of moral revolution? As Thoreau would have it, we need to learn how to adjust our timing, and develop a moral wisdom entailing a certain rhythm—a rhythm dictating when to speed up and when to slow down, when to arrive and when to leave, in accordance with the revolutions that we but dimly perceive all around us.



**Jym St. Pierre** has worked professionally on conservation for 50 years, most recently as Maine Director of RESTORE: The North Woods and Editor of the Maine Environmental News website.

*Thoreau: Revolutionary Art Muse*

Henry David Thoreau's ideas have long inspired visual artists. This slide talk will illustrate how Thoreau, not just as a deep thinker but also as a revolutionary looker, has been a muse for creative people for generations.



**Catherine Staples** teaches at Villanova University, serves on the board of The Thoreau Society, and has a new collection of poetry, *Vert*.

*Revolution as Change in Consciousness: A Poetry Reading*

Not all revolutions are as visible as militia facing off against British soldiers at the Old North bridge. Through a series of original poems, this reading explores the role of shocks, accidents, and "uncanny wildness" in provoking a change in consciousness--from Thomas Sims, John, and Waldo to Katahdin and Cape Cod.



**Michael Stoneham** is the Chair of Humanities and an Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Pittsburgh Johnstown.

*Using a Spike Maul to Inspire Revolution: Contemplating a Few Strident Provocations in Walden*

This presentation will explore the way in which Thoreau attempts to radicalize his readers by confronting them again and again--indeed provoking them--with the assertion that all too often, they have been "enslaved" by their limited perspectives born of their willing acceptance of roles and self-conceptions that they have not originated. My presentation will focus upon the five sentences that follow Thoreau's oft-repeated assertion about his contemporaries' "lives of quiet desperation" and explore the way in which each sentence pounds the concept of despair into the reader's conscience and causes the attentive reader to pause and consider the hopeless and utterly painful condition that he or she may endure.



**Mark Sturges** is associate professor of English at St. Lawrence University in northern New York.

*A Road Not Taken: Thoreau's Harvard Classmate Horatio Hale and the Anthropological Revolution*

This paper sets Thoreau's ethnological studies alongside those of his Harvard classmate Horatio Hale who made a modest contribution to the nineteenth-century field of Iroquois studies and the modern discipline of cultural anthropology. Hale's studies represent a road that Thoreau's did not take, and this alternative path of a contemporary may help to situate Thoreau's Indian Notebooks more firmly in their historical moment.



**Alireza Taghdarreh**, a devoted reader and translator of Thoreau and Emerson in Iran, bridges American and Persian literary heritage through comparative analysis of their literature. He strives to unite the two poetically, despite decades of political hostilities.

*Thankful in Gulag, Critical at Walden Pond*

From an international perspective, I aim to explore the essence of freedom in Walden, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, and Sa'di's Gulistan, while drawing insights from other Persian poets and mystics. In Solzhenitsyn's novel, the priest expresses gratitude even within the confines of the Gulag, whereas Thoreau, despite acknowledging in Walden that he lives in a 'relatively free country,' remains deeply critical of his own society and culture. At the end of the chapter Economy, Thoreau quotes a story from Sa'di's Gulistan (Rose Garden) to define the meaning of freedom, where the Persian word Azad, meaning 'freedom,' appears three times.



**Robert (Thor) Thorson** is life member of the Thoreau Society, serves on its board, and is a Professor of Earth Sciences at the University of Connecticut.

*The Most Sudden and Greatest Revolution*

This presentation shares Thoreau's understanding that the "most sudden and greatest revolution... that ever takes place in this town" was not the "Concord Fight," but the rapid, dramatic, and even dangerous breakup of river ice on the Concord River. This

annual event signaled the onset of his phenological year, one very different from that of our modern warming world.



**Jack Truman** is the Director of Theatre at Walters State Community College and a 40 year veteran in the entertainment business.

*Thoreau's Role in Later Revolutions*

This presentation explores how Thoreau has impacted modern revolutions. There is a lot going on in the world today, and a lot of modern revolutions have been going on over the last 60 years, with Thoreau's method being a major influence.



**Barry L. Velleman** is Emeritus Professor of Spanish, Marquette University, Milwaukee WI

*Juana Manso and Margaret Fuller: Two Women in the Nineteenth Century*

This session shares reflections on the work of the Argentine writer Juana Paula Manso (1819-1875), her proto-feminist vision in a hostile social environment, and her relationship to Margaret Fuller, whom evidence suggests she met in New York City in April 1846.

These women shared many views on the role of women in education and society, the rise of the Italian Republican movement, the importance of humanitarian organizations, and the search for historical literary and civil heroines.



**Kristina West** is a lecturer in Children's Literature and American Literature at Royal Holloway, University of London, in the UK.

*"It would make your hearts ache, as it has mine": The Alcott family and the sorority of social work*

This presentation will focus on the development of social work as a female activity in Concord's history and Louisa May Alcott's fiction, charting how Abba Alcott's paid and unpaid social work influenced the lives and works of her daughters, but also how helping

others enabled these women to support both other women and themselves in 'the sorority of social work'.



**Dr. Amity Wilczek** is a longtime educator and Thoreau enthusiast who also serves on the Thoreau Farm Trust board of directors.

*"Where the washing is not put out, nor the fire, nor the mistress": Thoreau's Ideals of Domesticity*

In *Walden*, Thoreau elaborated on revolutionary ideas of domestic life alongside his painstaking inventories of his own housekeeping. What were these visions, and how might Thoreau's own varied experiences have influenced the domestic life he endeavored to live?



**Geoff Wisner** is a board member of the Thoreau Society and the editor of *A Year of Birds* (Mercer University Press, 2024) and *George Templeton Strong: Civil War Diaries* (Library of America, 2025).

*Country Mouse and City Mouse at War*

Thoreau's support for the abolition movement is well known, but his urban contemporary George Templeton Strong was also deeply engaged in the issues that drove the Civil War. Though a social and political conservative, Strong was a founder of the patriotic Union League Club and treasurer of the US Sanitary Commission, a precursor of the Red Cross that provided medical services to wounded soldiers.