

## Merged Board of Directors



**Austin Bailey, PhD** (New York, New York) is a Doctoral Lecturer in English at Hunter College, where he teaches courses ranging from first-year writing to 19th-century American literature and literary theory. He was formerly associate co-coordinator of Lehman College's Writing Across the Curriculum program (2020–2024). Austin's research centers on 19-century American literature and philosophy—especially affect theory, new materialism, pragmatism, and process metaphysics. In addition to his literary scholarship, Austin researches composition studies and alternative assessment practices, particularly ungrading, and shares this work through Hunter's ACERT. He also chairs the awards committee for the Emerson Society. **Austin is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board and chairs the Fellowships committee. He would complete this term and be eligible for reelection in 2027.**



**Court Booth, M.Ed.** (Concord, Massachusetts) is an educator, consultant, and community leader whose work centers on leadership development and organizational effectiveness. At Northeastern University's College of Professional Studies, he teaches in the Leadership program and leads courses such as Transforming Organizations. Court also consults with organizations to advance team leadership, communication, strategic planning, and culture. He previously served for more than three decades as Community Education Director for the Concord-Carlisle School District and now works as a Manager at Wachusett Mountain and a trainer with Hale Education. Court holds an M.Ed. in Community Service Education and has represented organizations including Project Adventure, Hale Education, and Outward Bound. A resident of Concord, he served on the Concord and Concord-Carlisle School Committees, serves on the Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council and helped found both Concord-Carlisle Public Access Television and the Thoreau Farm Trust. **Court currently serves as President of Thoreau Farm. He has also been a member of the Thoreau Society-Thoreau Farm working group. Court would serve as co-president of the merged organization until the 2027 election.**



**Lois Brown, PhD** (Tempe, Arizona) is Foundation Professor of English at Arizona State University and director of the university's Center for the Study of Race and Democracy. A graduate of Duke University and of Boston College, she is a public historian, a published scholar and an award-winning teacher of African American literature, history and culture whose groundbreaking research reshapes our understanding of race, class, gender, faith, and place in America. Her publications include *Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins: Black Daughter of the Revolution* (UNC Press, 2008) and the first modern edition of the groundbreaking antebellum biography *Memoir of James Jackson The Attentive and Obedient Scholar* by Susan Paul (Harvard UP, 2000). She worked closely with the Drinking Gourd Project group that preserved the Robbins House in Concord. She has served on two state Humanities Councils and the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center board. She currently serves on the board of the Sedona Arts Center. She has experience in strategic planning, board governance, fund development, and institutional engagement. **Lois is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board and serves on the Fellowships, Education, and Collections Committees. She would complete this term and be eligible for reelection in 2027.**



**Lawrence (Larry) Buell** (Lincoln, Massachusetts) is Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature Emeritus at Harvard University. Considered one of the founders of the ecocriticism movement, he has written and lectured worldwide on Transcendentalism, American studies, and the environmental humanities. He is the author of many books, including *Literary Transcendentalism*, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Invention of American Culture*, *Writing for an Endangered World*, *Emerson*, and *HENRY DAVID THOREAU: Thinking Disobediently*. **Larry serves as a multi-term director on the board of Thoreau Farm. His current term would end and he would rotate off the board in 2027. Larry would then serve in an advisory role.**



**Kristen Case, PhD** (Farmington, Maine) is Executive Director of the Monson Seminar, a tuition-free residential program for low-income college students in an artist residency setting. She is co-editor of *Thoreau at 200* (Cambridge UP, 2016), and a former editor of *The Concord Saunterer*. She was previously a Professor of English at University of Maine, Farmington, where she taught courses in environmental writing and American literature. She has published essays on Thoreau, Dickinson, Frost, and more, and is the author of *American Pragmatism and Poetic Practice: Crosscurrents from Emerson to Susan Howe* (Camden House, 2011) and *Henry David Thoreau's Kalendar: Charts and Observations of Natural Phenomena* (Milkweed, 2025). **Kristen is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board. She chairs the Membership & Development committee. She would complete this term and be eligible for reelection in 2026.**



**Alice de Galzain, PhD** (Paris, France) is a Marie Skłodowska Curie – Seal of Excellence postdoctoral researcher at Sorbonne Université in Paris, France. Her research project centers on the women who lived at Brook Farm and the Fruitlands, aiming to uncover the feminist subculture that existed within these two Transcendentalist utopias. She is currently writing her first monograph, provisionally entitled *Cultivating the Roots of Feminism: Health, Gender, and Reform at Brook Farm and the Fruitlands*. **Alice is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board. She would complete this term and be eligible for reelection in 2028.**



**Molly Eberle** (Concord, Massachusetts) brings extensive experience in fundraising, organizational leadership, and community engagement. A former Director of Development for the Concord Free Public Library Corporation, she has also advanced institutional growth and donor relations at Concord Academy, Wellesley College's Davis Museum, and The Fenn School. Her strategic and collaborative leadership extends to years of board service, including roles with Thoreau School's PTG, the Education Symposium, and the Discovery Museum in Acton. She is a Wellesley College graduate and former member of the English department at Dana Hall School. As former Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Scholarship Fund of Concord and Carlisle—where she has served since 1996—Molly has demonstrated long-term commitment to educational access and civic stewardship. She and her husband, Jeff, raised three children in Concord, their home for more than 40 years. **Molly is a multiple term member on the Thoreau Farm board and serves on the Thoreau Society-Thoreau Farm working group. She would rotate off when her current term expires in 2027.**



**Cristie Ellis, PhD** (Oxford, Mississippi) is Associate Professor of English and Co-Director of Environmental Studies at the University of Mississippi. She is currently Vice President of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE) and has served as the liaison between ASLE and the Thoreau Society since 2016. Her publications on Thoreau have focused on his relation to antebellum racial science (in *Antebellum Posthuman: Race and Materiality in the Mid-Nineteenth Century and Thoreau in Context*), his ecoerotics (in *Dispersion: Thoreau and Vegetal Thought*), and his philosophy of natural history (in the forthcoming Oxford Handbook on Thoreau). When not in Oxford, she and her partner, two young kids, and aging pitbull can be found on the farm in Charlemont, MA where her mother grew up. **Cristie is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board, serves on the Annual Gathering Committee, and is liaison to ASLE. She would complete her current term and be eligible for reelection in 2027.**



**David H. Gordon, PhD.** (Baltimore, Maryland) is Associate Teaching Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University Maryland, specializing in the History of Philosophy, Environmental Philosophy, Applied Ethics, and the relationship between science and religion. He wrote his master's thesis on Emerson, Thoreau, Muir, and the Deep Ecologists. He is the author of *The Implications of Evolution for Metaphysics: Theism, Idealism, and Naturalism*, and co-editor with Marc Jolley of a forthcoming anthology of essays on Thoreau and Philosophy. He grew up in Chicago but spent summers at a family cabin on a lake in the north woods of Wisconsin. For this reason, he has never felt Thoreau needed justifying. The value of a life lived in nature has always been self-evident to him. He would like to continue

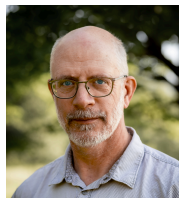
in the tradition of Henry to preserve wild spaces. **David is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board and serves as Clerk. He would complete his term and be eligible for reelection in 2027.**



**Don Jewler, MA** (Tysons, Virginia) spent nearly twenty years as Director of Communications at the Association of Community Cancer Centers in Rockville, Maryland, and as medical writer and Managing Editor of *Oncology Issues*. Previously, he taught English at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf in Washington, D.C. His appreciation for Thoreau deepened in the Maine Woods during a week-long canoe trip on the West Branch of the Penobscot River. Don is a long-time member of the Thoreau Society and is currently a Thoreau Society Board member. **Don is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board and serves as Chair of the Communications Committee. He would complete this term and be eligible for reelection in 2027.**



**Marc Jolley, PhD** (Macon, Georgia) is Director of Mercer University Press and Senior Lecturer in Philosophy and Great Books at Mercer University. He received his PhD in 1993 in Hebrew Wisdom Literature. He has taught as an adjunct at four institutions of higher learning and has been in academic publishing for nearly thirty-four years. In publishing, he has contributed to the publication of more than 1,100 books in various fields such as philosophy, history, religion, literary criticism, fiction, poetry, and regional studies. His interest in Thoreau began in the mid-'80s in a philosophy class at the University of Louisville when a professor suggested he read Emerson and Thoreau. Thoreau as “a mystic—a transcendentalist—and a natural philosopher” has been his primary focus as he is most interested in how the “marriage of the soul with nature” was manifested in Thoreau’s life and can be so in his own. Most importantly, he continues to explore how Thoreau used this idea in reply to the Socratic question of “how to live a life.” **Marc is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board and serves on the Finance and Publications Committees. He would complete his term and be eligible for reelection in 2028.**



**John J. Kucich, PhD** (Maynard, Massachusetts) is a professor of English at Bridgewater State University. He has been an avid reader of Thoreau since encountering *Walden* in a high school English class, an experience that nudged him towards a career of teaching and a life-long effort to live a bit more deliberately in a world that is full of not-so-quiet desperation. After earning a BA in English and history at Williams College and an MAT at Brown University, he taught high school in Connecticut at a school for learning-disabled students. He then earned a Ph.D. in English at Tufts University and, since 2003, has taught American literature and English Education at Bridgewater State University – the alma mater of Walter Harding. He currently lives in Maynard, Massachusetts (seven miles from Walden Pond) with his wife, Monica; they have two adult sons. Kucich’s publications include *Ghostly Communion: Cross-Cultural Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Dartmouth College Press, 2004), the edited collection *Rediscovering the Maine Woods: Thoreau’s Legacy in an Unsettled Land* (UMass Press, 2019), and *Unsettling Thoreau: Native Americans, Settler Colonialism, and the Power of Place* (UMass Press, 2024). His work over the past fifteen years has focused on the intersections between European and Native American cultures in the 18th and 19th centuries. More recently, he has examined how Thoreau’s writing grapples with the legacy of colonization in a landscape he saw as his own native ground – a problem that occupied his whole writing life and that he never fully resolved. Kucich has pursued this topic while getting more and more involved in the community of Thoreau scholars and enthusiasts. He participated in the Thoreau-Wabanaki 150th Anniversary canoe tour and several other forays into the Maine Woods with fellow Thoreauvians, edited the *Concord Saunterer* for five years, and has served on the Thoreau Society Board of Directors since 2021. This work has given him a deep impression of the power of Thoreau’s legacy to spark rich conversations about the most pressing issues of our time and his ability to drive real change, both in individual readers and the world at large. He is grateful for the kind and wise mentorship from long-time members of the Thoreau community and excited to move their work forward. **John currently serves as president of the Thoreau Society. He has also been a member of the Thoreau Society-Thoreau Farm working group. John would serve as co-president of the merged organization until the 2027 election.**





**Nancy McJennett** (Concord, Massachusetts) Nancy is the former content and marketing manager for New Leaf Project Management, a project-management training and consulting firm in Concord, MA. Previously, she was a college textbook designer for many Boston-area publishers. Her Concord volunteer experience includes 2 terms on the School Committee, 10 years on the Friends of the Library board, 2 years on the Library Committee, and 11 years as a Girl Scout leader. She also serves as treasurer and newsletter editor for the Concord Housing Foundation, a non-profit that supports affordable housing, since 2001. Nancy and her husband Jack Nevison have lived in Concord since 1979. Their 2 daughters are products of Concord's public schools and write for a living. Nancy and Jack live on Thoreau Street. Nancy's sister Linda lives on Walden Street in Cambridge. It was therefore fated that Nancy would join the effort to preserve Henry's birthplace. She is a graduate of Wellesley College with a BA in Art History. **Nancy is a multiple term member on the Thoreau Farm board. She would rotate off when her current term expires in 2028.**



**Nicole Palmer** (Concord, Massachusetts) brings more than two decades of professional experience in geriatric care and a lifelong passion for Thoreauvian values to her nonprofit leadership. A Concord resident deeply rooted in her community, she combines her expertise as a Geriatric Consultant—focused on holistic, nature-based approaches to well-being—with a strong record of advocacy and creative problem-solving. A current board member of the Thoreau Farm Trust since 2021 and longtime member of the Thoreau Society, Nicole has contributed actively to fundraising, event programming, and hands-on projects that sustain the organization's mission. Her warmth, resourcefulness, and commitment to community make her a thoughtful and dedicated addition to our board. She lives in Concord near Great Meadows with her son Morgan, daughter Olivia, and her dog Nina. She has spent the last half of her life renovating old houses. With a love for the poetry of Mary Oliver, she is naturally drawn to “all things Henry.” **Nicole has served on the board of Thoreau Farm since 2021. Her current term expires in 2027.**



**Beverly D. Pittman, PhD** (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) is a Health & Wellness professional and a former Professor of Health and Wellness with a strong background in health care finance, strategic planning, and organizational development. In her first post-PhD position, she taught in a large rural community that afforded her the opportunity to live in the woods for three years, thus following in Thoreau's footsteps. While teaching, she often used his quotes to motivate her students to live more holistic lives. She left academia in 2018 and ventured out on her own to begin her dream of implementing culturally-based preventive health promotion for the African American community. She sees this work as, again, following in Thoreau's footsteps as she continues to put the foundation under the castle that she has built in the air. **Beverly is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board and serves on the Annual Gathering Committee. She has also been a member of the Thoreau Society-Thoreau Farm working group. She would complete her term and be eligible for reelection in 2026.**



**Michael Schleifer** (Kauneonga Lake, New York) is a practicing CPA/tax consultant and a retired lecturer/undergraduate advisor in Accounting and Economics at Hunter College (CUNY, 1986 to 2018). His background in finance and intimate knowledge of the Society's finances are important assets as we continue to improve our financial stability. Before retiring in 2018, Michael was a lecturer and academic advisor in Accounting and Economics at Hunter College for 32 years. He continues to operate a small accounting practice focusing on individual tax and financial planning. In his spare time he serves on the audit committee of a non-profit land conservation trust in New York. Michael and his wife divide their time between Kauneonga Lake and Brooklyn, New York (and, of course, Concord!). **Michael is a (mumbles) term director on the Thoreau Society board, is a past president and current treasurer. He also has also been a member of the Thoreau Society-Thoreau Farm working group. He would complete his current term as treasurer in 2027.**





**Catherine Staples** (Devon, Pennsylvania) is a poet and teacher. She is the author of three collections of poetry: *Vert* (Mercer University Press, 2024), *The Rattling Window* (Ashland Poetry Press, 2013), and *Never a Note Forfeit* (Seven Kitchens Press, 2011). Catherine grew up in New England and it's there, in *Vert*, that the loss of her brother plays out as a quest across space and time: from a rusty weathervane atop the first Madison Square Garden to the tracks of skates on frozen rivers. Thoreau's narrative echoes and enlarges hers, as do poems featuring Emerson, Sophia Hawthorne, Henry Beston, and the Concord river. Her poems have appeared in the *Academy of American Poets*, *Copper Nickle*, *Kenyon Review*, *Poetry*, *The Southern Review*, *The Yale Review*, and others. Honors include the Guy Owen Prize, the McGovern Prize, a Walter Dakin Fellowship, and residencies at the Tyrone Guthrie Center in Annaghmakerrig. Catherine teaches in the Honors and English programs at Villanova University. Her nature writing workshop is taught out-of-doors; students read and write in the good company of trees, inspired by the likes of Thoreau, Shepherd, Heaney, Kimmerer, T. K. Smith, and Macfarlane. **Catherine is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board and chairs the Publications committee. She is also a member of the Thoreau Prize committee and served early on the Thoreau Society-Thoreau Farm working group. She would complete her term and be eligible for reelection in 2026.**



**Mark Sturges** (Canton, New York) is Associate Professor of English at St. Lawrence University in northern New York, where he teaches a variety of courses in American literature and environmental literature as well as a creative writing class in the college's Adirondack Semester. His research focuses broadly on early American environmental writing and has resulted in past publications about the rhetoric of agricultural reform, the poetry of sheep farming, the cultural history of maple sugaring, and the climate narratives of tuberculosis health-seekers in the Adirondacks. Time and again, Mark finds himself returning to Thoreau's writings to explore whatever topic in cultural history currently has his attention—see, for instance, his study of Thoreau and nineteenth-century maple culture (*ESQ*, 2017) or his article about Thoreau's natural health philosophy (*Concord Saunterer*, 2023). He is currently investigating Thoreau's engagement (if any) with key figures in the emerging field of nineteenth-century Iroquois studies. He values the public humanities work of the Thoreau Society and especially loves how the society's programs make a space for scholars, creative writers, local historians, artists, and enthusiasts to converse—and geek out!—about the living legacies of Thoreau and his contemporaries. **Mark is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board and serves on the Education committee and the Annual Gathering committee. He would complete his term and be eligible for reelection in 2028.**



**Robert (Thor) Thorson** (Storrs, Connecticut) is a Midwestern native turned Northwestern geologist turned Northeastern academic. His immersion into the works of Henry D. Thoreau during the tumult of the late 1960s and early 1970s gave him a model to live by. A Professor of Geosciences at the University of Connecticut, he juggles teaching, scholarship, and service. Visiting scholarly appointments include Harvard University (American Studies), Universidad Tecnica de Santa Maria, Valparaiso, Chile (Civil Engineering), Dartmouth College (Geography), and Yale University (History). His pedestrian commute — being able to walk through the woods around a pond and upon a fieldstone wall to reach his lab and office at a research university — is an example of living deliberately. The last four of his seven books involve *Thoreau Studies: The Guide to Walden Pond*; *The Boatman: Henry David Thoreau's River Years*; *Walden's Shore: Henry David Thoreau and Nineteenth Century Science*; and *Beyond Walden: The Hidden History of America's Kettle Lakes and Ponds*. He is a father to four children and grandfather of three. His hobbies are reading, writing, walking, and cooking. **Thor is a second-term director on the Thoreau Society board and chairs the Committee for Nominations & Elections. He would complete this term and rotate off the board in 2028.**



**Chrissa Ventrelle** (Fairfield, Connecticut) is the Director of Philanthropy for the Catholic Charities of Fairfield County. She has extensive experience as a nonprofit executive, board member, fundraiser, funder, and volunteer. Her career spans leadership roles in the San Francisco Bay Area and Las Vegas, with a focus on strengthening regional nonprofit organizations. In addition to her nonprofit work, Chrissa is the author of two books of spiritual meditations and poetry, *May It Be: Growing a Genuine Life* and *What Nature Knows*. She is also part of the

Spiritual Direction Formation Program at Fairfield University's Murphy Center. Her volunteer work includes serving on the Board of Directors for The Connecticut Audubon Society Fairfield Region in Fairfield, CT. Chrissa graduated with a BA in Economics from the University of Notre Dame and holds a Master of Public Policy from the University of Michigan. **Chrissa is a first-term member of the Thoreau Farm board. She would complete this term and be eligible for reelection in 2026.**



**Dr. Amity Wilczek** (Concord, Massachusetts) is an evolutionary ecologist whose role as an educator and researcher has been shaped by attention to place, history, and student experience. Her teaching career started at Harvard and Brown before transitioning to Deep Springs College, where she served as Herbert Reich Chair of Natural Sciences, Academic Dean, and Vice President. Her work on plant responses to changing environments has appeared in *Science*, *PNAS*, *Ecology*, *American Naturalist*, and *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. Amity serves as trail steward of the

Emerson-Thoreau Amble for the town. **Amity is a first-term member of the Thoreau Farm board. She would complete this term and be eligible for reelection in 2028.**



**Lydia Willsky-Ciollo** (Hamden, Connecticut) is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of American Studies at Fairfield University. She is an American Religious Historian specializing in the 19th century with a focus on the religious thought of Unitarianism and Transcendentalism. She is author of *American Unitarianism and the Protestant Dilemma: The Conundrum of Biblical Authority* (Lexington Books, 2015). Her book, *Wildness: Henry David Thoreau and the Making of an American Theology*, is forthcoming from the University of Notre

Dame Press in March 2026. She has frequently presented on Thoreau at conferences for the American Academy of Religion, the American Society of Church History, and the Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society. She was also fortunate enough to participate in the 2022 NEH Summer Institute on "Transcendentalism in the Age of Reform." **Lydia is a first-term director on the Thoreau Society board. Previously, Lydia served as an elected member of the Thoreau Society Committee on Nominations and Elections and she now continues on that Committee as a board appointed member. She would complete this term and be eligible for reelection in 2028.**