

# 2023 SUMMER SCHEDULE

LECTURES  
DISTINGUISHED VISITING  
SPEAKERS

SATELLITE  
PROGRAMMING

JEFFERSON  
EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

3207 STATE STREET  
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA  
814.459.8000  
[JESerie.org](http://JESerie.org)

# 2023 Summer Schedule

All programs are held at times scheduled at the Jefferson Educational Society,  
3207 State Street, Erie, PA. For more information or to register, call 814.459.8000  
or visit [www.JESErie.org](http://www.JESErie.org).  
**SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

## Lectures, Panel Discussions, and Distinguished Visiting Speaker Events

When	What	Who	Program Type
Thursday, June 29 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Democratizing and Diversifying Philanthropy Through the Power of Collective Giving</b>	Sara Lomelin, B.A. *	Free Lecture In Partnership with the Erie Community Foundation
Monday, July 10 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Erie Troops at Gettysburg: 160 Years Later</b>	George Deutsch, B.A.	Lecture
Tuesday, July 11 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Thank God for Jimmy Carter</b>	Rev. Charles Brock, M.Litt.	Brock Institute Lecture
Wednesday July 19 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>The Complicated Saga of Downtown Erie's Transitway Mall</b>	Ed Whitbred, B.S.	Free Lecture
Tuesday, July 20 6:00 p.m. Reception 7 to 8:30 p.m. Lecture	<b>New Americans: Demographic Trends and Immigration Patterns in Erie, PA</b>	Baher Ghosheh, Ph.D.	Free Lecture Reception and Book Signing
Tuesday, July 25 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>A Tribute to Erie Civic Leader, William "Bill" Sennett</b>	David Frew, Ph.D.	Free Lecture
Thursday, July 27 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Music of the American Revolution</b>	David Hildebrand, Ph.D. * Ginger Hildebrand, M.M. *	Music / Lecture
Tuesday, August 1 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Ecology of the Grizzly Bears of Yellowstone National Park</b>	Steven Ropski, Ph.D.	Lecture
Monday, August 7 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b><i>American Ending</i>: Old Believers Immigrants in Appalachia and Erie</b>	Mary Kay Zuravleff, M.A. *	Free Lecture Book Signing
Monday, August 14 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>The Disappearance of the Marquette and Bessemer No. 2 Vessels</b>	Carrie Sowden, M.A. *	Free Hagen History Center Lecture
Tuesday, August 15 7 to 8:30 p.m.	<b>Erie Solidarity: Challenges for a Community Renaissance</b>	Philip S. English, B.A.	Free Lecture
Friday, August 18 4 to 5:00 p.m.	<b>The Power of Play: Enriching Children's Lives through Play-based Learning</b>	Ainslie Brosig, B.S.	Community Conversation Free JES event @ Celebrate Erie
Saturday, August 19 4 to 5:00 p.m.	<b>Landmark: Erie's Bicentennial Tower</b>	Lou Richards, M.A.	Video Screening & Discussion Free JES event @ Celebrate Erie

\*Denotes Visiting Lecturer from outside the Erie community.

## More than 80% of programs are FREE!

### Covid-19 policy:

The JES will continue to monitor the Erie County COVID-19 community levels to ensure the safety of our members. If you or a member of your party are sneezing, coughing, running a fever or generally unwell, please stay home and visit the Jefferson on a day when you all are feeling better in the future. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or longer. The Jefferson Educational Society of Erie cannot guarantee that any visitor will not contract COVID-19 while on its premises. By visiting the JES and its satellite locations, all visitors voluntarily assume all risks related to COVID-19 exposure and accept and agree to abide by the terms and conditions, posted signage, and verbal instructions. To review the JES's entire Covid-19 policy and any changes, please visit [www.jeserie.org](http://www.jeserie.org).

*The views and opinions expressed in the program descriptions and during the events are those of the presenter(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Jefferson Educational Society or its employees.*

ECGRA GRANT MONEY WORKS HERE!  
[ecgra.org](http://ecgra.org) 814-897-2690



# Jefferson Satellite Programming



East Erie - Erie Center for Arts & Technology (ECAT)			
When (Thursdays)	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
June 22 7:00 p.m.	<b>A. Phillip Randolph Institute: How a Labor Union is Working to Get More Minority Workers into the Trades</b>	DeWitt Walton	Distinguished Visiting Speaker
July 13 7:00 p.m.	<b>From Erie to Broadway: A Local Writer's Journey and Lessons Learned</b>	Lenore Skomal, M.A.	Visiting Speaker
July 27 7:00 p.m.	<b>What is Afrocentrism? - A Look at World History through a Different Lens</b>	Parris Baker, Ph.D.	Community Conversation
August 3 7:00 p.m.	<b>Poverty in Erie: Understanding the Data Behind the Problem</b>	Ken Louie, Ph.D.	Community Conversation
August 24 7:00 p.m.	<b>Blaze with the Glory of Fathers &amp; Sons: The Folly &amp; Promise of Black Masculinity</b>	Rhonda Matthews, Ph.D., Parris Baker, Ph.D.; Antonio Howard, Adrienne Dixon, Ph.D.	Panel Discussion
Fairview – Lincoln Community Library			
When (Mondays)	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
July 17 6:00 p.m.	<b>Guide to Local Archaeology</b>	John Sites	Lecture
July 24 6:00 p.m.	<b>Is the Lake Erie Yellow Perch Heading Toward Extinction?</b>	David Frew, Ph.D.	Lecture
August 14 6:00 p.m.	<b>The History of Black Labor Unions in America</b>	Paul Gambill, M.A.	Lecture
August 28 6:00 p.m.	<b>A Wealth of Resources: How to get the Most out of Your Public Library Experience</b>	Colleen Donaldson, BFA	Community Conversation
Corry - Corry Higher Education Council			
When (Tuesdays)	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
June 13 6:00 p.m.	<b>Corry RAILS: History to Present-Day</b>	Tom VanTassel and Carl Wassink, A.E.	Community Conversation
July 18 6:00 p.m.	<b>Marquis de Lafayette's Visit to Northwestern PA 200 Years Ago</b>	Judy Lynch, Ph.D.	Lecture
August 22 6:00 p.m.	<b>Exploring Resource Management at Presque Isle State Park</b>	PA Dept. Of Conservation and Natural Resources	Community Conversation
Harborcreek - Harborcreek Township Building			
When (Wednesdays)	What	Who	Program Type (All free)
June 28 6:00 p.m.	<b>The Future of Harborcreek Township</b>	Harborcreek Board of Supervisors	Community Conversation
July 5 6:00 p.m.	<b>Harborcreek Historical Society: A Collection of History</b>	Melinda Meyer, MBA	Community Conversation
August 9 6:00 p.m.	<b>America in 1968: The Far Side of the Moon &amp; the Birth of the Culture Wars</b>	Andrew Roth, Ph.D.	Lecture
August 30 6:00 p.m.	<b>Nimitz, Halsey &amp; Spruance – The Admirals Who Won the Pacific War</b>	Mark Squeglia, B.A.	Lecture

## Distinguished Visiting Speakers

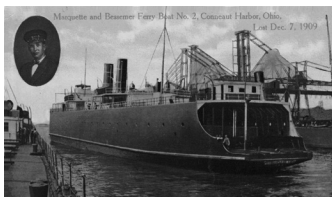
Bryan Patrick Photography



**Democratizing and Diversifying  
Philanthropy Through the Power of  
Collective Giving**  
**Sara Lomelin, B.A.**  
Thursday, June 29  
7 to 8:30 p.m.



**Music of the American Revolution**  
**David Hildebrand, Ph.D.**  
**Ginger Hildebrand, M.M.**  
Thursday, July 27  
7 to 8:30 p.m.



**The Disappearance of the Marquette and Bessemer No. 2 Vessels**  
**Carrie Sowden, M.A.**  
Monday, August 14  
7 to 8:30 p.m.

## Breakdown of Program Costs (unless otherwise noted):

**Lectures:** \$10/person; \$15 with a guest

**Visiting Speaker Lectures:** \$15/person; \$25 with a guest

**Community Conversations:** Free, lunch optional \$5/person

**Lecture Series and Courses:** \$50/person; \$75 with a guest

All Jefferson Programming is free to all Erie County students with advanced registration and proof of enrollment.

A \$1 service charge will be applied to each transaction. Payments must be made at registration. Visa, MasterCard, AMEX, and Discover accepted. Cash payments are no longer accepted by the Jefferson. The Jefferson Educational Society no longer accepts cash as form of payment for events.

Act 48 hours for the Erie Catholic Diocese, Erie Day School, Erie School District, Corry, Fort LeBoeuf, Girard, Harbor Creek, and Wattsburg teachers apply to ALL programs at no additional cost.

Programs at the Jefferson Educational Society will take place at 3207 State Street, Erie, PA 16508.

**Jefferson Satellite Programming** during the Summer Term will be held at the Erie Center for Arts and Culture (ECAT, 650 East Ave, Ada Lawrence Community Room, Erie, PA 16503), Corry Higher Education Council (221 N Center St, Corry, PA 16407), the Lincoln Community Center Library (1255 Manchester Road, Erie, PA 16505), PennWest University Edinboro, William P. Alexander Music Center (110 Kiltie Rd., Edinboro, PA 16444), and Harborcreek Township Building (5601 Buffalo Rd., Harborcreek, PA 16421). All Jefferson Satellite Programs are free and open to the public.

For full program descriptions, please visit [www.jeserie.org](http://www.jeserie.org), where advanced registration can be made. Registrations can also be made by calling 814.459.8000 or by visiting the Jefferson at 3207 State St., Erie, PA 16508.

## JES LECTURER BIOGRAPHIES

**Parris J. Baker, PhD., MSSA**, Associate Professor & Director, Social Work, Mortuary Science, and Gerontology Programs, Department of Criminal Justice & Social Work, Gannon University. He received his undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees in social work from Gannon University, Case Western Reserve University, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, and the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work respectively. In 2011 Dr. Baker became the first African American tenured professor at Gannon University. He most recently became Jefferson Education Society Scholar-In-Residence and Harry T. Burleigh & Beyond Fellow.

**Rev. Charles Brock, M.Litt.**, is director of the Brock Institute for Mega Issues Education at the Jefferson Educational Society. An Erie native, Rev. Brock is an emeritus fellow, chaplain, and director of Ministerial Education at Mansfield College, Oxford, UK, where he taught for 35 years. In addition to being a founding member of the Jefferson and serving as Secretary of the Jefferson Board of Trustees, Rev. Brock is acting minister of The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Girard.

**Ainslie Brosig, B.S.**, has been the Executive Director of the expERIENCE Children's Museum in Erie PA since 2013. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communications and Media Studies from Penn State Behrend College and has been well known for her work in the non-profit sector for over 20 years. Under Ainslie's leadership, the Children's Museum has seen tremendous growth. Museum attendance has doubled, and membership has tripled. She is currently overseeing the \$18 million dollar expansion and renovation project - the largest Capital Campaign for an organization of its size in Erie County.

**George Deutsch, B.A.**, retired Executive Director of the Hagen History Center (Erie County Historical Society), has co-founded several historical organizations related to the Civil War and the War of 1812 in his hometown of Erie. Mr. Deutsch was a co-founder of the Flagship Niagara League, which played a central role in reconstructing the U.S. Brig Niagara and creating the Erie Maritime Museum. He annually teaches history courses at Chautauqua Institution near Mayville, N.Y., and for 30 years has given numerous presentations on Civil War history across seven states and Washington, D.C. He has been published in numerous journals and served as a consultant to National Geographic magazine for its Civil War sesquicentennial issue. He earned a degree in history from Mercyhurst University and was also educated at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

**Adrienne Dixon, Ph.D.**, is president and CEO of Sarah A. Reed Children's Center and teaches in the Counseling Program at PennWest Edinboro University. Adrienne holds a master's degree in counseling, a post-master's Certificate in Marital and Family Therapy, and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. Adrienne has more than 35 years of clinical experience as a professional counselor, educator, and administrator. Her area of focus has been on Serious Mental Illness (children, families, and adults) and includes settings such as inpatient, residential treatment, drug and alcohol, and outpatient services. Additionally, she conducts professional training and workshops for organizations in the areas of Diversity, Organizational Competence, Clinical Interventions, Strengths Based Assessment, Supervision, and Enhanced Mental Health Services.

**Colleen Murray-Donaldson, BFA**, began her journey with the Erie County Public Library in 2019 as the branch manager for the Lincoln Community Center Library. Colleen is a graduate of Edinboro University and has completed some graduate level classes at the University of Pittsburgh. She grew up in Erie in a working class family. She attributes her success from her parent's strong work ethic and their focus on having higher education. She is the first generation in her family to go to college. Colleen was just finishing up her degree in Fine Arts when her future mentor offered her a job in early childhood education. Falling in love with education, she extended her time at Edinboro University to include teacher certification and graduated with honors in 2000. She strongly believes that it is her many life experiences that have brought her here to serve the community through the library. She believes that life offers the best education, if one is open to really paying attention, which takes compassion and understanding. Most of her biggest life lessons have come from the many adventures that she and her spouse have had including raising a family.



**Phil English, B.A.**, is Co-Chairman of the Government Relations Practice Group at ArentFox Schiff LLP, and associated with the firm's Taxation, Trade, Health Care and International practices. An Erie resident, he is a former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Phil is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania in Political Science, where he recently served as Visiting Fellow.

**David Frew, Ph.D.**, a prolific author and historian, is an emeritus professor at Gannon University, where he held a variety of administrative positions during a 33-year career. He is also emeritus director of the Erie County Historical Society and is president of his own management consulting business. Dr. Frew has written or co-written 40 books, most recently "Accidental Paradise: A 13,000-Year History of Presque Isle," and more than 100 articles, cases, and papers. His work has appeared in publications ranging from refereed journals such as the Journal of Applied Psychology to popular magazines such as Sail Magazine and Cruising World. Growing up on Erie's lower west side as a proud Bay Rat, Dr. Frew was known to join neighborhood kids playing and marauding along the west bayfront. He has written for years about his beloved Presque Isle and his adventures on the Great Lakes. In the "On the Waterfront Series" for the JES, the scholar-in-residence takes note of life in and around the water.

**Paul Gambill, M.A.**, is a member of the Jefferson Educational Society's Board of Trustees and has been serving as a trustee since 2015. He is a Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence who helped develop the JES satellite programs at ECTA. Prior to joining the Jefferson Board, he also served as Chair of the SEIU Local 668 Civil & Human Rights Committee from 2010-2015. For the past 10 years, he has been working as a Community Resource Specialist for the government, and retired after 16 years of working as a Juvenile Counselor at the Erie County Edmund Thomas Adolescent Center. Paul Gambill received his Master's in Administration of Justice from Mercyhurst College.

**Dr. Baher Ghosheh, Ph.D.**, is a scholar-in-residence at the Jefferson Educational Society in Erie, Pennsylvania. An expert in Middle Eastern Studies, he holds a Ph.D. in Economic Development from SUNY-Buffalo and was a Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, cultural and economic Geography at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania until retiring in 2022. He has graduate degrees in International Relations/Middle Eastern Studies, International Trade, and Comparative Economic Development. A native of Jerusalem, Dr. Ghosheh has lived in eight countries, traveled to 59 countries, and has taught in Japan, China, Russia, Italy, and Morocco. He was awarded a Fulbright to conduct research in Malaysia and Singapore and was selected as the Pennsylvania Geographer of the Year and Edinboro University's Educator of the Year.

**David and Ginger Hildebrand** are professional performers, teachers, and recording artists. They specialize in early American music, having co-founded and for more than 20 years directed the Colonial Music Institute, which is now under the auspices of George Washington's Mount Vernon. Their soundtrack work includes the PBS film Rediscovering George Washington, and Anthem- The Story of the Star-Spangled Banner. Ginger holds an M.M. in guitar performance from the Peabody Conservatory; David's M.A. and Ph.D., both in musicology, are from George Washington University and Catholic University. Ginger teaches privately at the Key School and Severn School, and David is on the faculty at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore.

**Antonio Howard** (Peggy's son) is an autodidactic artist, muralist, and paralegal for the public defender's office. At 15 he was incarcerated and sentenced to life in prison, where he served 26 ½ years. While in prison, he educated himself through instructional books on the concepts and processes of visual art, thus dubbing himself a "shelf-taught artist." He is a proud American Bar Endowment Pardon Fellow and organizing member of the Erie County Pardon Project, a project created to assist qualified ex-offenders (and their families) in the Erie community with navigating the pardon process. He is the 2019 recipient of Erie Arts & Culture's Emerging Artist Fellowship and a 2021 Teaching Artist through Erie Arts & Culture. He is the author of three self-published books including "When A Child is Worth More Than The Worst Mistake He Ever Made: A Juvenile Lifer Story."

**Sara Lomelin, B.A.**, is a connector of people and ideas, a relationship builder and a firm believer that everyone can be a philanthropist. A self-proclaimed philanthropy disruptor, Sara has traveled the world speaking about the power of collective giving at high-

profile conferences and events, including TED 2022 where she delivered her talk, "Your Invitation to Disrupt Philanthropy." As founding CEO of Philanthropy Together, Sara is growing a movement of people-powered philanthropy to resource grassroots nonprofits, shift power dynamics and promote widespread philanthropy. Prior to Philanthropy Together, Sara served as Senior Director of Leadership Philanthropy at Opportunity Fund, now Accion Opportunity Fund, the largest nonprofit small business lender in the US. Previously at the Latino Community Foundation, Sara served as VP of Philanthropy for eight years and created the Latino Giving Circle Network™—the largest network of Latinx philanthropists in the US with 22 circles and 500 members. She currently serves on the National Council of the Women's Philanthropy Institute at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and the Board of Directors of GivingTuesday and Battery Powered.

**Kenneth Louie, Ph.D.**, is Director of the Economic Research Institute of Erie (E.R.I.E.) and Associate Professor of Economics in the Black School of Business at Penn State Behrend. He received his B.A. in Economics from Northwestern University and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His areas of specialization are macroeconomics, international economics, the economics of labor markets, and the economy of China. As director of ERIE, Dr. Louie has provided analysis and commentary on issues related to the Erie economy for local and national news media.

**Judith Lynch, Ph.D.**, has been a board member of the Jefferson Educational Society since its inception and served as its first chairwoman. She is the Jefferson's Decadian Scholar and continues to serve as a scholar-in-residence. From 2004 to 2017, Dr. Lynch served as Associate Professor of Political Science and History at Mercyhurst University, and from 2002 to 2004, she taught at Allegheny College and was part of the Civic Engagement Institute. Prior, she worked as an analyst for the CIA and served for 20 years as Erie County executive, the county's top elected official. She received her Doctorate with Distinction in Political Science in 2001 from the University of Pittsburgh and her M.A. in Social Studies from Gannon University. Her undergraduate degree, a B.A. in History and Political Science, is from George Washington University.

**Rhonda Matthews, Ph.D.**, is an associate professor of political science and women's studies in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice at PennWest Edinboro University. Rhonda has been with the university since 2002 and served as the director of the Dr. Robert C. Weber Honors Program for three years. Prior to her work at Edinboro, she taught at other institutions and worked in the fields of diversity affairs and residence life. Rhonda is dedicated to the advocacy and empowerment of women and children as a result of her previous work as a sexual assault survivor counselor. Using tenets of intersectional analysis, her primary areas of academic interest include gender and women's studies, sociological theory, popular culture, and stratification.

**Melinda Meyer, M.B.A.**, is an experienced public historian, educator, project consultant, grant writer and nonprofit administrator. As a public historian, she consistently pursues avenues to share local history with all audiences. Ms. Meyer has also taught museum studies and historic preservation undergraduate courses at Mercyhurst University. She currently serves as a grant writer at the Erie County Department of Planning & Community Development.

**Stephen S. Oler**, was elected to the position of Harborcreek Township Supervisor in 2019. He is charged with the civic duty of providing sound fiscal management of the township in addition to securing the health, safety and welfare of its citizens. His responsibilities include the general governance of the township and execution of the legislative, executive and administrative powers. Specifically, his duties include Superintendent of Code Enforcement, Parks & Recreation and Public Works. Steve served Five (5) years in the United States Navy at the Fleet & Mine Warfare Center and aboard the USS John Hancock (DD-981) prior to his election. Steve was honorably discharged in 1985. He then served as a Trooper with the Pennsylvania State Police in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania before retiring in 2017.

**Dean Pepicello, B.A.**, is a 1985 Graduate of Harbor Creek High School, and has been serving as a Harborcreek Township Supervisor since 2006. He earned his After graduating from Harborcreek high school, Pepicello went on to earn his B.A. in Communications from Edinboro University. He is a former radio talk show host on Jet 1400, and is currently a Public Address Announcer for the Erie Otters and Erie Seawolves.

**Patrick (Lou) Richards, M.A.**, is the owner of L.R. Production, a studio dedicated to making important documentary films about Erie's rich history. He produced and directed the recent documentary *Landmark: Erie's Bicentennial Tower* that is appearing in WQLN PBS's series "Iconic America: Our Symbols and Stories with David Rubenstein". He has been an award-winning Television Producer and Director for almost 50 years. In the 70s and 80s, Lou worked for WQLN-TV and WICU-TV as Producer, Director, Cinematographer, Videographer, and Lighting Director. Lou taught Video Studies at Allegheny College and has a master's degree from Penn State University.

**Steven Ropski, Ph.D.**, is a graduate of Gannon College(78) with a degree in Biology and teaching certification in high school Biology. He then taught high school Biology at Elk County Christian High School in St. Mary's, Pa for one year. He spent 1979-84 at Indiana State University getting his doctorate in Ecology while studying hibernation in the Meadow Jumping Mouse...and met Ms. Ropski who also teaches at Gannon! Dr. Ropski has been back at his alma mater since 1984. His hobbies include being a referee for college and high school soccer and participating in shows at the Erie Playhouse. He also works for a local Murder Mystery company and does dinner theatre for them and is the proud dad of daughter Meg who is a vet and son Nathaniel who works in admissions at the University of Maryland. He passes the winters in Erie by being a devoted Erie Otters hockey fan and cross-country skiing while biking and kayaking in the summer.

**Andrew Roth, Ph.D.**, has been working in the higher education sector for 49 years, and his experience is global. Beginning at Gannon University and then Mercyhurst University, he was a faculty member in three departments: English, Communications, and Business; as a coach he founded Mercyhurst's women's soccer team; and for more than 20 years, he was a senior administrator: Director of Admissions, Vice President for Enrollment, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Dean of the College. He served as President of Notre Dame College from 2003 to 2014 before being named President-Emeritus. After a brief retirement, he served as interim President of St. Bonaventure University during 2016-2017. He is now a scholar-in-residence at the Jefferson Educational Society, where he directs its Raimy Fellows Program as part of the Jefferson Civic Leadership Academy and presents frequently on American cultural issues. He is also author of the Jefferson's popular "Book Notes" series.

**John C. Sites** is originally from the town of Royersford, Montgomery Co., PA, and moved to Cambridge Springs in 1987. He retired in 2017 with 2 years in serving in the Military Police and 45 years working for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. As an amateur archaeologist, Sites has decades worth of experience collecting fossils and artifacts. He is the secretary of the Indian Artifact Collectors Association of the Northeast States and president of the French Creek Archaeological Society. Sites is also associated with the American Society for Amateur Archaeology. He has presented programs on the French & Indian War, fossils, early man, climate change, and Native American cultures and enjoys French & Indian War and American Civil War re-enacting.

**Lenore Skomal, M.A.**, is a career author, playwright, theatre, and film producer. Author of 17 books, including her first published nonfiction *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter: The Remarkable True Story of American Heroine Ida Lewis* (Rowman & Littlefield) which was honored with the New York Public Library's Best Book Award of 2003 and is celebrating its 20th anniversary in continuous publication this year. As a New York City-based Off-Broadway theatre producer, she is also the founder and director of Broadway Bound Theatre Festival--which produces and presents 20 new plays annually. An experienced playwright in her own right, her comedy *THE EXES* premiered Off-Broadway in 2019 to critical acclaim and is currently licensed in regional and community theatres. Her work has garnered the prestigious Eric Hoffer Award, finalist in the Eugene O'Neill Festival, The International Book Awards for Literary Fiction, *Writer's Digest* 75th *Writer's Award* first place winner, numerous Society of Professional Journalism Award, and winner of the New York Summer Festival's best play of the season.

**Carrie Sowden, M.A.**, is the Archaeological and Research Director of the National Museum of the Great Lakes. Her research has taken her all over the globe -- in Turkey, Portugal, Florida, Maine, and Oklahoma. She has been focused on the Great Lakes for the last 18 years. Sowden has a Master of Arts from Texas A&M University in Anthropology with a focus in nautical archaeology.

**Mark Squeglia, B.A.**, is an Erie native and has spent most of his career working in the areas of information technology and marketing for Hammermill Paper, Erie Insurance, and General Electric. Squeglia is the president of the Hagen History Center Board of Directors, and he has been involved in governance, advancement, planning, facilities, and executive committees. Squeglia has a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Gannon College and has been involved in the Hagen History Center's speaker series for several years. He is also a frequent lecturer for the Jefferson Education Society on historical topics, specializing in military history, specifically World War II, and serves as a board member of Torch International's Erie chapter.

**Tom VanTassel** was a founding member of Corry RAILS and is current Chairman of the Board. He was raised on the family farm here in Corry, where he learned-by-doing everything mechanical around the farm. Following High School, he joined the Army and made a tour in Vietnam. Since then, and until retirement, he has been active in the remodeling portion of the Construction Industry and then in Industrial Sales. Over the years, he has been highly active in volunteering for many organizations in the Corry area. He was involved in the Cass, WV restoration efforts of Climax "C" No. 1551 before becoming a part Corry RAILS and the Rescue and Restoration efforts of Climax "A" No. 313.

**DeWitt Walton** was born in Mississippi and reared in Gary, IN by activist parents. He is a 25-year employee of the United Steelworkers (USW) and is currently assigned to the Civil & Human Rights department. He has served as an organizer, strategic campaigner, and assistant to the union's international president. His responsibilities include increasing union membership along with strengthening the historic link between organized labor and the Minority community, and he brings a broad range of experiences in community and political mobilization. Walton is the District 10 labor representative for Allegheny County. He also serves as Program Director of the Pittsburgh APRI's "Breaking The Chains of Poverty" workforce development program.

**Carl Wassink, A.E.**, is a "learn-by-doing historian". Having grown up in Corry, he was exposed to the local history by his grandfather, Carlton Smith, from an early age. Carl has an associate degree in engineering... and another year or so in architectural studies before joining the Navy Seabees for a couple of tours in Vietnam. Later, he was involved in several diverse businesses in California over a 40-year span. Moving back to Corry a dozen years ago, he became involved with the restoration in Cass, WV of the Class "C" Climax No. 1551, one of only 3 Class "C" Climax's remaining.

**Ed Whitbred, B.S.**, is an Erie "Lifer" who grew up in the neighborhood he will discuss. He attended Jones School, East High, graduated from Edinboro and taught for two years at Millcreek McDowell. He then spent 35 years at Procter and Gamble where he wore a number of hats but was always paid by the sales department. For eighteen years he has been one of the hosts and editors for "the Amazing Grays", a senior oriented television show produced by Community Access Media. As a lay worship leader in the Lutheran Church, he has been preaching and conducting services about once a month for over a decade. He is the program chair for the Y Speakers Series. As a former board member of SafeNet, he has spoken to many groups about their programs for victims of domestic violence. He spent four years on the board of Bethany Outreach Center. He has been a marginal second tenor in a number of choruses including The Lake Erie Concert Choir, The Choristers of the Erie Maennerchor and the Symphonic Singers.

**Mary Kay Zuravleff, M.A.**, is the author of *The Frequency of Souls*, winner of the American Academy's Rosenthal Award; *The Bowl Is Already Broken*, which the New York Times called, "a tart, affectionate satire of the museum world's bickering and scheming"; and *Man Alive!*, a Washington Post Notable Book. Her essays have appeared in the Washington Post, Washingtonian, Atlantic, and LA Times Book Review, and she has received multiple DC Artist Fellowships, including for 2023. *American Ending* was inspired by her grandparents, immigrants of the Old Believer Russian Orthodox faith who mined coal in Appalachia. Mary Kay's parents grew up in Erie, and her cousin, Archpriest Pimen Simon, leads Erie's Orthodox Old Rite Church of the Nativity.

For full program descriptions, please visit [www.JESErie.org](http://www.JESErie.org)



# JEFFERSON

## EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

3207 STATE STREET  
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16508-2821

Thomas Jefferson believed a citizenry that was educated on issues and shared its ideas through public discourse had the power to make a difference in the world.

The Jefferson Educational Society of Erie is a strong proponent of that belief, offering courses, seminars, and lectures that explain the ideas that formed the past, assist in exploring the present, and offer guidance in creating the future of the Erie region.

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