



**SPRING 2026
CLASSES**

CENTRAL RED SOCIETY

LEARN + ENGAGE + DISCOVER

WHAT IS CENTRAL RED SOCIETY?

Central RED (Ready to Engage and Discover) Society is an innovative, lifelong learning program that enriches members' lives through relevant, broad-based learning experiences. Central RED Society fosters creativity, intellectual curiosity and engagement with the Pella community and the surrounding communities.

Courses range from recreational, educational, and informational. In addition, it always includes socializing and fun!

BOARD MEMBERS:

Tim Baar, Dave Barnes, Valerie Brandt, Nancy Brown, Marcia Carter, Glenda Duven, Mary Glendening, Joe Michmershuizen, Lynne Petty, Don Ringgenberg, Pat Smith, Ardie Sutphen, Milly Vande Kieft.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Members pay a \$20 per person annual membership fee to be a part of Central RED. Memberships run from June 1 through May 31 each year. New members are welcome anytime throughout the year; membership fee is not prorated. Five to eight classes or events will be held every fall and spring. When the class or event includes a meal a fee is charged for the meal.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Central RED Society is a volunteer-supported program open to all persons who seek opportunities for lifelong learning. Central RED offers an environment of sharing and fellowship that provides opportunities for intellectual, social, and cultural stimulation and growth.

Less Is More. More or Less.

Third Church • Chapel

Friday, January 23 • 11:30am-12:30pm

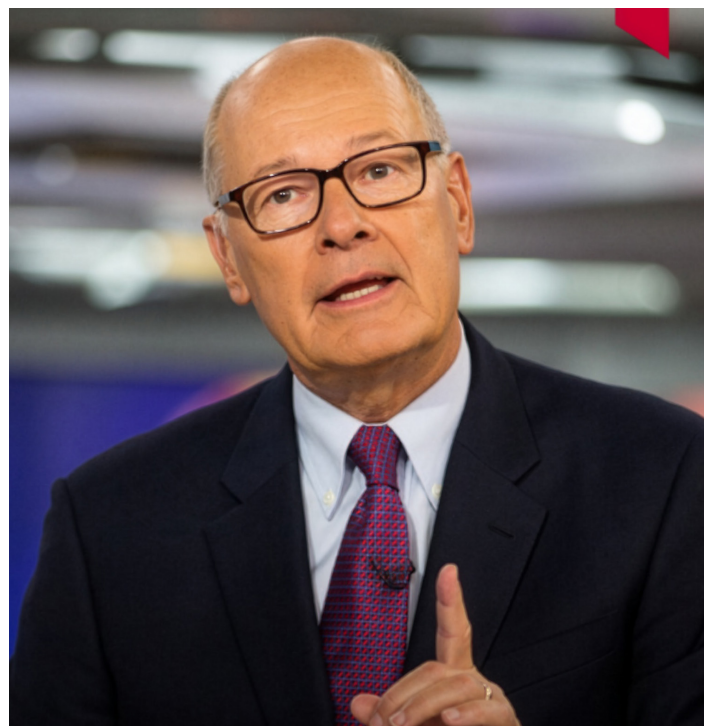
HARRY SMITH

Executive in Residence • Central College

Cost: Free—No need to register

Harry Smith will share insights on how simplifying life can create more meaning, satisfaction, and peace. Drawing on decades of storytelling as an Emmy- and Peabody-winning journalist, Harry offers reflections on balance, fulfillment, and what truly matters.

Harry Smith, a retired NBC News reporter, teaches Central students about curiosity as an essential skill in today's workforce. His goal in class is to foster curiosity and other life skills. Harry has spent nearly four decades covering stories from all 50 states and every continent.



How Our National Parks Inspire a More Perfect Union

Third Church • Chapel

Thursday, January 29 • 11:30am-12:30pm

TOM MEDEMA

Retired Associate Director & “Chief Storytelling Officer”

Cost: Free—No need to register

Tom Medema will explore how America’s National Parks serve as living classrooms. Drawing on decades of experience as a ranger and senior leader in the National Park Service, Tom shares powerful stories that illuminate how these treasured landscapes contribute to America’s story over the past 250 years.

Tom Medema served 35 years with the National Park Service, retiring as Associate Director and “Chief Storytelling Officer” for over 430 national park sites. Recipient of numerous awards for his contributions to education and interpretation and co-founder of Rally for Rangers, Tom currently consults with America250 to shape the nation’s ongoing 250th anniversary.



There Is Blessing In the Battle, Finding Good In the Struggle

Dave & Ardie Sutphen Common Room • Graham Annex

Thursday, February 5 • 11:30am Lunch & 12:00pm Presentation

MARIJKA MICHMERSHUIZEN & CAROL VAN KLOMPENBERG

Local Authors

Cost: \$15 (lunch included)

These local authors will discuss the book “There is Blessing in the Battle” that they co-wrote which narrates Marijka’s 21-year journey of joy, hope, and faith, alongside disabilities, challenges, and crises. Her health battles began when she suffered two strokes at age four. Her ability to find blessings in that battle began just a few years after that. She said, “In my journey, God has taught me how to find a bright spot in almost every situation.” The duo will present in a conversational format. They will read short passages from the book as well as share stories about their time together writing.

Marijka is a '21 Pella Christian High School grad. She lives at the Forward with Faith home in Pella. If you are unfamiliar with this organization, ask her and she will happily tell you about it. She is the oldest of four girls in the Michmershuizen family. She is currently on a journey to learn more about the earliest Michmershuizens to arrive in Pella, at the same time as Dominie Scholte. She is an intense fan of the Pella Christian Eagles, the Iowa Hawkeyes, and Caitlyn Clark.

Carol Van Klompenburg started to play and work with words in first grade, when her four-line poem won a blue ribbon. Carol has lived in Pella since 1978. In that time she was a homemaker, an English teacher at Central College, the owner of The Write Place, and a writer. She and her husband, Marlo, have two adult sons and four grandchildren. Her published books include: Child of the Plains, Creative Aging, and A World in a Grain of Sand.



Union Street Players, History & Overview of Pella's Community Theatre Group

Dave & Ardie Sutphen Common Room • Graham Annex

Wednesday, February 25 • 11:30am Lunch & 12:00pm Presentation

TOM VANDER WELL

Union Street Players President (Actor, Director, Producer, and Playwright)

Cost: \$15 (lunch included)

For over three decades, Union Street Players Community Theatre has been providing a stage for local talent to shine, offering a wide variety of high-quality performances that captivate and inspire. Their mission is to provide an opportunity to perform for those persons interested in live theatre and to enhance the growth of fine arts in the community of Pella.

Tom majored in theatre at Judson College in Elgin, IL and was invited to the MFA Acting program at the University of Iowa before choosing to pursue another path. In 2004, he moved to Pella where he rekindled his love of the stage with Union Street Players, Pella's award-winning community theatre. He met his wife, Wendy, backstage during the 2004 USP production of "South Pacific." He became President of Union Street Players (USP) in 2005 and has served as President for 12 years. He is also known locally as a teaching leader at Third Church and the emcee of Pella's annual Tulip Queen Announcement Party in November. He is owner and CEO of Intelligentics, a market research firm.



If Dad Comes, Then Mom Comes Too: Post WWII Dutch Immigration to the Pella Area

Dave & Ardie Sutphen Common Room • Graham Annex

Thursday, March 12th • 5:30pm Dinner & 6:00pm Presentation

LISA JAARSMA ZYLSTRA & LAURYN VENEMA

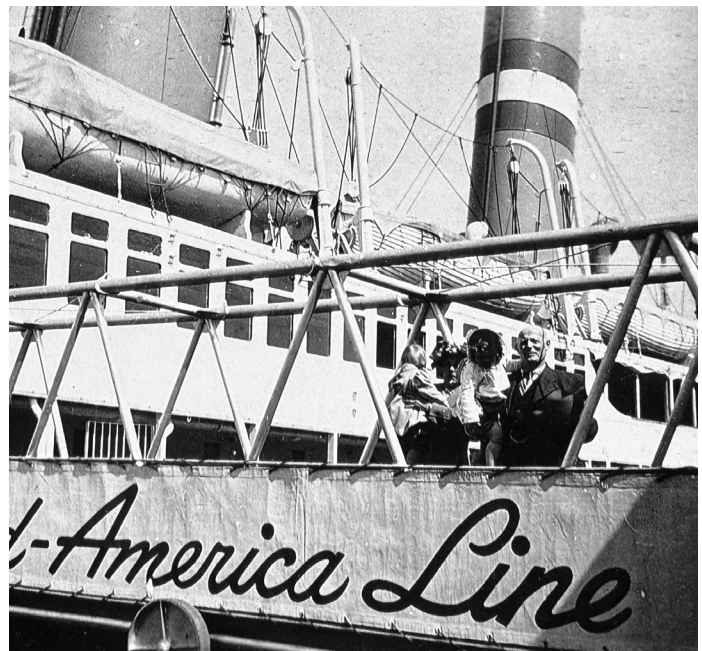
Public Historian • History Club President

Cost: \$20 (dinner included)

Local historian, Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra, and Central College student, Lauryn Venema, researched 44 families (178 individuals) that immigrated to the Pella area after World War II. This presentation will explore their immigration stories, including the conditions in the Netherlands during and after the war, the process and reality of immigration, the journey, and early days in Iowa. They will also discuss the effects of immigration on the immigrants and the impact of those immigrants on Pella.

Lisa Jaarsma Zylstra, a '91 Central grad, recently retired from teaching 5th grade for the Pella Community Schools. She earned a masters in US History with a certificate in Public History from Arizona State University. Her master's thesis examined how Pella's ethnic identity has changed and has been highlighted through its history. She loves all things Pella. Lisa is married to Brian, and they and their two sons live in Pella.

Lauryn Venema is a senior history major at Central College. At Central, she is involved in the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, serves as the History Club President, and is working on a Senior Honors Thesis. She is from the Amana Colonies and has previously interned at the Amana Heritage Society and is currently interning at the Pella Historical Museums. After graduation, Lauryn is planning to pursue a master's degree in public history.



The Many Colors of Buxton

Dave & Ardie Sutphen Common Room • Graham Annex

Thursday, April 9 • 11:30am Lunch & 12:00pm Presentation

CONNIE VAN BOLEN

Retired Mahaska County Treasurer • Local historian of Buxton

Cost: \$15 (lunch included)

This presentation explores the brief history of the biggest, and Iowa's largest, coal mining camp west of the Mississippi known as Buxton, located in Monroe County, Iowa.

Connie has been sharing presentations about Buxton for more than 30 years. She first learned of Buxton while researching genealogy for her Schippers family, who settled in the area in 1895—before, during, and after Buxton existed.

She now owns 63 acres of the former townsite and is pleased to share the history, folklore, artifacts, maps, and many images of this now-beloved ghost town. Buxton is unique for its time, offering opportunities to people of all races in the early 1900s.

Please join us as we walk back in time to Buxton.



Indigenous American Land Acknowledgement

Dave & Ardie Sutphen Common Room • Graham Annex

Tuesday, April 21 • 11:30am Lunch & 12:00pm Presentation

RANDY ROLFFS & WINONA VAN BERKUM

Member of Friends of Big Rock Park • Student at Central

Cost: \$15 (lunch included)

Presentation honoring Native American culture, history, and archeology, especially Pella's Big Rock Park, the surrounding area, and southeast Iowa. A member of the Winnebago tribe, which is part of the Ho-Chunk nation, Winona Van Berkum traces her connection to the tribe through her paternal grandmother who was born on and raised on the reservation. Growing up in Pella, Van Berkum has made almost yearly pilgrimages to the tribe's homecoming. As she has gotten older, Van Berkum has taken part in dancing competitions with the Winnebago, travelling to pow wows across the Midwest.

After retirement from Town Crier Ltd., Randy Rolffs developed a hobby interest in Native American life about six years ago. Exploring and researching their life and culture by learning from topical books, internet research, other enthusiasts, and personal artifact hunting.

Winona Van Berkum is a senior at Central College. The NCAA celebrated Native American Heritage Month during November. There were 2,364 Native American student-athletes in action for the 2024-25 academic year. Van Berkum was one of the 124 who participated in women's outdoor track and field. Winona has been accepted into the University of Iowa's athletic training program and will be starting there in June.



Marion County Iowa CSI

Dave & Ardie Sutphen Common Room • Graham Annex

Tuesday, May 19 • 5:30pm Dinner & 6:00pm Presentation

DR. SHANNON REMMINGTON, MD & FRIENDS

Marion County Medical Examiner's and Medicolegal Death Investigators

Cost: \$20 (dinner included)

The Marion County Iowa Medical Examiners will share with you their unique and little-known role in Marion County. Learn as they describe how their work integrates with local and state authorities, as well as the Iowa State Medical Examiner's office.

Marion County Medical Examiner's and Medicolegal Death Investigators, led by Dr. Shannon Remmington, MD & Dr. Dale Lensing MD. ME-I's Dawn Bender, Tracey Hall, Marv Vander Wiel and Teri VanKooten.

Additional Notes: This presentation does talk about all manners/causes of death and autopsies. It is not a graphic presentation but may be uncomfortable for some individuals.

Spring 2026 Class Registration

SIGN ME UP FOR CLASSES!

- + Class reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.
- + You may sign up more than one person on a sheet. Please include both names and payment for both people.
- + Please mail to Central RED Society, P.O. Box 152, Pella, IA 50219. Be sure to add a check. Class reservations cannot be held without payment. Make checks payable to **Central RED Society**.
- + Sorry, no refund on classes unless the entire class needs to be canceled.

Name (1): _____	Name (2): _____
Street: _____	Street: _____
City/State/Zip: _____	City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Email: _____	Email: _____

Classes I'm signing up for

Annual Membership	\$20 each = _____
There Is Blessing In the Battle, Finding Good In the Struggle	\$15 each = _____
Union Street Players, History & Overview of Pella's Community Theater Group	\$15 each = _____
If Dad Comes, Then Mom Comes Too: WWII Dutch Immigration to the Pella Area	\$20 each = _____
The Many Colors of Buxton	\$15 each = _____
Indigenous American Land Acknowledgement	\$15 each = _____
Marion County Iowa CSI	\$20 each = _____
Total	_____

Payment Options

- Check enclosed. Please make checks out to Central RED Society.
Sorry, we cannot accept credit cards at this time.



PO Box 152
Pella, IA 50219



CENTRAL
RED
SOCIETY

READY TO ENGAGE AND DISCOVER

Chased after my Officiating Father Leo...
• Officially began on the field in 1979
• Officiated High School over 20 years – Small College for
• Fought in Big 12 since 1998 – Very different for officials...