

## **Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, Inc.**

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### **FY 2020 BOARD MEMBERS**

**Blue Earth County** – Liz Miller, Good Thunder. Liz has a BFA in Painting and MFA in Drawing & Painting and is an Art Professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato. In her own work she is focused on mixed media and site specific installations. Liz is currently teaching Installation Art at MSU, Mankato and is connecting the campus community with the broader arts community in the region. She has served as a panelist for the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Minnesota State Arts Board for their Artist Initiative Grants, and been a juror for exhibits. Liz has also received several Artist Grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board, and grants from the Jerome Foundation, McKnight Foundation and the Joan Mitchell Foundation. She has exhibited her work throughout Minnesota, the United States and abroad. Term began 8/1/17.

**Brown County** – Denice Evers, Springfield. Denice has a BA in Elementary Education/Special Education and is vice president of the Springfield Community Theatre. She has been a judge for speech competitions and has been involved for over 30 years acting and directing theater productions. She is the Trustee of St. Paul Parish, Comfrey as well as the President of Area Faith Community. Denice previously served on the PLRAC board from 1999-2005 and 2008-2013. Term began 8/1/14. Denice serves as Treasurer.

**Faribault County** – Carol Soma, Kiester. Carol has a Master's in Library Media Education and BA in English and Spanish. She is a retired teacher from the Blue Earth Area Public Schools, where she was a media specialist K-12; previous teaching included Language Arts and Spanish there and in the Southcentral and Kiester Public Schools. At BEA Carol co-directed plays with the Peer Helping program and at KHS she was the One-Act play director. She has served on the board of directors of the Kee Civic Theatre in Kiester since its inception as a non-profit in 1990 and is a patron of the Blue Earth Town and Country Players. She also serves on the local library board and other community and church committees. Term began 8/1/15. Carol serves as Vice-President.

**LeSueur County** – Randy Mediger, Waterville. Randy has a BS in Elementary Education and Minor in Music, MS Curriculum & Instruction, and Education Specialist: Administration. He previously served as Elementary Principal at Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Public School and classroom teacher in Waterville, Henderson and Belle Plaine schools. He's participated in a variety of music and theater performances in the past, and was a charter member of LeSueur Community Theater. He received the 2002 Arts Education Leadership Award from the Minnesota Alliance for Arts in Education. Term began 8/1/14. Randy serves as President.

**Martin County** - Kristie Gaalswyk-Pomerence, Truman. Kristie is currently the Martin County 4-H Program Coordinator in Fairmont. She has a BA degree in Theatre Arts and Journalism, with a focus on Arts Administration, from the University of Minnesota. She was the Education Coordinator at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts for 4 years. While there, Kristie facilitated in-school artist residencies, managed their school performances, and developed a musical theatre camp. She is a board member of the Martin County Area Foundation, Fairmont Community Education and Recreation Advisory Council. She also previously served as a board member of the Fairmont Opera House. Term began 8/1/18.

**Nicollet County** – Rita Rassbach, St. Peter. Rita has a BA/BS in Psychology/Biology and MS in Occupational Therapy. She is the Executive Director of Mankato Ballet Company and served on their Board from 2012-2018. She previously served on the Boards of Merely Players Community Theatre, Mankato and Creative Play Place, St. Peter. She is Taiwanese, first generation in the U.S. Rita noted that “coming from a different background with parents who are immigrants, helps her understand struggles, challenges and obstacles”. Term began 4/1/19.

**Sibley County** – Teresa Konechne, Henderson. Teresa has an MFA in Interdisciplinary Art, (video, performance and installation) and a BS in Interior Design/Architecture. She was an Assistant Professor of Video at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. In 2017, she co-founded Henderson CAN (Community. Art. Nature) which explored creative economy and the relationship between art, economic development, local foods and climate change. She currently is lead artist for a community mosaics project in Henderson. She also founded the non-profit *Wicked Questions - art and conversation on climate and change*. She has served as a board member for the Northern Warehouse Artist Coop and KFAI Community Radio in the Twin Cities and was a cohort member of the Creative Community Leadership Institute. Term began 7/1/19.

**Waseca County** – Karen Krause, New Richland. Karen has a BS in Comprehensive Art and MS in K-12 School Counseling. Karen recently retired as School Counselor for Waterville Public Schools. She has served on the Board of the Waseca Arts Council and been a member of the organization since 1978. In the past she has been an Elementary and Jr. High Art Teacher and she currently teaches art classes for youth at the Waseca Arts Council. She has taught art classes for community education, been a Trustee for Church of All Saints in New Richland, and served on the Waseca County Fair Board. She has also been a judge for the 4-H Fair in southern MN and at the MN State Fair in arts and crafts. Term began 8/1/17

**Watonwan County** – Steve Davis, Madelia. Steve has a BA in Computer Science and is a Software Developer working from his home office in Madelia. He is a violist with the Mankato Symphony Orchestra and Minnesota State University Mankato/Community Orchestra; and volunteers with the Mankato Area Youth Symphony Orchestra, the New Ulm Suzuki School of Music, and the Mankato Ballet. Currently he is a member of the Madelia Rotary and Lions Club. Previously he volunteered with the Madelia Community Theatre to run the lighting and sound boards for performances. Term began 8/1/16. Steve serves as Secretary.

**City of Fairmont** – OPEN

**City of Mankato** – Margie Larson. Margie has a BS in Art Education. She is a member of the Arts Center of Saint Peter, Carnegie Art Center, and Twin Rivers Council for the Arts; and has volunteered at the 410 Project in Mankato. Margie is currently painting with oil and cold wax in an abstract and expressive style. She has taken a variety of art classes and workshops over the years, exhibited her artwork in Mankato and throughout Southern Minnesota, and received awards in several juried art exhibitions. Margie has received four Artist Grants from Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council. Currently Margie is the co-manager of the gift store at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Mankato and previously served on their board; also previously worked as the Study Abroad Coordinator in the International Students Office at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Term began 8/1/17

**City of New Ulm** – Charles Luedtke. Charles has a BS in Education (English, German, Mathematics); MA English; MFA Music; and DMA Organ Performance and Church Music. Charles was a Professor of Music at Martin Luther College, New Ulm for 41 years. He is a Board Member of the MN Music Hall of Fame and Museum, New Ulm; member of the Sioux Trails Chapter, American Guild of Organists and the New Ulm

Area Civic Orchestra; and a church organist. Charles also served as the keyboard accompanist with the St. Cloud-based Minnesota Center Chorale during its three European tours of 1997, 1999, and 2001. Term began 8/1/14.

**City of North Mankato** – Dana Sikkila. Dana has a MA and BFA in Printmaking, and Non Profit Leadership Certificate from Minnesota State University, Mankato. She concentrates on making her art work as well as being Executive Director of the 410 Project Art Gallery, a volunteer managed art space as well holding an arts adjunct professor position at MNSU, Mankato. Since 2014 Dana has served as a Grant Review Panelist and Artistic Evaluator for the Minnesota State Arts Board. In 2015 she was voted by Minnesota Monthly Magazine as one of Minnesota's Up and Coming Artist under the age of 30. Her art work combines printmaking, sculpture, and performance with an impressively anarchic sense of scale and playfulness. Dana has received numerous awards including Mankato Free Press 2016 “Outstanding Woman in Business”, 2015-2016 Art Educators of Minnesota "Distinguished Service Outside the Field" Recognition, 2015 Mankato's YWCA Young Woman of Distinction, 2015 Woman of Courage and Vision from MNSU Mankato, featured artist on Post Cards, Pioneer's PBS Art TV Program, and KEYC's Jefferson Good Person Award. Term began 8/1/14.

**City of St. Peter** - April Malphurs. April has a MA in Art Education and BS in Interior Architecture/Design. She is a practicing artist in sculpture, glass and jewelry. Currently she is teaching community art camps and classes for children in St. Peter and at the Minnetonka Center for the Arts. April was the founder of Creative Play Place in St. Peter, and served as board member and director for eight years. She is currently on a leave of absence from her position as a K-5 elementary art teacher at Hoover Elementary School, Mankato. April worked with South and North Elementary Schools in St. Peter as Art Adventure Coordinator for five years, and was a guest artist and volunteer with the Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota in Mankato for eight years. Term began 7/1/19.