

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

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### **FY 2021 BOARD MEMBERS**

The Prairie Lakes board represents a cross-section of art forms as well as various arts perspectives: artists, teachers and representatives of arts organizations. Since a primary function of the Council is to serve as a panel for arts project applications, members are chosen for their knowledge, expertise, and involvement in the arts in the areas of dance, literature, music, theater, and visual arts. Board Members are appointed through an open nomination process. The board is comprised of fourteen members, one from each of the nine counties and one from each city over 10,000 population. Board members serve a three-year term with a maximum of three terms.

**Blue Earth County** – Liz Miller, Good Thunder. Liz has a BFA in Painting and MFA in Drawing & Painting and is a Professor in the Department of Art & Design at Minnesota State University, Mankato. In her own work she is focused on mixed media, site specific installations and fibers. Liz is currently teaching Drawing and 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** – Bethany Steffl, Sleepy Eye. Bethany has a BS in Elementary Education and MS in Educational Leadership. She is the Principal, Music and Art teacher (2018-present) and previously taught Kindergarten at St. Raphael School (2006-2018). She previously taught school at Mount Olive Lutheran School (2004-2006). Bethany is a Board Member of the Springfield Community Theater (2019-present). Bethany is the School Choir Director at St. Raphael School (2007-Present). She is a 4-H Club volunteer (2016-Present). In her spare time, she is also a jewelry artist. Term began 7/1/20.

**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.

**LeSueur County** – Larry Pint, New Prague. Larry has a degree from Control Data Institute. He is the retired CEO and owner of SOFT-STAR, Inc. and Pint Industries, Inc. He is on the board of directors for the Minnesota Association of Community Theaters. Larry is a member of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, American Association of Community Theater, and New Prague Arts Council. He is an auditorium tech for New Prague Area Schools. He previously served on the New Prague School's Board of Education, the Twin Cities Users Group board, City of New Prague Commissions, and the Curtain Call Theatre board. Term began 7/1/20.

**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 7/26/18.

**Nicollet County** – Rita Rassbach, St. Peter. Rita has a BA/BS in Psychology/Biology and MS in Occupational Therapy. She recently served as the interim Executive Director of Mankato Ballet Company and has 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 a MA in Intermedia Art, MFA in Intermedia Art, Minors in Sculpture and Drawing, and BS in Interior Design. She was the co-founder of Henderson CAN in 2017 which explored the creative economy and relationship between art, economic development, local foods and climate change. She is the lead artist for a community mosaics project in Henderson to be completed in fall 2019. Teresa has been an Adjunct Professor at MSU, Mankato in Advanced Filmmaking and at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter in Advanced Video Art and Digital Photography. She is the founder and director of the non-profit Wicked Questions, that focuses on arts and climate change. She has been a board member of Northern Warehouse Artist Cooperative and KFAI Community Radio. 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.

**Watsonwan 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 and the New Ulm Suzuki School of Music. 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.

**City of Fairmont** – OPEN

**City of Mankato** – OPEN

**City of New Ulm** – OPEN

**City of North Mankato** – Dana Sikkila. Dana has a MA and BFA in Printmaking, and Non-Profit Leadership Certificate from Minnesota State University, Mankato. Her artwork combines printmaking, sculpture, and performance with an impressively anarchic sense of scale and playfulness. She concentrates on making her artwork 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. She has been a member of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts since 2016. Dana has been an Artist Career Consultant for Springboard for the Arts, St. Paul since 2018. 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.