



NDMTA NEWSLETTER

November 2025

Letter from the President, Lisa Schuler

NDMTA is alive and well! I attended the annual MTNA Leadership Summit in Cincinnati, Ohio in September. I left feeling content with NDMTA's active programs, steady membership and committed board members. Not all states have these. One area that I learned that NDMTA could improve on was the amount we pay our judges for competitions. When attending a "State by Size" meeting, in which state presidents with similar membership numbers meet and share ideas and concerns, I learned that we were not paying our judges the amount they deserve for their wisdom and time. This issue was easily solved at the recent board meeting in October. You'll see the increases in the minutes published in this newsletter. We chose to vote on the Popplers Competitions at the October meeting, and we will address the MTNA Competitions at the January meeting. Thank you to the board for addressing our competitions.



Inside this issue:

STATE COMPETITIONS	2
VCSU COLLEGIATE CHAPTER	3
UPCOMING EVENTS	3
NATIONAL CONFERENCE	3
2026 CONFERENCE PRESENTER: HELEN MARLAIS	4, 6
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES	5, 6
POPPLERS COMPETITION	6
POPPLERS APPLICATION FORM	7

We have some exciting news! Ozzie Johnson in Valley City has taken the steps to start a Valley City State University collegiate chapter. After meeting with Ozzie and reading over the group's proposed constitution and bylaws, the NDMTA board unanimously voted to accept the new association. Ozzie shared how he was involved in a collegiate chapter throughout his years in college and he's excited to give the students at VCSU the same beneficial experiences. Our collegiate members are the future of MTNA. Thank you, Ozzie!

The 2026 Mini Conference is shaping up nicely. In this newsletter, you'll learn about our guest clinician. At the January board meeting, the board will approve the schedule so be looking for that in the February newsletter. Until then, reserve Wednesday, August 5th and Thursday, August 6th on your calendars!

Finally, a big CONGRATULATIONS goes to our official 2026 Foundation Fellow, Michelle Kallod! Michelle is an outstanding teacher, and we value her contributions to NDMTA, which is being our state treasurer and newsletter editor, and she is active in her local association, FMMTA. This makes her a very deserving Fellow. Please consider attending the MTNA Gala at the National Conference to support her in March!

Lisa Schuler, NDCTM

NDMTA State Competitions

By Sheryl Kjelland

Congratulations to the following students who are North Dakota representatives in the upcoming West Central District MTNA competitions. These students will be submitting performance videos for the next level of competitions. The WCD winners go on to compete at the National conference in Chicago this March.

Each entrant's teacher will be mailed a check from NDMTA to cover their WCD entry fee. These funds are provided by the Silent Auction during State Conferences.

A special thank you to Valley City State University and Ozzie Johnson for hosting the competitions.



Nanae Yashiro
Student of Nariaki Sugiura
Junior Piano



Garrett Peterson
Student of Simona Barbu
Young Artist Strings



Grant Gellner,
Student of Dianna Anderson
Senior Piano



Enoch Orukotan
Student of Russel Peterson
Senior Woodwinds



Jeremy Wohletz working with
Enoch at VCSU

Upcoming Events - see www.ndmta.org for more information

December 15, 2025

Early Registration Deadline for MTNA Conference

\$445 by Dec 15, \$495 by Feb 5, \$545 after Feb 5

March 21-25, 2026

MTNA National Conference

Chicago, IL

August 5-6, 2026

NDMTA Mini-Conference

Popplers Music, Grand Forks

VCSU starts Collegiate Chapter

NDMTA has a new collegiate chapter started by Ozzie Johnson at Valley City State University. They have received their official certificate from MTNA and already have a project to organize the VCSU pedagogy library. Welcome to the chapter, VCSU!



Make plans now to attend the 150th Celebration of MTNA at the annual conference: March 21-25, 2026 in Chicago, Illinois.

Connect with Lisa Schuler if you're planning to attend and would like to coordinate travel arrangements.

Early registration of \$445 will close December 15. Check the mtna.org website for details and look for emails from MTNA.

August 2026 Conference Presenter: Helen Marlais

Dr. Marlais' dedication to pedagogy for the young is sincere and unwavering. She has given well over 800 pedagogical presentations and master classes for pre-college students. One of the joys of her life has been creating materials to support piano teachers as they guide young musicians. The piano series that she has developed and published for The FJH Music Company have become an integral part of piano students' repertoire across the country and abroad.



Excellent external reviews have come from the European Piano Teachers Association (EPTA), Canada, and the USA. Her series, *Succeeding at the Piano®*, and *The All-in-One Approach to Succeeding at the Piano®*, *Succeeding with the Masters®*, *The Festival Collection®*, *In Recital®*, *Write, Play, and Hear Your Theory Every Day®* all have companion recordings. Other series that round out her catalog are: *Sight Reading and Rhythm Every Day®*, *Energize Your Fingers Every Day®*, *Play Your Scales and Chords Every Day®*, *The FJH Intervallic Reading Series®*, the *FJH Adult Piano Curriculum*, and *In Recital®* for the *Advancing Pianist*. The *Contemporary Keyboard Editions®* focuses on piano music by contemporary art-music composers. Several of these series above have been released in South Korea, China, and Taiwan. One can peruse this library and teaching resources, including over 1,500 free teaching and performance videos, on Marlais' website: www.HelenMarlais.com as well as on her You Tube channel: *Piano Lessons Helen Marlais*

Dr. Helen Marlais' performance schedule includes concerts and pedagogical sessions throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Her travels abroad have included performing and teaching in India, S. Korea, Taiwan, Italy, England, France, Spain, Hungary, Turkey, Germany, Austria, Lithuania, Estonia, China, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, and Russia. Marlais has recorded on Audite, Gasparo, Stargrass and Centaur record labels. She has had performances broadcast regionally, nationally, and internationally, on radio, television, and the Internet. Her recording, *Music for Clarinet and Piano*, with husband Arthur Campbell, was nominated for the 2013 International Classical Music Awards, one of the most prestigious distinctions available to classical musicians today. *FonoForum*, a leading European classical music magazine, writes: "Seldom has one so clearly observed the bubbling substructure of the piano part of Schumann's *Fantasy Pieces Op. 73* and, thereby, seldom have the Schumann pieces been played so elegantly and delicately." They continue with: "...Marlais' playing is always exact, elegant, without excess. The beauty of this genuinely joint playing is so engaging that it seems to lack for nothing."

Recipient of the Distinguished Contribution to a Discipline Award at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Dr. Marlais teaches piano and directs the Piano Pedagogy Certificate program for undergraduate piano majors and for professional piano teachers. Dr. Marlais teaches applied piano lessons to a select number of exceptional piano majors who come to GVSU specifically to study with her, and she also teaches piano literature on a rotating basis. Many of Dr. Marlais' pre-college through university majors are award-winning pianists.

(Marlais, continued on page 6)

Annual Business Meeting October 10, 2025

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Lisa Schuler at 10:00 AM.

Roll Call

Present: Lisa Schuler, Vangie Johnson Parker, Michelle Kallod, Vanessa Wold, Kathleen Johnson, Michelle Schumacher, Dianna Anderson, Sheryl Kjelland, Jessica Poyzer, Ozzi Johnson, Jennifer Flores.

Absent: Priscilla Keogh, Lynnae Wiitamaki, Amy Mercer, Tamara Bertram.

A quorum was established.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

Reports of Officers

Secretary – Vanessa Wold: Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and accepted with no corrections.

Treasurer – Michelle Kallod: Reported current balances; funds will be shifted to Bell Bank for higher yield.

Vice President/Commissioned Composer – Vangie Johnson Parker: Discussed 2026 commissioned composer and 2027 nominee. President – Lisa Schuler: Announced \$1,000 affiliate reward opportunity and upcoming presentation by Beth Klingenstein.

Committee Reports

Certification/Service to the Profession – Amy Mercer: 2027 conference session planned.

Coordinator of Directory Advertising – Jessica Poyzer: 19 advertisers, 6 pending payments.

Directory Editor – Michelle Schumacher: Directory at printer, 30 digital and 70 printed copies planned.

Foundation Fellow/Past President – Tamara Bertram: Michelle Kallod named 2026 Foundation Fellow.



Michelle Kallod,
2026 Foundation Fellow

Historian – Lynnae Wiitamaki: Requested photos from members.

IMTF – Sheryl Kjelland: Local rotations shared; Upper Valley Association MTA meeting Oct 31.

Membership – Dianna Anderson: Updating records, collegiate membership collaboration.

MTNA Competitions – Ozzie Johnson: Overview shared.

Newsletter Editor – Michelle Kallod: Newsletter deadline Nov 7.

Popplers Music Competition – Priscilla Keogh: Coordinating with Tamara Bertram.

Rally – Sheryl Kjelland: Registrations complete.

Technology – Kathleen Johnson: Website updates pending; noted contact changes.

Business

2026 Mini Conference – Topic #3 by Helen Marlais approved; non-members may attend last session only.

Competition Judge Fees – Motion by Vangie Johnson Parker, second by Dianna Anderson to raise fees to \$180 for first 2 hours, \$60/hour thereafter. Vote 10 yes, 1 non-vote. Motion carried.

National Conference – Attendees include Lisa Schuler, Michelle Kallod, Vangie Johnson Parker, Dianna Anderson, and Minot State University students.

Idea Share – Encouraged local activities, social gatherings, and music swap events.

Local Association Reports

Badlands – Priscilla Keogh (absent)

Bismarck-Mandan – Jennifer Flores: Met with UMary faculty.

Fargo-Moorhead – Lynnae Wiitamaki: Monster concert, Rally April 11.

Greater Grand Forks – Tamara Bertram (absent)

Langdon Area – Lisa Schuler

Minot – Dianna Anderson: Collegiate chapter active with events.

Northwest – Inactive

Upper Valley – Sheryl Kjelland

Valley City – Ozzie Johnson: Motion by Vangie Johnson Parker, second by Michelle Schumacher to start MTNA Collegiate Chapter at VCSU. Vote 11 yes, motion carried.

(Minutes, continued on page 6)

(Marlais, Continued from page 4)

She has demonstrated the ability to develop the highest of standards while teaching with a joy-filled approach. She received her DM in piano performance and pedagogy from Northwestern University and her MFA in piano performance from Carnegie Mellon University. She received her BM in piano performance from the University of Toledo and was their 2008 Outstanding Alumna in the Arts. Dr. Marlais has been inspired by her teachers and their teachers: Frances Renzi, Rosina Lhévinne, and Beveridge Webster; Alan Feinberg and Dorothy Taubman; Ralph Zitterbart, Irene Schreier Scott, Elvina Truman Pearce, and Fran Larimer; and Harry Franklin, who traced his musical genealogy through Alexander Siloti to Franz Liszt.

Visit:

www.HelenMarlais.com

FB: Succeeding at the Piano method

(Minutes, continued from page 5)

Announcements and Upcoming Events

Newsletter Deadline – November 7, 2025

MTNA National Conference – March 21–25, 2026,
Chicago, IL

Popplers Music Competition – August 5, 2026,
Popplers Music Store, Grand Forks NDMTA

State Conference – August 5–6, 2026, Popplers
Music Store, Grand Forks

Leadership Summit: Encouraged virtual chapters,
new leadership, and collegiate engagement.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Sheryl Kjelland, second by
Dianna Anderson. Unanimous approval. Meeting
adjourned at 11:58 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Vanessa Wold

Secretary, North Dakota Music Teachers
Association

Popplers Music Competition, It's not too early to start!

The 2026 Poppers Music Competitions will be held on
Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at the Popplers Music Store in
Grand Forks, ND. Now is the time to think about what
students in your studio would benefit from a non-advancing
competition. The numerous benefits of a competition may help that student grow beyond your expectations!
The competition details can be found in your NDMTA directory.

Popplers
Music, Inc.

The competition day usually looks like this; the student and their teacher are given a rehearsal time to get used to the piano and atmosphere of the room. The students are given the competition time for a bit later in the day. Anyone can listen to the students play in the competition. The students will then receive written comments from the judge and learn the outcome of the competition. That evening at 7:00pm, all participating students will play one piece of their choice from their competition in the Popplers Music Recital. The recital is free and open to the public.

NDMTA members may submit students by completing and sending in the application by July 1, 2026. Applications can be mailed or filled out online at ndmta.org.



Popplers Music Competitions Application

Popplers Music Store, Grand Forks, ND

Wednesday, August 5, 2026



Complete this form in pen or online <https://www.ndmta.org/competitions.php>

Entrant Information

Name _____
Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____ Age as of June 1, 2026 _____
Name(s) of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) _____
Hometown Newspaper & Email _____

Student Fees (circle one)

Elementary	\$30.00 (ages 8-11)
Junior High	\$35.00 (ages 12-14)
High School	\$45.00 (ages 15-18)
Collegiate	\$50.00 (ages 19-26)

Teacher Information

Name _____ Member of NDMTA Yes/No _____
Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Email _____
Name of accompanist (if applicable) _____
Area entering (piano, woodwinds, brass, strings, etc.) _____

Repertoire for Competition Performance

This repertoire program must include title and number of each movement, tempo markings, the composer's full name, total performance time and period of music. Please type the complete program on a separate sheet of paper and attach to this application form.

Example:	<u>Composition</u>	<u>Composer</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Period</u>
	Sonata No 1 in g minor, BMV 1001	JS Bach	I. Adagio (4:17)	Baroque
			<u>IV Presto (2:48)</u>	
			Total 7:05	

Competition Agreement: It is the responsibility of the teacher and the entrant to abide by the rules listed in the NDMTA directory that are applicable to the Popplers Music Competitions. This form will be returned if there are any omissions or inaccuracies. The undersigned verify that the information submitted on this application form is complete and accurate and that the teacher paid state and national dues. All piano programs must be memorized.

Signature of Entrant _____ Signature of Teacher _____

Completed forms and check (payable to NDMTA) must be postmarked by July 1, 2026. Mail to:

Tamara Bertram
1103 Darwin Dr.
Grand Forks, ND 58203-2028