



NDMTA NEWSLETTER

September 2026

Letter from the President, Vangie Johnson Parker

Hello!

Welcome all to a new NDMTA fiscal year! NDMTA has been an organization which has generously given to me and I look forward to serving you for the next two years. I have a few personal goals which I will share at the fall board meeting, but I am interested in hearing what your goals are for membership in NDMTA. We have a great Board of Directors and I know that if we work together, we can help NDMTA become an even stronger organization. Please let your local representatives know your thoughts or contact me at vangie58801@yahoo.com. We're better when we work together!



Sounds, Physical Gesture & Imagination NDMTA Conference Session Recap

by Jennifer Flores & Amy Mercer



Dr. Helen Marlais opened her session, "Sounds, Physical Gesture, and Imagination," by reviewing complementary materials and continuing themes from her first session, including "Stop and Listen," moving the wrists in small ovals to aid good chromatics, keeping the hand as one unit, and using the side of the thumb. She then went deeper, demonstrating how sound, physical gesture, and imagination can bring out a student's musicality.

Marlais began with pieces that teach specific technical concepts, including two-note slurs in *In the Distance* (Etudes Book 2) and chord inversions in *Crystal Mountain Falls* (Etudes Book 2). "Imagination is key," she emphasized, noting that science shows teachers who use more imagery have greater success. She encouraged students to play a piece and then guess what it is about, or to give a piece with a generic title—such as "Minuet in G"—an actual name. The richer the imagined story and imagery, she said, the greater the likelihood of student success.

Suggestions for developing imagery were wide-ranging. Teachers can ask students to consider a piece's mood—admiration, joy, sadness, love, hate, sorrow, or desire—and to imagine where they are: floating in clouds, on the ground, flying, or floating in water.

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Students might describe a piece through a story, attach emotions to a piece or to particular sections, use visual art and architecture, or imagine different orchestral instruments playing it. Teachers can also ask, “What instrument would this be—or not be?” and “What picture fits this piece?”

Marlais also recommended sensory questions: What kind of fabric do you feel—soft, fuzzy, coarse, smooth, or fluffy? What would this taste like? What temperatures do you feel? Another favorite approach was to be a tour guide: Where are we, what are we doing, and how can we narrate our made-up story? The “tour guide” idea can also lead an audience toward what is most interesting in each phrase.



According to Marlais, physical gestures create all phrasing. Across her sessions, she referred to five gestures—Drip-Drop-Roll, Tissue Box, Woodpecker, Push Off, and Kick Off—which are used and explained in her *Succeeding at the Piano* method book series. She demonstrated how moving the arms into the keys, forward and back, can shape a phrase; elbow circles help students feel the power coming from the back of the arm. She also highlighted articulation, such as a two-note slur played with a fast, kick-off touch.

To learn these gestures within pieces, Marlais recommended impulse practicing: begin with two notes played slowly with the physical gesture, try them more quickly, add the next note and repeat, then add another note and repeat. She also suggested singing the counting, using counting and contour to find the high points of a phrase, and then artificially stressing a different beat. Teachers or students can physically draw the contour they hear; students can also draw while listening to the teacher.

Her practicing strategies included “regrouping”—starting anywhere in a phrase except the beginning—and placing adverbs on slips of paper. A student can draw a random adverb, such as fiery, tragic, indifferent, or lovingly, and play a passage in that character. Marlais further recommended rushing on purpose and then randomly stopping on a beat that is neither the first nor the second, helping students develop greater rhythmic discipline.

Throughout the presentation, she demonstrated these ideas through different pieces. Near the conclusion, she offered a playful exercise for exploring sound character: several audience members received lists of descriptive words and called out new terms periodically while she altered her playing to match each word. With students, teachers can reverse the activity by calling out words for students to interpret at the piano.



These techniques—imagery, sensory exploration, physical gesture, contour, and playful experimentation—can be used with students of all ages and levels. Together, they deepen a student's connection with the piece and encourage more engaged, imaginative, and capable musicianship.

Oct 15 deadline for physical copy of NDMTA Directory

**ACTION
needed**

The 2026-2027 NDMTA Directories will be published in October. Directories will only be available in a digital format, unless you request a printed physical directory. You must contact Michelle Schumacher at schumacherrm@bektel.com prior to October 15 to obtain a physical directory. Directories will not be printed after October 15, but will be available digitally on the www.ndmta.org website by selecting the drop down arrow by “Member”, then “Member Directory”. You will need a password and user name to gain access to the directory. Contact Kathleen Johnson at kathleen@utma.com for assistance.

Drip, Drop Roll - and a Dragon or Two

by Vanessa Wold

The 2026 NDMTA State Mini-Conference, held August 5–6 at Popplers Music in Grand Forks, featured guest presenter Dr. Helen Marlais. Funny, engaging, and wonderfully expressive, Dr. Marlais combined practical pedagogy with memorable demonstrations and storytelling that kept attendees learning—and laughing.

A question woven throughout the conference was simple but essential: What are our goals for our students, and where are they going? Dr. Marlais encouraged teachers to consider not only the repertoire students are learning today, but also the musicianship, independence, and practice skills they will need in the future.

Building Technique from the Beginning

Foundational technique began with a student's physical setup at the piano. Dr. Marlais demonstrated how the elbows should be positioned slightly forward and above the white keys, allowing the fingers to rest naturally on the keyboard. Props, imagery, movement, and tactile experiences can then help students feel technical concepts before being asked to reproduce them independently.



She also encouraged teachers to avoid ambiguous instructions. Instead of “curve your fingers,” teachers might say “use a comfortably rounded hand shape.” Rather than simply telling a student to “relax,” we can help the

student identify and release unnecessary tension. “Move your hand to the note” is clearer and healthier than asking a student to stretch or reach. Other thoughtful language changes included describing something as “challenging” rather than “difficult” and asking reflective questions such as, “Were you satisfied with that?” or “Do you think you were successful?” Dr. Marlais emphasized that technique is not a collection of isolated motions. Pronation, supination, rotation, wrist movement, arm weight, listening, and release all work together.

One of the most memorable demonstrations was the Drip-Drop-Roll: the arm “drips,” drops into the keys through

gravity, and then rolls forward, led by the wrist. The motion produces a full sound while helping the student release tension.

Additional gestures included:

- Tissue Box: A slow, light release for a soft, wispy sound.
- Push-Off or Kangaroo: A quick forward motion of the wrist and elbow, useful at the end of two- and three-note slurs.
- Flying Fingers: The hand lifts and relocates during scales and arpeggios rather than stretching or holding tension.
- Rotation: The forearm, wrist, and hand turn together as one coordinated unit.

Her humorous image of a “happy, hanging humerus bone” gave teachers a memorable reminder that healthy technique should remain free and unforced.

Students can also be encouraged to experiment with these gestures and decide which movement best produces the sound they want. Technique then becomes a musical choice—not merely an exercise to be completed.

Listening Before Playing

Dr. Marlais repeatedly returned to the importance of the brain and ear. Before students begin a piece, they should know what they are listening for. Rhythm, articulation, tone, movement, and musical character can be prepared before the first note is played.

Discovery-based activities—marching a rhythm, tracing with a finger, using a whiteboard, or physically experiencing direction and rotation—allow students to encounter a concept before seeing its notation or terminology.

As Dr. Marlais reminded attendees, teaching is not always telling. It is a dialogue. A student who is asked to listen, experiment, and evaluate becomes an active participant in the learning process.

(Drip, Drop and Roll Continued on Page 8)

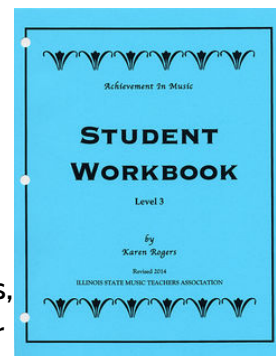
Rally Promotes Student Growth & Achievement

By Sheryl Kjelland

I would like to encourage you to be a part of a Rally with your local MTA group sometime this school year. It is a good thing for your students and it is a good thing for teachers as well.

As you are preparing for a new year of teaching, you are probably thinking about theory options for your students. I would like to suggest something that I have used successfully for several years. The Illinois Music Teachers Association publishes workbooks to complement their Rally materials. Our Rallies in North Dakota are built on the Illinois Rally Materials, so these workbooks work very well in Rally preparation, both for students and teachers.

These workbooks are available to coordinate with the various levels of Rally, beginning with Level 2. (I have study sheets for levels 1A, 1B, and 1C for you. Let me know if you need them.) The Level 2 and higher workbooks provide excellent preparation for students who will be taking Rally tests and they provide an excellent learning experience even for students who are not involved with Rally. These workbooks contain exercises in notation, rhythm, terms, music signs, aural skills, harmonization, score analysis, sight reading, transposition, composers, and they also contain technique skills that are all written out for your student, such as 5 finger patterns, scales, chord progressions, tonic triads, arpeggios. There are play back, interval identification, and dictation examples included for use by teachers and students.



You can order these workbooks directly from the Illinois Music Teachers Association. Go to their website ISMTA.org and follow the instructions listed under "AIM Publications." If you have problems with ordering through the ISMTA website, give me a call, and I will do what I can to help. 701-520-9975 or okjellan@polarcomm.com

And ISMTA has a binder available that has all the parts of a Rally available for you and your students to use. That is also available on ISMTA.org.

Also, please set the date for your local Piano Rally and get that date to me as soon as you can. It is helpful for me to have that information as soon as possible, especially if you plan to have your Piano Rally this fall.

NDMTA 2026 Commissioned Composer: Emily Black Driscoll

Emily Black Driscoll's NDMTA commissioned piece for 2026 was an uplifting song of hope. Emily said "I felt compelled to write a piece that tried to capture the tenacity and resilience of hope, and sent a few words to my friend and regional poet Michelle Rose as inspiration: 'Hope is a thing with Teeth.' From there, the rest of the poem was birthed, which served as a sort of kindred spirit and companion to the song."

The moods of the piece were portrayed by violin, cello, piano, and voice. The vocal "Amen" at the end of the piece was a collection of recorded voices from North Dakota's churches, soloists, and vocal ensembles.



Violin: Melyssa Ostler, Piano: Emily Black Driscoll, Cello: Victor Chukw

(Driscoll Continued on page 7)

Dr. Dianna Anderson NDMTA 2026 Foundation Fellow

by Lisa Schuler

Once the term of NDMTA President is completed, the president moves into the role of Past President and Foundation Fellow Chair. This is another rewarding position to have on the board! The Foundation Chair oversees the nomination of the Fellow and then cheerleads for that nominee. NDMTA members are encouraged to donate to the Foundation in honor of the nominee. Being NDMTA members are THE BEST, it is usually a very easy goal that is met every year.



This year we have been collecting funds in honor of Dr. Dianna Anderson of Minot. As of August 2026, there has been \$1,435 raised. Our goal is \$1,500. If you would like to donate, please send a check with Dianna Anderson written in the memo line to Jenny Thomason in care of MTNA, 600 Vine St. Ste. 1710, Cincinnati, OH 45202. You may also donate at mtna.org. Again, be sure to list Dianna Anderson as the Fellow.

Here is the list of donors we would like to recognize so far:

Anne Morris, Eileen Geske, FMMTA, Kathleen Johnson, Mary Anderson, Maxine Beseler, Monica Wolf, Sister Bernadette Trecker, Vangie Johnson Parker, Vonne Tamavsky, Wanda Wavra, Dr. Bob Groves, Lisa Schuler, Priscilla Keogh, Sharon Gegelmann, Gloria Bethke, Lynnae Wiitamaki, Mary Leaf Schneider, Michelle Schumacher, Amy Mercer, Cynthia Johnson, Sheryl Kjelland, and others who paid in cash during the state conference.

Supporting the MTNA Foundation Program has proven fruitful for NDMTA. In June we were awarded a \$1000 grant to help fund the state conference and its efforts to celebrate 150 of MTNA and 70 years of NDMTA. The foundation also provided funds in the past to award NDMTA as State Affiliate of the Year and LAMTA as Local Affiliate of the Year.

Editor's Note: As of Aug 30, the goal of \$1500.00 has been raised

Thank you again for supporting the foundation!

70th Wedding Anniversary for NDMTA Member Eileen & Donny Geske

Donny and Eileen Geske celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary this past August. They were married on August 26th, 1956. Eileen said that she has been in love with Donny since she was 14 years old. They say their secret to a long and happy marriage is to always forgive each other and stay centered in Christ. Eileen was a 2013 MTNA Foundation Fellow, 2001 NDMTA Teacher of the Year, and 2004 National MTNA Teacher of the Year.

Congratulations to these two!



The History of NDMTA and MTNA

by Lynnae Wiitamaki

Dr. Beth Gigante Klingenstein was the presenter for this year's IMTF Luncheon. Her presentation, titled "The History of NDMTA and MTNA" was a celebration of the 70th year of NDMTA and the 150th year of MTNA.

The very first NDMTA conference was held in Fargo and the first executive board consisted of Mrs. W.H. Temple of Fargo as President, John W. Seale of Jamestown as Vice-President and Mrs. Ray A. Johnson of Fargo as Secretary/Treasurer. Since its beginning, NDMTA conferences have been held in 8 different cities throughout the state and have had many distinguished presenters, including Marvin BlickenstaW, Nelita True, Paul Sheftel, Maurice Hinson, Jane Magrath, Robert Vandall and many others.

Today, there are eight local associations across the state: Badlands MTA (Dickinson), Bismarck-Mandan MTA, Fargo-Moorhead MTA, Greater Grand Forks MTA, Langdon Area MTA, Minot MTA, Upper Valley (Park River/Grafton) MTA and Valley City MTA. The first Foundation Fellow for NDMTA was Janie Green in 2001, and the first Commissioned Composer was Daniel Goode, a UND professor, in 1964. Another honor that is continued is the Teacher of the Year Award, which was granted to Sharon Wesbrook, but is now a general Service to the Profession Award.

Dr. Klingenstein also shared the history of MTNA. In 1876, Theodore Presser and 62 men and women met in Delaware, Ohio to form the national association. Their first executive board consisted of Dr. Eber Tourjee as president, Theodore Presser as Secretary and George Magrath Cole as treasurer. By the second MTNA convention in 1879, there were 175 members in attendance. The first edition of American Music Teacher was published in 1951 and continues to be published today.



The presentation highlighted the rich history and many accomplishments of both NDMTA and MTNA. The many benefits of membership in these organizations are a testament to the value of being part of such long-standing and well-established professional associations.



Service to the Profession Award Recipient Vangie Johnson Parker

Thank you very much for selecting me for the Service to the Profession Award. I feel very honored and beyond humbled to be recognized by such a great organization. The award gives me an even stronger desire to serve you and NDMTA in the best way that I know how.

I want to thank the two associations who nominated me, my wonderful NDMTA board members, and my fellow FMMTA members. Your support has meant the world to me. As I said at our Mini-Conference in Grand Forks, we share this award. It belongs to all of us. It's working together that we accomplish our goals.

~Vangie Johnson Parker

Hope is the thing with Hunger and Teeth
That howls and hunts for Joy's promised feast -
Full of guts and muscled mirth
It grins at ghosts and maps unearthed

Since the future is neither certain nor come
Why relinquish the pen? This story's not done -
No! Smooth your feathers - stretch your wings
and with Spirit and Voice and Courage - sing!

For Hope is the Song with resolute flight
That circles and seeks through darkening night
For Strains to recall and Words ripe with meaning -
While tenaciously dancing to Reality's keening.

Oh Friend, there's those who pray you give in
Or up, or away from this gathering Wind
Who fold their hands and patiently wait
For you to grow tired, or alone, or sedate

But the Fates are feathers themselves in your hand -
For your families, neighbors, your nation, your land -
Written in speech or silence one day
This Present with bear a Sentinel - or Decay

See, Hope is asking for more than a Crumb -
It's holding its hat - begging Enough
To feed Kindness - Beauty - Truth - Plenty to cheer
In tomorrow's filled cups - bellies empty of Fear

For Goodness and Mercy to chase us all down
First, Hope is the thing that never backs down.

"Hope" is the thing with Salt and Grit -
With vision and fight and strength to pitch

Against what strives to crush, to quench
Body and soul - unyielding - unflinched -
It holds the helm through brooding seas -
It's the thing that rises - in drowning Griefs

Bolstered with the bully brine
Hope hoists our hearts to view shorelines
Yet to arrive - we dig in the oars
Unsure of landfall - we follow the Stars.



Popplers Music Competition

The Popplers Music Competition was held Wednesday, August 5th, and the adjudicator was Dr. Helen Marlais. Joshua Gratton, owner of Popplers Music Store, presented the awards to the students at the evening winners recital. We are grateful for the generosity of Popplers who has been making this competition possible.

by Priscilla Keogh

Popplers
Music, Inc.



Elementary awards went to Alex Zhao, student of Amy Mercer, First Place; Gus Pera, student of Tamara Bertram, Second Place; Brooke Gemmill, student of Lisa Schuler, Honorable Mention; and Jocelyn Zhang, student of Yechun Wang, Honorable Mention. The junior high award recipients were Philomena Juve, student of Sydney Crockett, First Place; and Samhita Nooti, student of Tamara Bertram, Honorable Mention. High School First Place winner was Elaine Liu, student of Gloria Bethke.

Gus and Samhita performed on violin and all other competitors were pianists.

Immediately following the competition Dr. Marlais presented a master class with the five piano competitors, a real bonus for students and teachers alike. The winners recital in the evening featured all seven students performing one of the pieces they played in the competition.

A sincere thank you to all the students and their teachers who took part in this event. It is not too early to begin preparing for the next Competition on August 11, 2027 at Moorhead State University.

Practicing with Intention

Effective practice was another major focus. Dr. Marlais encouraged teachers to make the purpose of each practice assignment unmistakably clear. Students should work in manageable units, such as one complete measure plus the following downbeat, rather than repeatedly playing from beginning to end.

Helpful strategies included:

- Dividing music into small, clearly marked practice units
- Using stickers, notes, tokens, or small erasers to identify completed repetitions
- Practicing in groups of three
- Using a timer to maintain focus
- Chunking memory work into approximately five to seven manageable items
- Writing daily practice on paper and reviewing it with the teacher for accountability

Yes, actual pencil on actual paper still has a place in modern pedagogy!

The goal is not simply to accumulate practice minutes, but to work with intention. When students know precisely what they are practicing and how success will be measured, they are more likely to recognize their own progress, and technique resources, including the Festival Collection, In Recital, Sight Reading and Rhythm Every Day, and Energize Your Fingers Every Day series.

Honest, Kind, and Connected Teaching

Perhaps one of the most meaningful reminders from the conference was that good pedagogy is both honest and kind. Teachers should be positive while helping students become as successful as possible with each new concept. Humor can soften correction, build connection, and give students a reason to trust their teacher.



Dr. Marlais modeled this beautifully through her own stories—including the evolving realities of studio policies and her humorous account of intending to publish only one repertoire book before that one project somehow multiplied into hundreds!

Attendees also enjoyed the warm musical partnership between Dr. Marlais and composer Mary Leaf. Their friendship, synergy, and shared expressiveness were delightful to experience. Mary Leaf's Scandinavian Hymn Medley offered a touching contrast to a spirited new dragon-inspired duet, reflecting the imagination and stylistic variety found throughout the conference.

Dr. Marlais also highlighted her integrated curriculum of method books, repertoire, theory, sight-reading, and technique resources, including the Festival Collection, In Recital, Sight Reading and Rhythm Every Day, and Energize Your Fingers Every Day series.

Teachers can continue exploring her ideas at HelenMarlais.com, which offers more than 1,500 free teaching and performance videos. Popplers Music concluded the event with the exciting announcement that it will become the Kawai dealer for North Dakota, South Dakota, and most of Minnesota while continuing to carry Yamaha instruments.



NDMTA Board Meeting Minutes August 5, 2026

Present: Jennifer Flores, Kathleen Johnson, Michelle Kallod, Priscilla Keogh, Sheryl Kjelland, Beth Gigante Klingenstein, Amy Mercer, Vangie Parker, Jessica Poyzer, Lisa Schuler, Michelle Schumacher, Lynnae Wiitamaki, Vanessa Wold

Absent:

Dianna Anderson, Tamara Bertram, Ozzie Johnson

Adoption of the Agenda

Minutes: With no corrections or additions to the minutes, the minutes were approved as emailed.

OFFICER REPORTS

Secretary: Vanessa Wold

Vanessa compiled the January board meeting minutes for distribution to Michelle Kallod for the next newsletter. She replied to email requests from board president, Lisa Schuler. She compiled and submitted her board resignation to board president, Lisa Schuler and reviewed and updated the secretary's job description to be given to Vangie.

Treasurer: Michelle Kallod

Current Balance in Checking: \$27,136.84
Current Balance in Savings: \$15,365.14
Current CD: \$11,278.02. Matures Jan 17, 2027

Michelle paid bills as presented and deposited checks when received. She tracked registrations for the 2026 Conference and prepared the 2026-2027 budget. The treasurer's job description was updated. The files for annual internal audit were sent. Michelle learned that Bell Bank offers 3.01 Money Market Savings, with a \$25,000 minimum balance. Our savings does not meet this threshold, so NDMTA savings will not be moved.

A discussion was held about students cashing their competition checks in a timely manner. Michelle reminded the board that NDMTA will cover the cost of Zoom board meetings when need be. The board then reviewed the budget presented by Michelle Kallod.



Vangie Johnson Parker moved to approve the budget. Jennifer Flores second. Motion passed.

Vice President/Commissioned Composer: Vangie Johnson Parker

Vangie met with the President, Lisa Schuler, to discuss additional details for both the upcoming conference and the new fiscal year responsibilities. She is continuing conversations with Commissioned Composer, Emily Black Driscoll and updated the VP/Commissioned Composer Chair timeline and Job Description for the new VP in August. Vangie wrote an article to promote the Popplers Competition winners and the Premiere of the Commissioned Composer's work for the Grand Forks Herald.

President: Lisa Schuler

Lisa attended the MTNA National Conference in Chicago and accepted the Foundation Fellow Award for Michelle Kallod who was unable to attend the MTNA Gala. She assisted with newsletter submissions. Lisa accepted Tamara Bertram's resignation as Foundation Fellow Chair and took over the position. She was in communication with FMMTA about the 2027 State Conference, set for August 11th-13th at MSUM. The guest clinician will be MTNA Past President, Peter Mack.

Lisa applied for the MTNA State Affiliate Enrichment Grant and received news in June that NDMTA was awarded a \$1,000 grant to be used for the NDMTA Mini Conference to celebrate the 150th year of MTNA and 70th year of NDMTA! She led the board's email vote to edit the Collegiate Eligibility rule for the Popplers Music Competition and continues to create posts on Facebook about upcoming events.

Lisa planned the 2026 Mini Conference at Popplers Music Store in Grand Forks and met with Vice President, Vangie Johnson-Parker, in Grand Forks to go over final plans and the transition of Vangie becoming president in August.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

2026 Mini Conference Report -Lisa Schuler

28 registrations. Received a \$1000 grant from MTNA. She reviewed the conference schedule. Visit Grand Forks was great to work with. They provided welcome bags, badges, and signage free of charge. There is no charge for the venue at Popplers Music Store.

Certification/Service to the Profession – Amy Mercer

Amy solicited nominations for the 2026 Service to the Profession Award. Created ad hoc committee to rank nominations. Ordered and picked up the award. She will present the award at the Annual Meeting on August 6th.

Coordinator of Directory Advertising – Jessica Poyzer

Sent out invitations to advertise in this year's directory. Forwarded information to Michelle Schumacher, editor. She will continue to collect ads. Vangie and Jessica will discuss the payment issue with VCSU. GGFMTA will not be contacted for future advertising until they become active again.

Directory Editor – Michelle Schumacher

Michelle added updates and ads for the directory. She requested updates for local association officers, contact information, president's letter/photo, and local association histories.

Foundation Fellow Chair– Lisa Schuler

Lisa received the Foundation Fellow Chair job description and timeline from Tarama Bertram, who needed to step down. She accepted Michelle Kallod's Foundation Fellow Award on her behalf at the MTNA Conference in Chicago. The total raised for Michelle was \$1,642.37. Fundraising for the 2027 Fellow Nominee, Dr. Dianna Anderson, is \$665.00. A collection will be taken before the Annual Meeting. Beth requested the list of who has donated for confirmation. The board discussed possible Foundation Fellow nominees for 2028 and will vote online after the list of names and backgrounds are reviewed by the board.

Historian – Lynnae Wiitamaki

Lynnae sent copies of photos and newspaper clippings from the NDMTA archives to Beth Klingenstein for use in her IMTF program. Lynnae is putting 2025 and 2026 conference pictures in the scrapbooks and requested pictures from the 2026 national conference in Chicago.

IMTF – Sheryl Kjelland

Upper Valley: 2026 & 2027,
Dickinson: 2028 & 2029,
Minot 2030 & 2031

Sheryl and Upper Valley have prepared for the recital reception and IMTF presentation.

Membership – Dianna Anderson (absent)

Dianna has sent welcome email letters to new members. The current membership is 89 total members; 42 regular, 30 senior, and 17 collegiate. Dianna identified members with 10, 25, or 50 years of membership and prepared certificates for them. Congratulations to Cheryl Dockter, Susan Clambey, and Gloria Coombs for 25 years of membership! Kathleen Johnson added that of our NDMTA members, the average age is 65.1 years. We need to work to attract younger members.

MTNA Competitions – Ozzie Johnson (absent)

Ozzie is working to secure judges for piano, woodwinds, and strings. He is also working with Kathleen Johnson to update competition information on the NDMTA website.

Newsletter Editor – Michelle Kallod

Michelle published and sent April and a shortened June newsletter. She sent several email reminders for the conference. August 19 is the deadline for August Newsletter articles. Michelle double checked & updated the newsletter gmail distribution list with new & renewing members.

Nominating – Priscilla Keogh

Priscilla found a replacement for the position of secretary. Mariah Wilz will fill the position. Motion made by Vangie to accept Mariah Wilz as interim secretary until next term. Second by Kathleen Johnson. Vote conducted. Motion passed. She reported that Ozzie Johnson will be nominated for VP and Vangie Johnson Parker for P at the Annual Meeting.

Popplers Music Competition – Priscilla Keogh

Priscilla prepared an announcement for the newsletter. She received applications from entrants and collected the registration fees. She corresponded with the judge and contacted Popplers to confirm preparations. The judge offered to hold a Master Class with the competition students, which was a success. Priscilla may ask judges to do it at future conferences if time allows.

Rally – Sheryl Kjelland

There were two Music Rallies this year. FMMTA and UVMTA held their events in April. FMMTA had 90 students and 14 teachers involved. UVMTA had 52 students and 4 teachers involved. FMMTA took in \$1,820 for Rally registrations and their Rally expenses were \$1,078.93. UVMTA took in \$1,040 for Rally registrations and their Rally expenses were \$453.30. Lisa Schuler asked Sheryl to write an article to explain and promote the Music Rally in a future newsletter.

Technology – Kathleen Johnson

Kathie did the following on the ndmta.org website:

- * Uploaded all the NDMTA Conference registration, schedule, and information
- * Updated the Popplers Competition registration form on the web site
- * Kept the "Dates to Remember" updated
- * Added the two Newsletters that were sent
- * Added pictures from the MTNA 2026 Conference
- * Added the information and picture of the 2027 Foundation Fellow Nominee
- * Did an in-depth sweep of the website and corrected information that was out of date

Kathie requested pictures from local and state activities. These can also be sent to Lynnae for the scrapbooks.

BUSINESS

Review State Dues: After discussion - Motion: Vangie Johnson moved to increase dues by \$1.00 for 2027-28. \$36 active, \$31 senior, Collegiate will remain free. Second by Priscilla Keough. Voted. Motion passed.

2027 Full Conference: Lynnae Wiitamaki announced that the conference will be held at MSUM Aug 11-13, 2027, with MTNA Past President Peter Mack presenting and playing in a recital. Vangie will see if he will also judge the Popplers Competition.

Removal of Emails from Leadership Page: A discussion was held on how to avoid scammers posing as board members. The topic was tabled.

Chair Binders: It was suggested that positions have a binder to pass on to the next chair. The binder should contain the timeline, job description, past reports, etc.

Mentor Chair: After discussion, Michelle Schumacher moved to create a Mentor Chair position on the board. Second by Vanessa Wold. Voted, motion passed. Vangie will find a member for the position.

Guest Beth Klingenstein: Beth spoke about her position as MTNA President-Elect and access to leadership in MTNA on a regular basis. She shared national leadership updates concerning MTNA's vision, mission, evaluations, and new policies.

LOCAL ASSOCIATION REPORTS

Badlands – Priscilla Keogh.

BMTA planned and presented a workshop featuring Nariaki Sugiura & Simona Barbu. They held election of officers, awarded \$200 IMC scholarships to 2 students, sent programs to Lisa for ASCAP, and made preparations for the state conference.

Bismarck Mandan – Jennifer Flores.

Jennifer is planning a Meet & Greet in September in hopes of getting BMMTA active again.

Fargo Moorhead – Lynnae Wiitamaki.

The February Zoom meeting featured Clinton Pratt from Ohio, who presented on "Practice Makes Perfect?"

- Dr. Robert Groves spoke at our March meeting. His program was titled "Why Students Struggle with Learning What I Try to Teach."
- In April, Vangie Johnson Parker and Anne Morris presented a "Synopsis of the MTNA Conference."
- Rally was held on Saturday, April 11, 2026, at NDSU.

- The annual spring brunch was held at Concordia College in May. The Iva Fillebrown Scholarship junior and senior high winners each performed one piece.
- Met with co-vice presidents Yechun Wang and Tammy Jasperse to discuss program ideas for the upcoming year.
- Secured August 11–13, 2027, with MSUM as the location for the NDMTA Conference.
- Contacted MTNA Past President Peter Mack, who agreed to be our guest clinician for the 2027 NDMTA Conference, which will be held at MSUM.

Greater Grand Forks – Tamara Bertram

No report.

Langdon Area – Lisa Schuler.

Lisa shared how LAMTA earns money for its treasury. Teachers charge \$2.00 per student in the fall. The money from each teacher is then forwarded to the LAMTA treasurer. It is explained to the parents that the money will be used for events sponsored by LAMTA. Costs may include printing of programs, bringing in guest composers, reception costs, etc. LAMTA encourages other locals to do the same.

Minot – Dianna Anderson (absent)

The local has not met recently but members were encouraged to attend the conference.

Northwest – Inactive

Upper Valley – Sheryl Kjelland.

Rally was held on April 18 & 20 with 52 students. They worked on the video for the IMTF session, with Jean Baird putting it together. They made plans for the reception for Wednesday evening reception at the conference.

Valley City – Ozzie Johnson

- No report received

Meeting Adjourned

Upcoming Events - see
www.ndmta.org for more information
October 17, 2026

MTNA Competitions

Valley City State University

April 2-4, 2027

MTNA National Conference
St. Louis, Missouri

August 11, 2027

Popplers Music Competition
Moorhead State University

August 11-13, 2027

NDMTA State Conference
Moorhead State University



Hosted by FMMTA

NDMTA Annual Business Meeting Minutes Aug. 6, 2026

Present: Jean Baird, Maxine Beseler, Jennifer Flores, Sharon Gegelmann, Robert Groves, Joann Herman, Tammy Jasperse, Cynthia Johnson, Kathleen Johnson, Sheryl Johnson, Michelle Kallod, Priscilla Keogh, Beth Gigante Klingenstein, Amy Mercer, Anne Morris, Vangie Johnson Parker, Alice Pekarski, Jessica Poyzer, Mia Presteng, Mary Leaf Schneider, Lisa Schuler, Michelle Schumacher, Kathy Tsen, Lynnae Wiitamaki

Adoption of the Agenda

OFFICER REPORTS

Secretary: Vanessa Wold

Minutes from June 5, 2025 were read. Having no corrections they were approved.

Treasurer: Michelle Kallod

Current Balance in Checking: \$27,136.84
Current Balance in Savings: \$15,365.14
Current CD: \$11,278.02. Matures Jan 17, 2027

The board-approved budget reflected higher-than-projected income and lower-than-projected expenses. Changes include adding reimbursement for Zoom account usage for online board meetings. No income for silent auction at the Popplers conference years, which is every other year. Directories will be digital unless a printed copy is requested. Shared the discussion to increase the annual state dues. Vangie Johnson-Parker moved to increase annual state dues by \$1 for the next fiscal year 2027-28; Kathleen Johnson seconded. Motion carried without opposition. New rates: \$36 active, \$31 senior; collegiate membership remains free.

Vice President/Commissioned Composer: Vangie Johnson Parker

Emily Black Driscoll served as the 2026 commissioned composer; Amy Mercer was announced as the 2027 commissioned composer.

President: Lisa Schuler

Attended Leadership Summit last September and National Conference in Chicago this year where she was honored to accept Michelle Kallod's Foundation Fellow Award. Planning mini conference. Received \$1,000 grant. Edited directory. Shared thanks and appreciation for being president.

2026 Conference Report – Lisa Schuler, LAMTA. This is the second mini conference with the purpose of running an efficient conference with Poppler's Music Store in order to raise money for the full conference and gain new membership. All attendees were encouraged to fill out conference surveys to improve the conference.

Foundation Fellow Report – Lisa Schuler, LAMTA.

Contributions collected were \$715 at this conference to honor Dr. Dianna Anderson as the new foundation fellow. The new total collected is \$1,380 of the \$1,500 goal. Only \$120 to go!

BUSINESS

Announcement of current Chair Positions. Technology-Kathleen Johnson. Competitions chair-Ozzie Johnson. Directory Editor-Michelle Schumacher. Foundation Chair/Past President-Lisa Schuler. Popplers Competition-Priscilla Keough. IMTF-Sheryll Kjelland. Historian-Lynnae Wiitamaki, Nominating Committee-Priscilla Keough. Newsletter Editor-Michelle Kallod. Commissioned Composer-Ozzie Johnson. Rally-Sheryll Kjelland. Membership-Dianna Anderson. Directory Advertising-Jessica Poyzer. Certification/Service to Profession-Amy Mercer. Local Presidents stood for applause.

Current officers, Vangie Johnson-Parker, Michelle Kallod and Vanessa Wold and past officer, Sheryll Kjelland, were presented gifts by Lisa Schuler.

Vangie Johnson-Parker spoke honoring outgoing president, Lisa Schuler, and presented a gift.

Vanessa Wold will be stepping down as secretary. Following the constitution, with the board's approval, president Lisa Schuler appointed Mariah Wilz as interim secretary for the remainder of the term, 1 year respectfully.

Nominations for Vice President and President for 2026-2028

Priscilla Keogh, BLMTA. Vangie Johnson Parker for President. Ozzie Johnson for Vice President.

Election of Officers

Ozzie Johnson for Vice President. Motion by Jennifer Flores, 2nd by Sheryl Kjelland. Vote, motioned carried.

Vangie Johnson-Parker for President. Motion by Kathleen Johnson, 2nd by Michelle Schumacher, voted, motion carried. Installation of Officers. Vangie Johnson Parker accepted and was installed as NDMTA President for 2026-28. Intention for Ozzie Johnson to be installed at the next board meeting.

Further Business or Questions from the Membership

Brief update that local associations are doing well with a couple being inactive. Slow in attracting new members but working on that.

Invitation to the 2027 State Conference – Lynnae Wiitamaki, FMMTA President. Aug 12-13, 2027, at MSUM hosted by FMMTA. Peter Mack will be the presenter.

Meeting adjourned.