



# PSAA-MN NEWS

*News from the Minnesota Chapter of the Penn State Alumni Association*

Website: [www.psumn.com](http://www.psumn.com) Facebook: Penn State Minnesota Alumni Chapter Twitter: @PSUMN

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, FROM EMILY N. ZUBER, '04



*Greetings, MN Nittany Nation!*

First and foremost, I hope this newsletter finds you all safe and healthy.

I really struggled with this year's President's message for many reasons. I can state the obvious, but we all know that 2020 has proven to test us all in some way, shape, or form. Aside from this year's most recent events, this message is tough for me to write because it is my last one as your Chapter President. And, as I mentioned in last year's message, we have a few other Board members retiring from their posts.

I would like to take this time to thank them. Petrina Zaraszczak, for her time as a supporting Vice President to our Chapter; I'm happy to know that she will continue as a Board member. Jim Kaufmann for his time and effort as Secretary, TV Tailgate messaging extraordinaire, and our newsletter orchestra leader—just to name a few. And, finally, a big thank-you to Dan Gordon for his 10-year dedication to our Board and for graciously hosting our annual student send-off at his home and that he recently held the duty of Membership Chair; because of Dan's ideas of how to gain new members and retain current members, our Chapter has seen its highest membership numbers to date!

I've truly appreciated my time as President the last four years. I cannot say thank you enough to those who have volunteered and continue to support our PSAA Chapter and community. As we look to bring on a new President, I would like to stress that in order to keep our Chapter active, we need our MN alumni to continue to step up to the plate.

While this is bittersweet, I know that our Chapter is in great hands and am looking forward to seeing us continue to grow because WE ARE...PENN STATE.

## TIME TO JOIN (OR RE-JOIN) THE CHAPTER!

Our chapter membership year runs from July 1 to June 30, so unless you've recently paid for your 2020-2021 membership, it's time to support your local chapter with a mere \$25 in dues; this covers your entire household. The money helps with operating expenses and also lets us build up our scholarship fund. As the chapter is able, it also donates to THON, Second Harvest Heartland, and Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota. You can definitely feel good about helping your chapter. Chapter membership is open to anyone, not just PSU grads.

With this newsletter is a membership form. Simply complete the form and send it in with your dues, as directed on the form. If you send more than \$25 (some do), use the bottom of the form to indicate where you want the extra to go (e.g., scholarship fund). You can also order chapter shirts.

Want to avoid the need to re-join every year? Lifetime membership is an option. On the membership form, you'll see that if you send in \$300, you (and everyone in your household) will be a chapter member for life.

## WANT TO HELP RUN THE CHAPTER?

As an all-volunteer enterprise, our chapter can only be as vigorous as the effort put out by its members. Our chapter constitution calls for 9 to 15 Board members, and because a few of our longer-serving Board members are stepping down at the end of this month, we need others to step up. If you'd like to help out, send an email to [president@psumn.com](mailto:president@psumn.com).

## UPCOMING DATES/EVENTS

### Application Deadline for Chapter Scholarship

As of this writing, the chapter has not yet received information from the Penn State Alumni Association (PSAA) regarding the application deadline and review/award process for our annual chapter scholarship. When we hear from PSAA, Paige Severson (our chapter scholarship chairperson) will contact the eligible PSU undergraduates who live in our chapter area and provide them with info on how to apply. Additionally, information will be posted to our website, [www.psumn.com](http://www.psumn.com).

### TENTATIVE: Sunday, August 9, Noon to 3:30 PM: Summer Barbecue and Student Send-Off

Join us at a new location: Brookview Park in Golden Valley. We've reserved a picnic shelter there (southwest corner of Hwy 55 and Winnetka Ave.). As in past years, this event will feature food and pop, a beanbag toss tournament, the announcement of our chapter scholarship winner(s), and more, with social distancing guidelines in mind. Park facilities include restrooms and nearby a nearby playground and sand volleyball court.

You don't need to be a chapter member to attend. Just be a PSU student or graduate, or simply a fan of the school. Family and friends are welcome, too!

There's no charge for this, but to help us plan, please use this form to respond:

<https://forms.gle/jcFPCv8VyTmRmHn6A>

**BUT NOTE: Currently, Golden Valley has closed the pavilions at Brookview Park, and Phase III of the "Stay Safe MN Plan" limits outdoor gatherings to 25 people. Under these conditions, we may cancel this event. Please watch your email and our Facebook page (Penn State Minnesota Alumni Chapter) for news as we get closer to the date.**

### Big Ten Alumni Softball Tournament???

Normally, this day-long event (Big Ten alumni groups play each other) occurs in late August, but this is not a normal year. We haven't heard of any plans to have a tournament this year, so we're thinking it's not going to happen. If we hear something, we'll put out a call for people interested in playing.

### TV Tailgates for 2020???

Recently, a Board member Googled "Poor Richard's Bloomington" and saw "Temporarily closed" in the search results. There was no answer at the phone number given on the restaurant's website. We may need another game-watch location. We would welcome your suggestions; send them by email to [president@psumn.com](mailto:president@psumn.com).

Another uncertainty is whether there will be college football at all this year. Penn State seems to be planning on it, but recent reports of COVID-19 illness among various teams (mostly southern) along with Dr. Anthony Fauci's questioning whether a 2020 NFL season might be possible do make one wonder. At any rate, here is the Penn State football schedule as currently shown on GoPSUsports.com:

09/05/20 vs. Kent State	10/03/20 at Michigan	11/07/20 at Nebraska
09/12/20 at Virginia Tech	10/17/20 vs. Iowa	11/14/20 vs. Michigan State
09/19/20 vs. San Jose State	10/24/20 vs. Ohio State	11/21/20 vs. Maryland
09/26/20 vs. Northwestern	10/31/20 at Indiana	11/28/20 at Rutgers

Watch your email and/or our Facebook page (Penn State Minnesota Alumni Chapter) for news as things become more clear. (And again: we'd love to hear suggestions for a new game-watch site, if PR's stays closed.)

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT—DAN GORDON

We finished 2019-2020 with 89 member households, representing 103 PSU alums. This is a record number of members! We beat our previous record by 10 additional members. Last year we hosted the Friday night mixer before the PSU-MN football game; this event helped draw a number of new members. We had 26 new alumni members plus 5 new graduates join our chapter. Our average graduation date moved up by 4 years to 1989, indicated we are having more recent graduates join the chapter.

## TREASURER'S REPORT—DEAN CREIGHTON

As of mid-June 2020, the chapter's checking account balance was \$7960, and the savings account balance was just over \$7900. During the fiscal year, the chapter passed on member contributions and contributed chapter proceeds to the following for the listed amounts:

THON - \$250

Second Harvest Heartland - \$250

Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota - \$350

PSU Student Care Advocacy Fund - \$200

Lake Street Council - \$250

The market value of our Endowed Scholarship Fund, which we use for scholarships to Minnesota students attending Penn State, is \$125,462.66. (The book value is just over \$88,000.) The Chapter Board hopes to be able to make another significant payment to our scholarship endowment fund soon. The Board wishes to thank all members who have contributed toward our scholarship fund beyond their annual dues fee.

## A RECENT EVENT

### May 8: Annual Meeting via Zoom

Our Annual Dinner had been planned to occur on April 18 at Poor Richard's Commonhouse in Bloomington, but the coronavirus torpedoed that event. So instead we set up a Zoom meeting for the evening of Friday, May 8, and invited everyone on our email distribution list to "zoom in." We're not sure why but attendance was light. Besides ten Board members, we were joined by Jim Marusak, Craig & Connie Johnson, and John Butz (thanks, you guys!). Board Officers made presentations and Dean Creighton's Penn State Trivia Quiz was fun—and tough—as usual (congrats to Dan Gordon, winner with 14 of 20 questions correct; Helene Slocum...better luck next time!). If we do another Zoom meeting, be sure to zoom in with us. It's always great to see everyone's smiling faces!

## UPDATES FROM OUR 2019 CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

We asked last year's two scholarship winners to give us a brief report on how their year went. It was quite a year for them. Here's what they had to say.

### From Cali Carper

Reuniting with friends, preparing for classes, and joining clubs—that's how I envisioned my junior year. Instead, my experience this year ended abruptly, but there is much I'm grateful for.

- I was tested. Inaugurating 60 first years residents to Penn State was an overwhelming, chaotic journey.
- I was rewarded. I cherish my residents, staff, and friends, and appreciate the chance to learn as much from them as they hopefully did from me.
- I was frustrated. I prepared all year to study abroad in Amsterdam next fall. My trip was recently cancelled.
- I was recognized. I was featured in *The Daily Collegian* for my study abroad experiences, participated on a student engagement panel, and advised Mock Trial teams throughout the year.
- I was disappointed. I couldn't celebrate my 21st birthday with many of my senior friends, who I never said goodbye to.
- I was motivated. After my cancelled internship, I was offered a summer position remotely. I conduct interviews, write articles, edit podcasts, and create media for Global Innovators Academy.

Still, I found a greater lesson in all that has happened. I realized that good always follows bad. I've been too focused on what was going wrong in my life, I failed to acknowledge when I accomplished something good. A friend of mine recently offered me some advice. She said, "Remember the journey." Reflecting back, I'm content knowing the perspective I gained from my journey this year is leading me to an unexpected but welcome future.

## **From Stacy Brehman**

Hello! My name is Stacy Brehman, and I will be an incoming senior at Penn State University for the 2020-2021 school year. In reflecting on my junior year at PSU, it was definitely one to remember! I had the very humbling opportunity to become a Penn State Dance Marathon (THON) Captain for the Supply Logistics Committee for THON 2020, where I worked on creating inventory systems to better allocate supplies for all pre-THON and THON events. This was an experience of a lifetime that has forever transformed my outlook on philanthropy and service. After THON ended, I was presented with another opportunity to become a Penn State Homecoming Captain serving as a talent coordinator for the Talent Relations Committee. I am still in this role, and I am very excited for Homecoming 2020 to commence as we celebrate the pride of what it means to be a Penn Stater! I am on track to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Politics and an enhanced minor in Russian Studies in 2021 from the College of Liberal Arts as Paterno Fellow and Schreyer Scholar with honors in political science. Before the pandemic, I was scheduled to complete an international internship with a gender-based violence advocacy NGO in Cape Town, South Africa; however, as this opportunity was unable to come to fruition due to travel restrictions, I am fortunate enough to work with this organization remotely this summer! Thank you to the Minnesota Chapter of the Penn State Alumni Association for all of your support within the last year!

## **MY 10 YEARS AS A CHAPTER BOARD MEMBER**

**By Dan Gordon, Penn State Class of 1975**

At the end of June, when my current term is up, I will be retiring from the MN Chapter Board. I still plan on attending our chapter events, and I will be still working with a number of other volunteer activities in the area. The one event that is taking more of my time has been establishing a scholarship endowment similar to the chapter endowment, but with my high school in Pennsylvania. We are now in our second year of offering \$1000 scholarships.

It has been a very rewarding time being a Board member watching the chapter grow. In the spring of 2010, I was asked to be a Board member by Sarah Houle, a fellow employee at General Mills. Shortly after joining, the Chapter President, Brian Binkley, asked if I would be interested in taking over the Treasurer's position. The role had been open a few months and needed some immediate attention and management. I had never held a Treasurer role before in any organization, but I agreed. As part of a long line of engineers on the Board, I brought some of my spreadsheet skills to organizing the funding and make tracking easier. The Treasurer's position collects funds (from dues, PSAA, donations, etc.), deposits them into our bank account, and disperses funds for our various expenses and scholarship endowment. I proudly did that job for 4 years until 2014, when I thought I would try something different. Dean Creighton and I decided to switch roles. I took over Membership Chair and Dean Creighton took over the Treasurer's role and has done a great job since then. Before Dean, Megan Feeser had already started a nice spreadsheet for current members, and had records going back to 1988. I pulled all that information together to a large master sheet and was off and running. We now track dues-paying members going back to the 1980s, and we can show trends in how the chapter is growing, how many new members and new grads join each year, and what is the average graduation year of our members. From the information, we could see we needed to recruit more recent grads and, based on where our members live, organize our event locations to be more easily accessible. We instituted a lifetime membership option and free membership for 1 year to new graduates. Now, after 6 years, I am relinquishing the duties of Membership Chair to Helene Slocum. She will do a super job in the role! The Membership job is a lot like the Treasurer. You take in applications, enter each household data into the spreadsheet and send the funds for dues or donations off to the Treasurer. The duties of Board positions are not difficult. For the most part, the jobs require only one or two hours of work a month to keep the data up to date and present the status at the Board meetings.

Aside from the Board positions, I also volunteered to coordinate the Student Sendoff each summer. Sarah Houle had sponsored the event until she moved back to Pennsylvania in 2011. That year and for the next 8 years I volunteered to host the event at my house. Aside from the incentive to get my backyard looking good, I enjoyed seeing the chapter members and meeting the students from around Minnesota who are going to Penn State. Both of my children, Kelly and Tyler, attended Penn State. I knew the routine of packing up their stuff, mailing some of it to family members in the area, driving the rest out for the 1000-mile journey each fall, moving into the dorms and bringing it all back home in the spring. We also got to know which airports are the cheapest to fly into and out of and which ones you are more likely to get stuck in during winter storms. After 9 years we have the Student Sendoff picnic down to a very efficient effort. Board members show up an hour early and put up tables, decorations, tents, and

chairs and bring the food. I generally volunteered to grill the burgers, hotdogs, or brats for part of the afternoon. With the popularity of cornhole, I built a couple of Penn State boards for the event and our cornhole or beanbag toss tournament has become an annual tradition. Aside from the food and tournament, at the picnic we also announced the scholarship winner and gave out gift cards and prizes.

So how has the chapter changed in the past 10 years? When I first started, football viewings were at Majors in Golden Valley. We were lucky to get 20-30 people. We shared an area with other patrons. Now at Poor Richard's in Bloomington we typically see 30-60 alumni and friends at games in our own room. Our TV Tailgate team, led by Jim Kaufmann, has done a fantastic job of managing that event. We now have decorations to set up and chapter items to sell. Membership was around 50 households when I started on the Board and last year we hit a record 89 households. We had a student sendoff that would bring in 30-40 people with 3 or 4 students. Last year we had 59 attendees in a rainstorm including 10 students. Our scholarship offering was \$2000 in 2010. Today we offer two \$2500 scholarships! We now volunteer each year at Second Harvest Heartland. We donate to Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, to THON, and our now our latest effort: donating to the Lake Street Council in Minneapolis to clean up and rebuild Lake Street. I have seen us host three Friday Mixers before Penn State—Minnesota football games. Last year we had over 300 attendees in what many attendees said was the best event they had been to. Emily Zuber did a fantastic job presenting our chapter live on Facebook and in a local TV interview. Our events are growing, bringing more opportunities to local alumni. We donate more to the local community and our scholarship fund.

It has been great to be part of this growth. For those of you out there who are considering being more involved in the chapter, becoming a Board member is a great opportunity. There are 1-hour meetings every month for the Board members and if you have an officer or the membership role maybe a couple more hours at most a month. For that investment you get to work with some of the most passionate Penn State alumni in the area with whom you share similar interests and experiences. I thank the chapter for the opportunity to be a Board member for this past decade. I wish the new Board Officers and Membership Chair good luck in the future, and I know this new team will continue to grow our chapter.

## MY 5 YEARS AS A CHAPTER BOARD MEMBER

By Jim Kaufmann, Penn State Class of 1972

Dan Gordon is a hard act to follow, that's for sure. Thank you, Dan, for all you've done!

When I retired (in late 2014), after a few months of R&R, I began thinking about volunteer work I could do. As I remember, I attended my first Board meeting at the Student Sendoff in summer 2015 and started fulfilling the chapter Secretary role in the fall of that year, doing the minutes for our monthly Board meetings. As an English major used to taking notes, the job came naturally to me. Also, I had served as Secretary years earlier for a teachers' organization to which I belonged and, more recently, as a member of the executive committee for the medical research group I worked for. To me the Secretary role is important because the Board meeting minutes constitute the raw material of the chapter's history. I know that Jean Anderson, who succeeds me as Secretary, will do a great job.

As the resident English major, the role of newsletter editor also came naturally. At first I continued the chapter tradition of putting out one newsletter per year, in June. This newsletter summarized the previous 12 months, noted upcoming events, and included a ballot for chapter Board elections and a membership form. This was a paper-only copy and was US-mailed to chapter members. Then Jack Yorkovich, a past president of the chapter (thanks, Jack!), observed that much of the "news" was in fact months old, so we switched to a quarterly newsletter, distributed by email to our entire email list, with the June newsletter (plus membership form and election ballot) being US-mailed to chapter members as well. **NOTE: With my retirement from the Board, it is unclear whether the quarterly newsletter will continue. However, the plan is that there will still be a US-mailing to chapter members every June that includes a membership form and an election ballot.** Given the well-established uses of email and social media for communication purposes, the idea of a newsletter seems increasingly quaint, a sort of relic from a bygone era. So watch your email and our chapter's Facebook page for timely news about the chapter.

Our beloved TV Tailgates were something else I helped with (as did other Board members) during my time on the Board. I wrote the weekly email about the upcoming game and sometimes did the Facebook post about it, and (like other Board members) played host at Poor Richard's. Over our time there, I had occasional interactions with Poor Richard's management to coordinate on some matters; all in all, I think PR's worked out well for us.

As a kind of extension of that experience, I also worked with the Best Western Plus Bloomington Hotel to set up the Friday Night Mixer before the PSU-UMN football game last November. This felt like a high-pressure task

because there was a risk that the chapter could lose money on the venture. Emily and I (thanks, Emily!) contacted every Penn State group within about 500 miles and also many groups in Pennsylvania to publicize the event (PSAA also did some publicity). Thankfully, attendance exceeded our break-even point, to everyone's relief.

I'm grateful for having met the people that I did by serving on the Board, and I encourage anyone reading this to pitch in and help the Board do its work. As it's been said, many hands make light work. Board service (as a member, or just an occasional helper) is what keeps this thing going... for the glory of Old State!

Chapter Board Members as of end-June 2020: Emily Zuber, President; Petrina Zaraszczak, Vice President; Dean Creighton, Treasurer; Jim Kaufmann, Secretary; Dan Gordon, Membership Chair; Helene Slocum, Historian; Paige Severson, Scholarship; Jean Anderson, Member At Large; Rob Behler, Member At Large; David Leard, Member At Large; Zach Robinson, Member At Large.

**NOTE: We're always looking for people who are willing to step up and contribute if only in a small way (as Board members or as non-Board committee members) to the work of the chapter. If you'd like to help, please drop an email to [president@psumn.com](mailto:president@psumn.com). Thank you!**