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April 29, 2019

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**Events**

- Duluth Seminar, June 26-28
- ILAC North Dakota, July 29-August 1, 2019
- MN Farmfest, August 6-8

**Join us elsewhere:**



MARL is made possible by many investors' generosity.

**From the Desk of Olga Reuvekamp**



One of my main job responsibilities is to raise funds for MARL. The program would not exist without generosity of many. As a passionate advocate, I can talk about MARL all day. Still, the "ask" comes with fear and vulnerability. Vulnerability exists when we are exposed to something that could harm or hurt us. It's not exactly our natural preference to be vulnerable. The cause is more important than my fear, however.

It takes courage to be vulnerable, or to "be in the arena", as Theodore Roosevelt referred to: *"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*

In this MARL Moments you will read about three individuals in the arena. First, MARL Program Leader Eriks' courageous and vulnerable step in his life. I am very grateful for all Eriks has done. Developing and delivering our curriculum, building relationships, listening and leading, thoughtful, humble and dedicated, with a global Minnesota-native perspective. He taught me how to be a better listener and interpreter. It has been a privilege to have Eriks on our team. We will keep going strong, as Christy Kallevig will continue to work on our team. We will be joined by Toby Spanier, who will be introduced in the next MARL Moments e-newsletter.

Secondly in the arena: Class II alumna Theresia Gillie. She is featured in the MARL alumni series. Third, in today's "MARL Mentions" you will read and watch Paul Wright, Class IX, talk about mental health in farming. MARL participants often show their vulnerable side during the sessions, when trying and learning new things. Speaking in public, asking a question in a full room, trying new foods, and openly discussing political perspectives, are some examples of MARL experiences. MARL makes the difference.

Thank you to all for supporting our dynamic, bridge-building program.



### Grain Gift

To make a gift of grain to MARL, please contact Olga at 507-537-6430 - [olga.reuvekamp@smsu.edu](mailto:olga.reuvekamp@smsu.edu)



Class X's stories and photos are on the blog on the MARL website: <http://www.marlprogram.org/blog/>

Alumni of MARL and their loved ones are invited to the annual conference of ILAC 2019, July 29-August 1, in Dickinson, North Dakota.



INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP ALUMNI CONFERENCE

### [Agenda & Registration](#)

The MARL Board of Directors is looking for visionary, dedicated candidates to be nominated for the board. The function of the MARL Board is of an advisory nature, and typically meets quarterly. Please contact Olga by **May 15** if you have suggested candidates. MARL alumni as well as non-alumni are welcome.

### MARL Class X seminar in Duluth

You are invited to join the Duluth dinner on **Thursday, June 27, 2019**, 6:30 pm, in Duluth. This evening we plan on revealing the Class X international destination. Class X will be traveling abroad, on a global agriculture and rural study trip in February 2020. Contact me to register, and feel free to bring interested friends.

Yours in Agriculture and Rural Leadership,

Olga Reuvekamp  
MARL Executive Director

### From the Desk of Eriks Dunens



As we teach in MARL, one way to be an effective leader is in practicing followership – being an engaged contributor in the success of others. When my wife Elizabeth began applying for graduate programs that would advance her career, it meant being encouraging and supportive as she went through the process of writing statements of purpose, revising applications, and studying for entrance exams. I felt immense pride and happiness when the University of Pennsylvania accepted her application. It also meant I would have the chance to act in a more demonstrative way in support of Elizabeth – moving to the east coast with her. It means I am also stepping away from my role as Program Leader for MARL.

I am feeling a range of emotions as I experience this transition – excitement, sadness, joy, fear, and more. Excitement for Elizabeth and for the possibility of something new in my career. Sadness for moving away from the participants, alumni, board, and

coworkers I have worked with in MARL and Extension. Joy for the kindness and generosity I have experienced as I learned the ropes of MARL. Fear for the unanswered “what ifs” that come with a cross-country move away from family and support systems.

Through the whole process, however, I feel gratitude most strongly and consistently. MARL has provided lasting friendships and unforgettable experiences. I’ve experienced patience, grace, and guidance. I’ve witnessed people opening up their homes, extending invitations to their farms, and sharing of themselves. I especially feel gratitude for Olga Reuvekamp who provides a steady hand as Executive Director and vision for the future of the program; for Christy Kallevig who is bringing so much skill, talent and passion to the teaching and execution of the seminars; and to Toby Spanier who is joining as a Program Leader for his willingness to go back to this agricultural roots to share the wisdom and experience from his twenty years of doing leadership development. With these three in place with MARL, I transition out with confidence knowing that MARL is in good hands and will continue to be the premier leadership development experience in Minnesota.

While Elizabeth and I plan to return to Minnesota after her four-year program, know that I wish to stay connected to the MARL family in the meantime. Please keep in touch ([dune0007@umn.edu](mailto:dune0007@umn.edu)).

With gratitude,

Eriks Dunens

Former MARL Program Leader, Extension Educator University of Minnesota Extension

## MARL Mentions:

- Nathan Nelson (Class VIII) was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives during a special election in District 11B. Congratulations Representative Nelson!
- Dave Marquardt, Class V, was featured at WCCO, talking about the late planting season. [Watch here...](#)
- MARL Class X was featured in The Crookston Times during the three-day seminar in the Red River Valley. [Read more...](#)

## Ag in the Classroom taught by MARL Class X participants

After an educational session with the staff of Minnesota Ag in the Classroom, the thirty participants of MARL Class X are assigned to actually go out to schools, 4-H or other groups, and connect youth with farming. Class X has enthusiastically been teaching at schools across the state. Watch an example of Class X’s Melanie Dickman and Aaron Vadnais in Willmar [here](#).

## Theresa Gillie an Enthusiastic Advocate for MARL



“It’s amazing how MARL can bridge the gap between the agricultural leaders so they can create another idea or see things in a different way to solve the problem or make it manageable,”

Gillie believes one of the most important lessons she learned throughout MARL is that setbacks are a necessary part of leadership. Throughout her experiences, she had times that knocked her out and she needed to get back up. “I learned it is okay to try things. Some won’t work out, but some do. Although it hurt at the time, these experiences taught me to grow, to keep going, and they always opened my eyes to another opportunity,” Gillie said. “I have learned to think big and to try big things. I may fail. I may fall down. However, I

have the skills to get back up and keep trying.” Gillie also understands, “It doesn’t matter how many times I get knocked down, but how many times I get back up that matters most.” [Read more...](#)

*Note: This is the second in a series of articles about past Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership (MARL) members leading up to the 20th anniversary of the program.*



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