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June 30, 2020



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**Events**

- August 17 - N. Mankato: MARL Golf Tournament
- MARL 20 & Class X Graduation Banquet & Auction: January 21, 2021 St. Paul

**Join us elsewhere:**



MARL is made possible by many investors' generosity. Thank you to all for supporting our dynamic, bridge-building program.

**Investor Highlight:**

A special THANKS to **CHS**

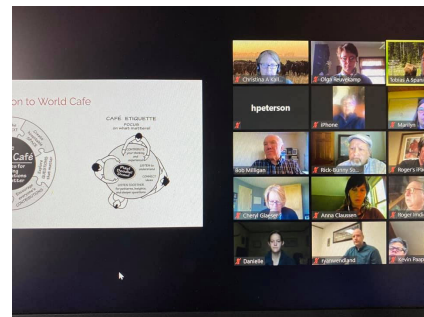
**From the Desk of Olga Reuvekamp**



It has been more than three months ago when the pandemic came to our state. This immediately impacted MARL as Class X was not able to have its graduation and celebration of the 20th anniversary of the program. The participants actually had their final leadership seminar and exit interviews via internet last Thursday. Congratulations Class X on the completion of our rigorous leadership journey!

Graduation and the big 20th anniversary celebration has been postponed until January 21 in St. Paul, in conjunction with Class XI's seminar. Several MARL alumni took the lead and, together with our staff team, organized highly interactive online sessions on "Navigating the impact of COVID-19". This was well attended by alumni and friends. My gratitude to all involved, and particularly to Rick Sommers (Class I) for his work on this. To help you tackle new challenges as a leader during tumultuous times, our team is preparing new, engaging and educational sessions this summer. Keep an eye on your inbox, Facebook and Twitter for updates.

As many, I have spent a lot of time in ZOOM and Webex meetings lately. Even the candidates for Class XI were interviewed online, instead of in-person! While I love meeting everyone in person, I have to admit that the new format created a much leaner process. It forced me to be innovative.



What does that mean for Minnesota's eminent ag/rural leadership program? Our staff team, encouraged by an active Strategy Committee and the MARL board, is embracing innovations as well. When Class XI starts in November, we plan on having new enhancements of the program implemented. The new design allows us to be even more interactive, more engaging and more effective than before. Advancing leaders to be even better prepared to lead through change and navigate a diverse society. This summer we will be working hard on all the elements of the new curriculum, while keeping the unique MARL experience intact. As usual, there will be a great deal for all to learn from one another, which makes it extremely important for all to fully commit. Through this, our goal is to advance Minnesota's leaders in agriculture and rural areas even more effectively than before.

The MARL board of directors was able to meet online and select a new cohort of very motivated, diverse candidates for Class XI. The board also had its elections; a competitive process with highly qualified nominees. With the cancellation of this year's Farmfest, the MARL picnic was unfortunately cancelled as well. We do hope to see many at the –slightly adjusted for safety– golf tournament on August 17 in North Mankato. Find more about this, and other interesting news, below.

Thank you for your continued support, and wishing you a healthy and safe summer.

*"Never let a good crisis go to waste" – Winston Churchill.*

Olga Reuvekamp-Brouwer, Executive Director Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership

Foundation, Minnesota Soybean Growers, and Absolute Energy for their financial investment in MARL!



**Grain Gift**

To make a gift of grain to MARL, please contact Olga at 605-695-4446 (Mob) - olga.reuvekamp@smsu.edu

**From the Desk of Toby Spanier**



A lot has changed since I last wrote in the MARL e-newsletter. In February, MARL class X traveled to Cambodia and Taiwan for their international study tour. Thankfully, we were able to travel and return back to the USA safely without disruption. Then in March our lives were significantly altered due to COVID-19. This pandemic has changed the way most of us have experienced everyday activities. We are managing and navigating MARL, our businesses, farm operations, families, and social interactions like never before. Then on May 25, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, was killed by a Minneapolis Police Officer. This symbol of yet another unarmed black person being killed, led to a state, national and global chorus of protests that have called for police reform and anti-racist behavior in institutions and communities.

One key learning I have had through COVID-19 and the global calls for social justice is the value and need for effective leadership during uncertain and chaotic times. We have likely heard chats from the recent protest, "No justice, No Peace". I concur and add "No leadership, No Positive Results". The need for leadership education and development is more important now than ever.

As a leader it is important to understand how the brain functions in uncertain times. Much of our motivation driving social behavior is governed by an overarching organizing principle of minimizing threat and maximizing reward (Gordon, 2000). The SCARF model summarizes the common factors that can activate a reward or threat response in social situations.

The SCARF model involves five domains of human social experience: Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness and Fairness. Status is about relative importance to others. Certainty concerns being able to predict the future. Autonomy provides a sense of control over events. Relatedness is a sense of safety with others, of friend rather than foe. And fairness is a perception of fair exchange between people. These five domains activate either the 'primary reward' or 'primary threat' circuitry (and associated networks) of the brain.

Although a job is often regarded as a purely economic transaction, in which people exchange their labor for financial compensation, the brain experiences the workplace first and foremost as a social system...

Leaders who understand this dynamic can more effectively engage their colleagues and employees' best talents, support collaborative teams, and create an environment that fosters productive change. Indeed, the ability to intentionally address the social brain in the service of optimal performance will be a distinguishing leadership capability in the uncertain and chaotic years ahead.

In the coming months and year, watch for some exciting and innovative enhancements to the MARL program. We need to continue to innovate and look for ways to meet the leadership needs of our agricultural and rural communities. MARL is more important than ever!

Toby Spanier  
MARL Program Co-Leader/Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension

**Class XI Announcement**

The MARL Board of Directors had the difficult to select from a strong pool of applicants. The first seminar of Class XI will be held in St. Paul on November 23-24. Please welcome and congratulate the following candidates:

- Haley Ammann-Ekstrom, Welcome
- Dylan Barth, Lakeville
- Quyntin Brandt, Shakopee
- Nada Carter, Starbuck
- Joel Dorn, St. Peter
- Erik Evans, Fridley
- Shannon Gegner, Redwood Falls
- Elizabeth Golombiecki, Morris
- Holly Hatlewick, Granite Falls
- Cheryal Hills, Brainerd
- Chelsea Honnette, Jackson
- Katie Knapp, Minneapolis
- Ausin Ludowese, Stewart
- Steven Marsh, Gonvick
- Sarah McCall, Fairmont
- Jessica Miller, Mankato
- Deborah Mills, Lake City
- Kim Neumann, Wabasso
- Robert Orsten, Willmar
- Jesse Pabst, Pennock
- Kaelyn Platz, Pemberton
- Brad Schloesser, St. Peter
- Amy Smith, Rockford
- Jana Stangler, Utica
- Brittany Ullrich, Detroit Lakes
- Dan Vagle, Lancaster
- Charlie Vogel, Thief River Falls
- Roy Wookey, New London



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## 9th MARL Golf Tournament - August 17, N. Mankato



Join us for the 9th annual MARL Golf Tournament on Monday, August 17th, 2020 at the North Links Golf Course in North Mankato. Check-in starts at 11:00 a.m., with tee-times starting at 12:30 p.m.. Dinner, silent auction and snacks-to-go. No lunch or program due to COVID-19 adjustments. Single players and teams are welcome. Register for the Early Bird fee of \$70 by August 14th. Sponsorships and Silent Auction Items welcome!

[Click Here to Register](#)

