

NORTH AMERICAN REGION LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 21-23, 2019

NORTH AMERICAN REGION
CALL TO BE FAMILY
DBA Lutheran Marriage Encounter
Dan & Charlotte Ricks
Secretary Couple
1725 W. Lake Ave.
Peoria, IL 61614
Phone (309) 682-7273
dcrLME1094@comcast.net
June 21-23, 2019

Dear Lovers,

This package provides the minutes of the NAR Board Meeting that was held June 21 to 23, 2019 at the Crowne Plaza in St. Louis, MO.

The minutes record the proceedings of the meeting. We attempt to avoid repeating the contents of the prepared District and Staff reports, so please read the entire package for completeness.

Please Note: The posted reports are prepared before the meeting for presentation and discussion. Concerns, requests and proposals may be modified during the meeting, so the reports attached to the minutes may not reflect decisions of the board. Matters of consensus are recorded in the minutes.

Next NAR Board Meeting: The next NAR Board meeting will be a virtual meeting, January 11, 2020, beginning at 11AM EST. The next in person meeting will be held, June 26-28, 2020, location to be determined.

The **NAR Roster** reflects the changes to the NAR Board, as of the date of the meetings.

The **Distribution List** for these minutes is as follows: NAR Lay & Clergy Execs, NAR Staff, District Lay & Clergy Execs, District Finance Couples, Area Lay & Clergy Contact Couples, Area Presenting Couple Coordinators (APCCs), European Region Lay & Clergy Execs, ILME Chair Couple, Canadian Facilitators, and Canadian Finance Couple.

To accommodate distribution of the minutes, the contents will be organized into several sections for easier downloading and printing. The minutes are available to all presenting couples, and are on the www.ILME.org website.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0.1 June 2019 NAR Board meeting minutes

Appendix A – Staff Reports

- A.1 2019 06 India Project Report
- A.2 2019 06 Deeper Report
- A.3 2019 06 NARPCC Report
- A.4 2018 Finance Narrative revised 6-5-19
- A.5 2019 06 Mid-Year Finance Report
- A.6 2018 F-990 EZ Merged
- A.7 2019 06 ER Report to ILME Board
- A.8 2019 06 NARLME Media Report
- A.9 2019 06 NARLME Website Analytics

Appendix B- Presenting Rosters

- B.1 2019 06 District I Presenting Couples
- B.2 2019 06 District II Presenting Couples
- B.3 2019 06 District III Presenting Couples
- B.4 2019 06 District IV Presenting Couples

Appendix C – Leadership Rosters

- C.1 2019 06 District I Leadership Roster
- C.2 2019 06 District I Staff Roster
- C.3 2019 06 District II Leadership Roster
- C.4 2019 06 District III Leadership Roster
- C.5 2019 06 District IV Leadership Roster
- C.6 2019 06 NAR Board Roster and Staff Roster

Appendix D – District Reports

- D.1 2019 06 LME NAR Report District I
- D.2 2019 06 LME NAR Report District II
- D.3 2019 06 LME NAR Report District III
- D.4 2019 06 LME NAR Report District IV

Appendix E – 3RE Video Encounter Updates

- E.1 3RE Video Encounter Facilitators Evaluation D2 Leaders
- E.2 2019 06 LME 3RE Video Encounter Directives for Cost Estimating and Reporting

Appendix F – Miscellaneous and Post Meeting

- F.1 2019 06 Five Point Gold Star Strive to Thrive Review
- F.2 2019 06 LME NAR Meeting Agenda REV 2019 06 14
- F.3 2019 06 NAR Action Items Summary
- F.4 District I Activities 2019
- F.5 Lutheran Formation Weekend outline_012014
- F.6 Testimonials from District I Meeting

NORTH AMERICAN REGION LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 21-23, 2019

Friday, June 21, 2019

Meetings began at 7:00 PM.

NAR Board Attendees – Rufes, Kasts, Leinickes, Redmans, Larsons, Guilfoiles, Prestons, Hartmans, Bates, Heins, Guynns, Fells, Ricks.

Guests from ER – Alanders, Hodnes, Gudmannsdottir/Bjornssons.

Opening with singing of Thrive by Casting Crowns, followed by prayer led by Ed and Emily Kast. Introductions, with each couple introducing themselves and sharing their position on the board. Each person was asked to tell how they felt blessed today.

Small group activity – separated into 6 groups, each group was asked to find 10 things in common. These were not to include things related to LME or being male or female. Many answers were given, with the point being to note that we all have things in common, even outside LME, and of course, to have fun while getting to know one another better.

Meeting with prayer partners to share joys and needs for prayer. Dismissed for the evening.

Saturday, June 22, 2109

Meetings began at 9:00 AM with prayer led by Chris and Cheryl Bates.

Attendees – same as Friday, with addition of Pettingers. Also, Teuschers attended for a short time to give an update on India.

Call for approval of minutes from January 2019 virtual meeting – moved by Larry Guilfoile, seconded by Jean Fell. **Unanimously approved with no changes.**

All oral reports are meant to mention items not in the written reports, which were published for pre-read, and to answer questions from the written reports.

India Report:

Teuschers told of monsoons in India that delayed progress. Subin, the clergy contact, received a new job in another area. He is now working for Lutheran Hour Ministries, which will give him good contacts for the future. Another weekend will not be planned for India until the writing couples have at least 2 talks ready. They are getting back on track and hope to have more news soon.

Staff Reports

Deeper Report:

Larsons reported that we have not had enough new presenters to hold a deeper in several years. We are referring couples to Worldwide Marriage Encounter Deeper Weekends. The WWME cost to attend is \$350 and the event goes from Friday through Monday. They hold about 4 per year in the United States. Couples can register online. New registration procedures are pending. Please contact the NARPCCs prior to registering. We will continue to use this plan until we have enough couples to host a Lutheran Deeper.

NARPCC Report:

Guilfoiles report one change from the published info, District II has only one couple writing, not 2. They asked for feedback on who is using the 3RE Video Encounter instead of, or in addition to, typical weekend format Encounters. District II previewed the 3RE Video Encounter presentations at a board meeting and now have plans to use it in Texas this November. Pettingers said they have done the 3RE Video Encounter in Denver in conjunction with the Methodists.

Finance Report:

Redmans noted that Dream Fund investments resulted in some losses due to stock market changes. Year to date 2019, operating funds are about even with last year at this time. Overall we are holding fewer weekends with fewer couples.

Media/Publicity Report:

This report was not available for pre-read. Leinickes highlighted that views on the website are down slightly from previous years. More people are now using mobile devices to view the website than desktop users. Areas need to be sure the emails for the churches are current to cut down on bounces from the E-Blasts. Phone calls to the churches to verify/confirm emails help also. They use Constant Contact to send these out. It will not allow them to send to addresses that begin with office@... Or admin@..., as this is seen as spam. Try to get someone in each area to take the time to contact the churches and get an email address that is more specific, so that the messages will be received.

Shared by the ER guests - in Norway they pay Google for ads. 20% of registrations come from Internet, with 80% from direct contact. In Finland, the opposite. They use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with most registering on the Internet. Younger couples are using Instagram more than Facebook.

Some of the Facebook ads that were approved to be published have not run due to the fact that Facebook now requires advertisers to adhere to their Non-Discrimination Policy. They require all advertisers to sign a non-discrimination disclosure statement. Ineligibility of same sex and non-married couples to attend the advertised events prevents the Leinicke Group from signing the Facebook policy statement. Rufes began the process of researching Christian discrimination with regard to this policy and have turned over the information to the Pettingers for further follow up.

Everyone should boost any event that is posted on the Facebook page by adding it to your own page, and encouraging others to share. That is free advertising, and it multiplies as each one shares.

There are about 3,500 tri-fold brochures in stock. Let Leinickes know if you need some. They will be recording new videos at the end of the meetings, which will be posted on the Continuing the Journey side of the website. Setting up a booth at church leadership events has been very effective. Let Leinickes know if you need to borrow the banners or table skirts.

****Action Item Reminders ****

Be sure you are sending Post-Encounter Participants Rosters (including only names and email addresses) to your district database coordinators for forwarding to the Leinickes. This is the responsibility of the Encounter ADMIN couple.

A complete Post-Encounter Participants Roster – with ALL participant contact information (names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, wedding dates, etc.) must also be sent to the NAR and District Finance Couples. The NAR Finance Couple MUST receive this information in a timely manner

following each Encounter in order to maintain the master encountered couples database for statistical reporting purposes. **Be sure to include, but CLEARLY note, any couples who *do not* want to be contacted.**

Due to the continual and extensive problems with Formstack, the GLM online registration program, consensus was reached prior to the meeting to switch to Corsizio. This system appears to be far superior to Formstack in its capabilities and will allow additional users real-time tracking of registrations in addition to many other features. The switch to Corsizio requires the switch from PayPal to Stripe for all E-Commerce transactions. This, too, was approved by consensus prior to the meeting. It will take some time to rebuild the registration system, but should solve the issues we had with Formstack.

District Reports

District I:

The Hartville, OH weekend dates mentioned in the pre-read, have been decided. It will be the April option. Schambers in PA plan to retire in 2020 and are working to train another couple to take over for them.

District II:

All areas are struggling to get couples on Encounters. Some areas are looking at using 3RE Video Encounters. The Indianapolis area is growing steadily since its rebirth.

District III:

St. Cloud cancelled in February, but held an Encounter in April with 5 couples. Nebraska held 1 Encounter with 4 couples. In Minnesota, the registration couple is retiring after many years. With the pre-pay Encounters, there were several requests for scholarships. Couples were asked what they could afford, and were directed to a special registration page. Finances came out okay in the end.

District IV:

With low registrations, area couples wonder if the pre-pay policy is a problem; but they have found no proof of that being the case. The California area is getting no responses, even with attending pastor conferences, and offering destination weekends. They have found that working with the Methodist ME has helped.

Lunch

ER Report:

Due to the multiple languages used in the various countries, ER & ILME use English as their common language. Encounters are held in the local language. Board meetings are held in English. Current numbers show 14 Encounters held, with 228 couples attending, ranging from 9 couples up to 25 couples per Encounter. Countries holding Encounters include Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Norway. The total number of Encounters is declining. Denmark has no clergy presenters. Norway is also looking for new presenters. Finland tried pre-pay Encounters, found it difficult to adapt, but it is working. Norway gets funding from the government to cover costs. ER holds Formation Weekends, which are a follow up to the original Encounters for couples who want to dig deeper. They use the outline from the Catholics in England. (The outline has been added to the appendix.) They are seeking to start an InterFaith board in Europe.

The next ILME Family Reunion will be held in Kristiansand, Norway, August 7-9, 2020. Kristiansand is the largest town in the South of Norway, with 70,000 citizens. It is mostly sunny with seashores and lots of islands. Average temperature is 21 Celsius, approximately 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Kjevik is the nearest airport. A private Facebook page, Norway 2020, has been set up for those hoping to attend. Contact Kevin Guynn if you would like to join the group.

ILME Report:

The ILME Board coordinates between the North American Region and European Region. They are currently working on guidelines concerning what constitutes a district, and the handling of ineligible couples' inquiries/attendance on Encounters. A request was made by Sons and Daughters, an organization that sponsors weekends for children of encountered couples, to have its program included in LME events/advertising. Since it is a separate organization affiliated with National ME in Europe, it was decided not to make any official connection with LME during the Encounter, however, information about the program can be given out at post-Encounter events – providing it is noted as a separate program. Update on outreach to Estonia – an Encounter was held in Finland for couples from Estonia 3 years ago. A deeper was held 2 years ago. No couples are writing yet.

InterFaith Report:

There are 8 Faith Expressions still active in the group, down from 12. The Catholics are still discussing ways to shorten LOC talk, with no revisions made yet.

5-Point Gold Star Strive to Thrive Review:

The report highlights most of the results from previous meetings. The 5 points are: Prayer, Personal Development, Pre-Encounter, Encounter Excellence, and Post Encounter.

Beyond the Box:

Action was taken on some of the Beyond the Box ideas listed in the Agenda as noted below. Preliminary discussions took place on those not listed below and will be revisited at a future meeting.

A Post-Encounter video on Constructive and Compassionate Confrontation for inclusion on the GLM/CTJ website will be taped by the Kasts and Leinickes following this meeting.

The Market Research Survey initially discussed at the June, 2018 NAR meeting, has been tabled from action until the June, 2020 NAR meeting.

The previously approved Facebook advertising expansion is currently on-hold due to their anti-discrimination policy.

Guilfoilles will seek recommendations from presenting couples for a 'best of the best' Friday night "Feelings" sample dialogue. Top submissions will be further evaluated by Leinickes for possible videotaping. The final 'best of the best' will be included in the Encounter PPT for optional use during the Encounter. Deadline for submissions: TBD.

LME communities are encouraged to submit photos (or very short video clips) of Post-Encounter activities occurring in your areas to the Leinickes who will put together a professionally narrated short video for inclusion in the Encounter PPT for optional use during the LOC presentation to 'bring to life' involvement in the encountered community. Deadline for submissions: TBD.

Discussion was started regarding streamlining administrative positions. Will revisit most in future meetings. DPCC position was addressed in “Unfinished Business” on Sunday morning.

Devotion:

Led by Guynns. Dialog question: How do I feel when I believe I understand God’s plan for us, but you seem to be hesitant moving in the direction I see God wanting us to go? Open sharing question: How has God shown us the directions He wants us to go during our married life? Time with prayer partners for personal and ministry prayers.

Election of new NAR Lay and Clergy Executives:

Couples on the ballot – John and Jennifer Pettinger for Lay Executives, Ted and Marty Hartman for Clergy Executives. Ballot voting, with 10 eligible couples voting. Unanimous election. Acceptance and congratulations all around.

Meal prayer led by Hartmans. Couples departed to home of Leroy and Fran Ettling for dinner and fellowship. Thanks to the St. Louis community couples for their help with this event. It was enjoyed by all.

Sunday, June 23, 2019

Meetings began at 9:00 AM with The Marriage Prayer led by John and Jennifer Pettinger. Rufes introduced and played the music video: “Don’t Give up on Me” by Andy Grammer and the PS22 choir. They asked the Board not to give up on ME – to continue doing all they can to make Marriage Encounter the very best it can be – for these kids and all future generations.

Action Items Summary Review:

Still working on getting registered in all states as a non-profit organization. Dave and Jean Fell are coordinating. This includes all states where we hold Encounters, states where couples live that attend Encounters, and states in which we receive donations. This is different than tax exemption and different from the corporate registration we have in Washington. Each District needs to gather info for their states and send to Fells, who will send to the contact couple at Worldwide. Use narfinancecouple@gmail.com for the contact on the applications.

Remove the item for Guynns to contact widows from the action items list.

Be sure you are sending Post-Encounter Participants Rosters (names and emails only) to your district database coordinators for forwarding to the Leinickes. A complete Post-Encounter Participants Roster must also be sent to the NAR and District Finance Couples. Be sure to include, but CLEARLY note, any couples that **do not** want to be contacted.

Keep church databases updated.

Other Business:

Due to the significantly smaller numbers of presenters, areas, and Encounters, and in working toward the streamlining of administrative positions, the Guilfoiles (NARPPCS) recommended that the DPCC (District Presenting Couple Coordinators) position be eliminated. According to our Bylaws, only the NAR execs can add or eliminate positions. The Rufes asked for the Board’s input (consensus was

unanimously given) to eliminate the DPCC position. The NAR executives eliminated the position based on those recommendations.

Recognition offered by departing Exec Couples:

Certificates were given to two clergy couples going off the board, Larsons, and Heins, Deeper coordinators - Larsons, NARPPC - Guilfoiles, Secretary Couple – Ricks, Finance Couple – Redmans, Publicity/Media Couple – Leinicks.

Certificates were also sent to other NAR staff couples not in attendance.

Thank you cards and a small gift were presented to the departing Exec couples.

Next Steps:

The newly elected officers shared thoughts on the future of LME. Pruning the vines in the vineyards is needed, as it helps them grow. Apply this to LME, like the life cycle of a church, be aware of the potential life cycle of LME. They hope to form focus groups.

Closing communion led by Ed and Emily Kast.

Installation of new officers led by departing Exec officers and joined by all present.

All joined in singing of “There’s a New World Somewhere”.

Next virtual meeting - January 11, 2020 at 11AM EST

Next in person meeting – June 26-28, 2020, location to be determined.

Meetings adjourned at 11:45 AM.