

The Boards that Never Met (Face to Face)

Chris Kniep, NEAFCS Historian

February 2020 – It started out “normal”. By the end of the month, many staples were in short supply, masks were becoming “every-day” and school, Church, sports events, and more were being cancelled. Imagine being elected to the NEAFCS Board in the Fall of 2019, having that first, initial post-board meeting in Hershey and meeting virtually for the remainder of your term in office. Or being elected virtually in the fall of 2020 and never meeting face to face.



For those of us who have served on the NEAFCS Board and enjoyed the learning, growing, comradery, and “traditions” of face-to-face Board membership, it’s hard to imagine serving on “The Board that Never Met.” Our leaders for the past two years have truly “made history” for our organization, by serving in their respective roles completely by phone, e-mail, and virtual meetings. They made some “tough” decisions like cancelling Annual Sessions and were creative in introducing new initiatives.

To capture their history making, Board members were asked to share their perspectives on serving on “The Board that Never Met.” A few of the comments they shared:

“It has been a pleasure to serve on the 2021 NEAFCS Board. Although we were not able to meet in-person, I feel we connected and supported each other. I feel we gained a respect for each other and were comfortable asking questions or making comments during the meetings. I feel each one of us worked together to make NEAFCS better for all members. I look forward to being able to meet with and spend a little time with all the members.” Pat Brinkman, NEAFCS VP for Professional Development

“I really enjoyed getting to know fellow board members through the “roll call” reflections — amazing what a favorite fall food might reveal about someone’s personality 😊.

Dianne was so creative with our virtual “parties”---she really went above and beyond to make us feel like a family.” Mary Liz Wright, NEAFCS VP for Public Affairs

“As the VP of Member Resources, I had such high hopes to meet in person. Although we didn’t meet in person, our board was extremely close and personal with one another. Although miles apart due to COVID, our board exemplified the true meaning of service and dedication in spite of our unfortunate circumstances.” Michelle Wright, NEAFCS VP for Member Resources

“I missed not meeting fellow Board members in person. We compensated by meeting for “social” events such as the Ice Cream Social in the summer of 2021 and the Board Christmas Party in December 2020. These social events provided opportunity for candid conversation between Board members and an opportunity to become better acquainted. I missed having the individual conversations with board members in which we learn from each other and become bonded.