

EGA needs your vote to update the bylaws

By Vicki Swerdlow, Director of Bylaws

In August, the national EGA Board of Directors approved a number of changes to the organization's national bylaws. To be adopted, these changes require a vote of the EGA membership. Below, I'll review the proposed changes and the reasoning behind each, but first, let's ask two questions.

1. WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THE NATIONAL BYLAWS?

Many people think of an organization's bylaws as an esoteric set of rules designed to be understood only by those "in the know." The fact is, EGA's bylaws are a living, breathing document that describes how *the membership* wants to run EGA. We on the national board are constantly thinking about ways to improve EGA, and this year, we are focused on strengthening organizational leadership.

2. WE JUST VOTED IN A NEW PRESIDENT AND OTHER OFFICERS LAST SUMMER. WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP?

You're right: There will be no national elections in 2026. Some of the proposed bylaws changes look ahead to the 2027 national elections by cleaning up outdated language. But two substantive changes in Article V look beyond and instead address how we ensure our leaders are best prepared to serve EGA.

A NEW OFFICER: THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

EGA leaders at all levels—chapter, region, and national—are volunteers. Nominating committees work hard to find the best candidates, volunteers with passion, skill, and, where possible, leadership experience. But ask any current or former president of EGA, and she'll tell you that nothing fully prepares one to serve as national president.

The Structure Team of the "Securing Our Future" planning effort recommended introducing a "training year" for

incoming presidents. They pointed out that spending a year as president-elect, a year that would overlap with the last year of the current president's tenure, would make the incoming president more effective from day one of her own presidency. President Lea Peacock agrees. Please see her president's letter on p. 2 for her thoughts.

If you look at the chart on the opposite page showing the progression of officer terms, both current and proposed, you'll see that we are asking Lea to serve an additional year as president to implement this change. This extra year is allowed under our current bylaws, and Lea has graciously agreed to stay on. If the proposed changes are approved, the first president-elect will be nominated in 2027. That person will serve one year shadowing Lea, then begin his or her own three-year term in 2028.

ELIMINATING CONCURRENT TERMS

One of the greatest challenges for our leaders is maintaining focus. We all know about the distractions for an embroiderer: That new project is calling, and that work-in-progress is so close to being done!

Imagine now that you are the national EGA secretary. Your needlework calls to you, but you are also preparing 20 meeting packets per year, finishing up minutes from the last meeting, managing inter-meeting voting, etc. And then you get the news that the secretary of your local chapter has unexpectedly resigned. The chapter needs a new secretary *now*. You know that job; you used to be chapter secretary. You can easily slip into that position and juggle one more ball.

Does this scenario sound familiar? We turn to existing leaders to take on another position all too often. And therein lies the difficulty: To be most effective, a leader must focus on their primary responsibilities.

Furthermore, if you, the hypothetical national secretary, fill this chapter position, it precludes someone else from

stepping up to serve. You have inadvertently narrowed the pool of those who are leading EGA today and might lead at higher levels tomorrow.

The current bylaws already prohibit chapter presidents and region directors from serving simultaneously as national officers or directors. Earlier this year, the Executive Committee approved policy changes on this topic. The policy now states that no national officer or director may hold *any* other elected or appointed position in EGA. Proposed bylaws changes will capture this restriction.

SOME LOGISTICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Other proposed changes to the bylaws include:

- Removing confusing language in Article IV that refers to chapters as “members.” Since the adoption of One Member One Vote (OMOV) in 2023, individuals, not chapters, are members.
- Clarifying nominations by petition and eliminating language around in-person voting in Article V. We are cleaning up language that harkens back to the days before OMOV, when officers were elected at an in-person annual meeting.

- Improving language in Article VIII about the executive committee quorum. The current language refers to “voting” members. There are no non-voting executive committee members, so on the recommendation of our parliamentarian, Ruth Ryan, PRP, we are removing the word “voting.”

IN CONCLUSION: PLEASE VOTE!

A red-line copy of the bylaws with the proposed changes may be found at egausa.org/vote. Please take the time to read through—or at least “glance at”; I know that needlework project is calling to you—the document and send me any questions or concerns at bylaws@egausa.org. Electronic voting will open on Jan. 2, 2026, and close on Jan. 30, 2026. Thank you in advance for supporting EGA in this way! ■



VICKI SWERDLOW is EGA's director of bylaws.

Staggering of EGA Officer and National Director Terms

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8
CURRENT	VICE PRESIDENT			VICE PRESIDENT				
	SECRETARY			SECRETARY				
	DIRECTOR OF BYLAWS			DIRECTOR OF BYLAWS				
		PRESIDENT			PRESIDENT			
		TREASURER			TREASURER			
		DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION			DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION			
		DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & MEMBERSHIP			DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & MEMBERSHIP			
	PROPOSED	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	
VICE PRESIDENT TRUDY POHAWPATCHOKO			VICE PRESIDENT					
SECRETARY CHRISTENE THURSTON			SECRETARY					
DIRECTOR OF BYLAWS VICKI SWERDLOW			DIRECTOR OF BYLAWS					
				PRES-ELECT				
PRES KAREN H.		PRESIDENT LEA PEACOCK				PRESIDENT		
TREAS PAM C.		TREASURER SHERRI HAGAR			TREASURER			
DOE VAL R.		DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION DEB BERGER			DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION			
DOMM WENDY L.		DIRECTOR OF MM INA GIBSON			DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & MEMBERSHIP			