

# SERREAM

## Newsletter

Fall 2018

### President's Message: Kay Morcomb

Time flies! And also picks up speed! Coming soon is the Wednesday October 17th SERREAM Fall Legislative and Health Conference. The great variety of topics and expertise of speakers foretells an interesting and informative conference.

At the Homestead, where I live, Dr. Laura Buehler, a podiatrist, came to speak. She is a specialist in foot and ankle surgery at the Rochester Foot and Ankle Clinic. She explained a variety of problems, more than I knew existed, that a podiatrist can alleviate. Later I saw her with a minor but annoying foot problem. Dr. Buehler identified and eliminated the problem. You will find her presentation very informative.

Have you heard of ACE? That stands for Adverse Child Experiences. The ACE Study is a research study conducted by the American health maintenance organization Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ACE effect the behavior and physical and mental health of adults, thereby affecting all of society. This is a public health challenge. Results of this study can help you have a better understanding of others and maybe of yourself. I'm looking forward to the presentation on this topic by Dr. Ruth Charles from Winona State University.

Another speaker at the conference is Susan Bowers, Minnesota State Demographer since 2012. She travels the state talking about the new social and economic realities brought about by recent demographic shifts and brings an understanding of demographic trends to changes in areas including the state's economy and workforce, education, health, immigration, and rural population changes. She earned a Ph.D. in sociology specializing in demography and family sociology. I have seen short clips of her on TV and interviews on TPT's program, Almanac. She stresses the importance of a complete count of everyone living in Minnesota in the upcoming census. Demographics effects redistricting. The number of representatives Minnesota has in Congress depends on our population. Minnesota is close to losing a representative.

The passage of the Pension Bill was an historic event. Now what are the long term projections for pensions? Jay Stoffel, TRA executive director will inform us. There's also the opportunity to hear from REAM leaders and legislative leaders and how the defined benefit pension system benefits everyone in Minnesota.

All of this and a bit of humor, lunch, free flu shots, door prizes and more for only \$20. Don't miss it or let your friends miss this either. Gather a group and attend the SERREAM Fall Legislative and Health Conference. The agenda and a registration form are at the back of the newsletter. Copies may be made for colleagues who have not yet joined SERREAM.

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**Reminder:** Use the Minnesota Political Contribution Refund (PCR) program in this year's election. A Minnesota registered voter may contribute up to \$50 to registered legislative candidates, state office holders, or a political party. Recipients will send you a voucher and form to send to the state for a refund.

**REAM** urges every member to make campaign contributions to the Governor and/or House of Representative Candidate that you support in the 2018 election. Candidates appreciate contributions and it also gives you a chance to promote your concerns. Mention that you are a retired educator who is concerned that your TRA/PERA defined pension plan be maintained.

# SERAM EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

## August 15, 2018

President Kay Morcomb called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM. Present were Ben and Sharon Baratto, Gayle Goetzman, Barbara Hunter, Keith Larson, Kathryn Lastine, Don Leathers, Carol Lozon, Ed Mikulich, Kay Morcomb, Lyle Olson, Phoebe Praxl, Edna Thayer, and Don Zwach.

**Secretary's Report (Sylvia Swede)** Sylvia is away. The May minutes were approved as printed.

**Treasurer's Report (Sharon Baratto)** A few dues are coming in the mail each day and several were brought to the meeting, so an accurate account as of this day is not possible. A complete report will be given at the October conference.

**President's Report (Kay Morcomb)** A message will be in the newsletter.

### **Committee Reports:**

**a. Membership (Ben Baratto)** Memberships are just coming in. The count will be along with the next treasurer's report.

**b. Legislative (Don Leathers)** In the final five minutes of the legislative session the Pension Bill passed unanimously in both houses. A great bipartisan achievement! Many many groups were involved to make this happen. We cannot think that our work is over as we celebrate this event three years in the making. Protecting a defined benefit pension is a continuous job.

**c. Newsletter (Open position)** Articles are due to Kay Morcomb by August 22. Publishing date is September 12.

**d. Educator Award (Edna Thayer)** Due to the cancellation of the April conference the 2018 award will be presented at the October 17th conference. Consider whom you will nominate for 2019.

**e. REAM Report (Don Zwach)** A committee is making a concerted effort to increase membership. A team has traveled to several communities around the state to explain the purpose of REAM and gather members and encourage forming more local units and help established groups increase membership. REAM has improved their web site. Check out the improved web site, MNREAM.org. Don would like a new person to continue his work as SEREAM's representative to REAM.

### **Continuing Business:**

**a.** The cancelled April annual business meeting plans were reviewed for the October conference.

**b.** Plans for the October 17th conference were finalized. The agenda and registration form will be in the newsletter. Each unit is asked to bring a door prize.

**c.** Sylvia Swede and Sharon Baratto are nominated for a second term in their positions. Open positions are president-elect, newsletter editor, and a REAM representative.

### **New Business:**

**a.** Don Zwach is retiring from his position as SEREAM representative to REAM. He has contributed so much for many years but wants to spend more time away in the winter and certainly deserves a lessening of responsibility. That leaves an important role to be fulfilled.

**b.** O-WEA (Owatonna Area) has voted to disaffiliate with SEREAM. Any members in that area may continue to belong to SEREAM and their membership and dues will be sent to Ben and Sharon Baratto.

### **Announcements:**

**a.** Next board meetings – November 14, 2018 and February 20, 2019.

**b.** REAM conference – Monday and Tuesday September 24 and 25 at Jackpot Junction

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 11:05.

Kay Morcomb, substituting for Sylvia

## SERAM Legislative Article Fall 2018

---Don Leathers  
SERAM Legislative Chair

The 2018 Pension Bill is in the books. Governor Dayton signed it in May after legislators on both sides of the aisle worked hard to pass legislation that had been in the works for three years. Retirees can thank Senator Julie Rosen (R) and Representative Tim O'Driscoll (R) for bringing the initiative over the finish line. The bipartisan support for the bill was amazing given the gridlock in St. Paul on several other measures. Keys to the bill include:

- \* 1.0% COLA for 5 years (2019 -2023), then an increase of 0.1% for 5 years to 1.5%
- \* COLA Delay: First COLA granted at age 66 (exempt Rule of 90 or 62/30 years of service).
- \* Employee (teacher) contribution increase: 0.25% beginning 7/1/2023
- \* Employer (school district) contribution increase: 1.25% phased in over 6 years (7.5-8.75%) in 2019-2014.
- \* The bill reduces liabilities to the system immediately by \$3.4 million and lowers the assumption rate from 8.5% to 7.5%.

Perhaps as important as the pension bill is the 2018 general election. Minnesota is in a unique position in that both national Senate seats are in play as is the governorship, all Minnesota House seats and the eight national Congressional seats. These races, almost all competitive, are compelling reasons to get out and vote.

I would urge SERAM members to advocate for candidates of their choice, knock on doors, get involved in phone banks for candidates and discuss the issues with friends and neighbors. More than ever, our democracy is at a critical juncture and sitting on the sidelines cannot be the status quo. Several states are working hard to suppress voter registration, but the greatest voter suppression is when people do NOT vote. Get out and exercise your rights.

Attend a candidate forum and ask representatives what their position is on pension reform, education, transportation, immigration and taxes, among other issues. Tell them that an educated workforce is what works best for Minnesota, and that a public pension helps retirees maintain their economic status and dignity. Point out that our tax dollars should go to sustaining the outstanding way of life for most Minnesotans. Explain to them that we want our state to be a better place for our children and grandchildren, not just a system of tax breaks and giveaways to corporations and the wealthy.

November 6, 2018, is a pivotal date for all Minnesotans. Do your part. Vote to keep our state and country vibrant and responsive to the needs of its people.

**Promote the SERAM conference that will be in  
Rochester on Wednesday October 17, 2018.**

## SERREAM Health Report Spring 2018

---Don Leathers

Don't you recall the memorable 1988 musical hit by Bobby McFerrin, "Don't Worry, Be Happy?" It sparked a generation of Americans to focus on the positive and leave behind what was bothering them. A soothing elixir for the soul back then....and now.

Over the past years I have written health-related articles about the Mediterranean Diet, the impact of yoga on the spirit and the benefits of eating fish in a diet impacted by omega threes. I've lately written about the toxicity of the current political state and how it can affect even the most sane psyche. Today, I will address the issue of happiness in the senior population, which includes me.

Happiness is a key factor in being functional and enjoying your life. People are living longer, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are living happier lives. Studies have shown that the lowest level of life satisfaction and the highest level of anxiety exists in 45-59 year old people. That's probably understandable given the rigors of raising children, saving for college and balancing the checkbook and planning for retirement. However, the "sweet spot" of happiness feelings and life satisfaction lies within the cohort of those between the ages of 65 to 79. Hoorah! Studies further validate that retirement age increases happiness because seniors feel freer to spend time on activities that enrich and promote their own well-being.

Some takeaways from studies on senior happiness:

- \* Married couple have a high degree of happiness.
- \* Retirees are happier if they have some sort of part-time employment to define who they are.
- \* Retirees are happier when they have a certain degree of religious purpose.
- \* A secret of lifelong happiness includes both physical and mental health.
- \* To promote happiness in life, perform work that really matters.
- \* Being content in life involves engaging in relationships that are meaningful
- \* Happiness involves being connected to something greater than oneself.

These are all positive guideline to direct us toward leading productive, meaningful lives in our years of retirement, and all the while striving to be, and stay, content.

You don't have to be a rock star to know that Bobby McFerrin was on to something when he wrote, "Don't Worry, Be Happy."

Go ahead, live your life with purpose. And, put on a big smile. You've earned it.

**SERREAM**  
**2018 Fall Legislative & Health Conference**

**Wednesday, October 17, 2018**  
**Rochester International Event Center (by the Airport)**  
**7333 Airport View Drive SW, Rochester, MN**

**Agenda**

- 8:00 – 8:25            Registration – Coffee, Juice, and Rolls.
- 8:25 – 8:30            Welcome by President Kay Morcomb.
- 8:30 – 9:15            “Podiatry - Keeping Patients on Their Feet” – Dr. Laura Buehler, podiatrist at the Rochester Foot and Ankle Clinic
- 9:15 – 10:10          “Adverse Childhood Experiences -ACE” - Dr. Ruth Charles from Winona State University
- 10:10 - 10:25        REAM Past-President Lonnie Duberstein;  
REAM VP Paul Ehrhard.
- 10:25 – 10:35        **Coffee Break**
- 10:35 - 10:45        Edna Thayer - Humor THAYER-apy.
- 10:45 – 11:35        “Our TRA & PERA Pension Update and 2018-19 Pension Legislative Challenges” - Jay Stoffel, TRA Executive Director
- 11:35 – 11:55        SERREAM Annual Business Meeting. President Kay Morcomb, and Edna Thayer, Award Presentations
- 11:55 – 12:45        **Lunch**
- Free Flu Shots available during lunch - Darryl Thompson, Perimed Services
- You need to show your Medicare Card or Social Security No.
- 12:45 – 1:30            “Minnesota Legislative Challenges in 2019 and 2020” – Speakers unconfirmed
- 1:30 – 1:40            “The role of the REAM Executive Director” - Chuck Hellie, REAM Executive Director
- 1:40 – 2:30            “Minnesota Demographic Changes Effecting our Future” - Susan Brower, Minnesota State Demographer
- 2:30                      Wrap-up and Door Prizes offered by each SERREAM Unit

## **There has to be a better way. I know there is.**

In the last newsletter I tried to answer some questions about how to contact your legislator. Being told you can find it on the computer just is not adequate help. I did my best to explain but knew there had to be a better way.

The better way has arrived. REAM has remodeled their web site – not just an update, but a remodeling. Everyone who has not used MNREAM.org recently needs to check it out.

Enter MNREAM.org and up pops the Home page.

Scroll down to “Legislature” on the lower left.

Click on “Find your legislators”.

There is a box on the left for you to enter your complete address.

Fill in the box and click the search symbol and pronto - pictures and names of your representatives and their district number appear.

In their box you can click on “Show district” and the map shows their district boundaries.

Under the picture click “Contact your member” and a whole page of information about that person appears including how to contact by phone, email or regular mail.

### **Learn more about REAM**

Go to MNREAM.org again. Explore what else is on the Home page including a couple videos. Then go to the top of the page and see the links after Home. Click on – Membership, Pension News, Travel, etc. See what each one offers.

### **Learn more about your government**

Start again at MNREAM.org. This time when you scroll down to “Find Your Legislator” and click on it, instead of entering your name and address look at the links all around the heading **Legislative Coordinating Commission**. Even though there is no action to follow until the January session begins you can learn about the legislative process by exploring those links. Redistricting is one link of current importance.

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## **MEMORIALS:**

Gloria Norman

From: Carl & Rosemary Most

## SAVE THE DATE

The Winona Retired Educators are hosting the SEREAM conference in 2019. The date is Wednesday April 24, 2019. We have reserved a room at the River Port Motel in Winona. The banquet room will easily hold 100 people and has equipment for visual presentations. Stay tuned for more information on menu and presenters.

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Registration For  
SEREAM Fall Legislative and Health Conference  
Wednesday, October 17, 2018  
Rochester International Event Center, 733 Airport View Drive SW  
Rochester, MN

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee (which includes noon lunch) \$20 in advance  
\$25 at the door

Make checks Payable to: SEREAM  
Mail Registration and Check to:  
Don Zwach, 2620 8th St. NE Waseca MN 56093  
507-835-1768 zwach66@gmail.com

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## *SEREAM Membership Form*

Complete this form and mail with \$10.00 per person to:  
Ben Baratto, 779 Bluffview Circle, Winona, MN 55987

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to SEREAM.  
Membership year: September 1, 2018–August 31, 2019

SOUTHEAST RETIRED  
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