

SERREAM

Newsletter

Summer 2018

President's Message: Kay Morcomb

I am writing this message shortly before Memorial Day and remembering my father who fought in the worst American battles of WWI. 2018 is the 100th Anniversary of that war. I have shared the contents of his army trunk and stories of his experiences whenever and where ever possible. Every Memorial Day I go to the 1865 church building next to the public Fremont Cemetery where my parents and other relatives are buried. I helped restore the building several years ago so the traditional Memorial Day programs could continue.

The Waseca local unit had a great conference planned for you last April. Nearly eighty people registered. Regretfully cancellation was forced by the weather. Unbelievable that a major snow storm would happen on **April 18th!** Wondering if the forecast was accurate was stressful. The decision to cancel had to be made several days in advance in order to notify the venue, speakers, and registrants. Then money had to be returned, much extra work for Phoebe Praxl, Don Zwach and his wife Fran. Many many many thanks to Pheobe, Don and Fran.

SERREAM had already booked the Rochester International Event Center for our fall conference. The manager kindly applied our room payment to the fall conference. We are grateful for their services and accommodation.

Now we hope all of you register for the SERREAM Fall Legislative and Health Conference. Last March the SERREAM board planned a full day of speakers for October. Esther Pfeifer has again arranged to have Darryl Thompson give free flu shots during our lunch break. She has done this for many years. Thank you Esther. We will need to squeeze in a brief annual meeting that normally takes place in April. Our next newsletter will have the program and registration form.

Our membership year is from September 1 to August 31, so it will be time to renew membership before the vote. Voting on dues is supposed to be done at the annual meeting which didn't take place. However the board is proposing to keep the dues at \$10. Now the vote won't take place until October but I doubt anyone will object to not changing dues. Remember to invite some new members.

SAVE THE DATE

SERREAM FALL LEGISLATIVE AND HEALTH CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17th 2018

SERREAM EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 16, 2018

President Kay Morcomb called the meeting to order at 9 AM. We welcomed Barbara Hunter, the new representative from Austin. Present were Ben and Sharon Baratto, Gayle Goetzman, Barbara Hunter, Keith Larson, Kay Lastine, Ed Mikulich, Kay Morcomb, Lyle Olson, Sylvia Swede, Edna Thayer, and Don Zwach. A mileage sheet and a breakfast envelope were passed around.

Secretary's Report. (Sylvia Swede) The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as printed.

Treasurer's Report. (Sharon Baratto) The current balance is \$9647.33.

President's Report (Kay Morcomb) Read her article in the newsletter.

Committee Reports

- a. **Membership (Ben Baratto)** We currently have 652 members.
- b. **Legislative (Don Zwach)** The pension bill has passed out of the Ways and Means Committee. It is important to contact one's legislator to vote for a clean bill. It is important also to thank those who vote for it.
- c. **Newsletter** Articles are due to Kay Morcomb by May 23. The newsletter will be published by June 13.
- d. **Educator Award (Edna Thayer)** Because the spring conference had to be cancelled because of the weather, the award will be presented at the fall conference.
- e. **REAM. (Don Zwach)** Leaders are working hard at the legislature and are also working to increase membership by visiting places like Mankato, Blue Earth, Jackson, and Worthington to explain what REAM does and the importance of an active unit.

Continuing Business

- a. Because of the cancellation of the spring conference, the annual business meeting will need to be part of the fall conference.
- b. Plans for the fall conference on October 17 were reviewed. Several presenters have been confirmed and flu shots will again be offered during lunch.
- c. Open positions. We need a president, a president-elect, a newsletter editor, and a REAM representative.

New Business

- a. Because of Thanksgiving, the November board meeting is rescheduled for November 14.
- b. Don Zwach encouraged attendance at the All-Metro Leadership Conference at the Lake Elmo Inn on May 21, 8:30-3.

Announcements

- a. The next board meeting is August 15 at the Homestead at 8:45 AM.
- b. The REAM conference is September 24-25 at Jackpot Junction.
- c. The SERREAM Fall Legislative and Health Conference is October 17 at the Rochester International Event Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05.

Sylvia Swede, Secretary

SERAM Legislative Article Spring 2018

**---Don Leathers
SERAM Legislative Chair**

Great news! After three years of inaction by the Legislature, a pension bill finally passed unanimously in both the Minnesota House and Senate at five minutes before midnight on Sunday, May 20. The bill provides sustainability measures for all four Minnesota public employee systems: TRA, PERA, MSRS and the St. Paul Teacher Retirement Association (SPTRFA). It is a refreshing change from previous sessions.

The plan calls for a 1% COLA for five years (2019-2023). Then increased to 1.5% over five years.

Other important features of the bill include:

- a 0.25 % employee (active teacher) increase in contribution beginning July 1, 2023 from 7.5% of payroll to 7.75%, phased in over six years.
- an employer (school district) increase of 1.25% from 7.5% to 8.75% phased in over six years (2019-2024).
- these measures reduce liabilities by \$2.0 billion for TRA alone.

Chair of the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement [LCPR] Julie Rosen praised the engagement of those who worked for three years on pension sustainability reform and stated that the pension bill contained “significant benefit reforms” as well as contribution rate increases for employees and employers that reflect a “true shared sacrifice.” She further applauded the four public pension systems for diligently working together to affect positive change.

The bill further reduces the rate of assumption from 8.5% to 7.5%, which is in keeping with trends nationwide. The bill also provides funding to school districts to offset the cost of employer contributions, which was a sticking point for the Minnesota School Board Association and school districts around the state. Importantly, the bill’s passage will ensure that Minnesota will continue to receive a Triple A bond rating, which is crucial for economic reasons.

Minnesota Management and Budget Commissioner Myron Frans stated that the bill is a “very important sustainability package” to improve the financial health of the public pension fund and the state of Minnesota. TRA Executive Director Jay Stoffel observed, “This is a great step forward for the retirement security of our members, for the health of the pension fund and for the state of Minnesota.”

The TRA Board of Directors endorsed the sustainability measures with the stipulation that the contribution rates by employers (school districts) be funded by the state and that the legislation reflects the board’s guiding principles of shared commitment, long-term financial stability, intergenerational equity and the recruitment and retaining of teachers in the field.

This is a truly great day of celebration for retirees, active teachers and teachers who will be coming into the field. Our defined-benefit pension has been preserved. That is wonderful news.

SERREAM Health Report Spring 2018

---Don Leathers

Fire Up the Grill

Most of us probably know the expression “Grillin’ is Chillin.” And most of us like to fire up the grill in the summer to enjoy our favorite foods: ribeye, sirloin, New York strip, porterhouse, burgers, ribs and brats. “Woow! I hear ya talkin.” But, maybe we should consider grilling another, more healthy food, fish. A cedar plank, some charcoal or gas can really transform a piece of fish into an exquisite summer dish.

Most of us know that we should be eating fish at least two times a week. But it isn’t easy. Here are a few of the best sustainable fish choices that are healthy for you:

1. Atlantic Mackerel. A strong flavored fish with lots of healthy omega 3s. It delivers 20 grams of protein in a 3-ounce filet. It pairs well with strong seasonings and is awesome with any kind of vegetable.
2. Fresh Coho Salmon. This farmed salmon receives a Super Green rating for environmentally friendly growing practices. A 3-ounce serving delivers between 700 and 1,800 milligrams of omega 3s. Enjoy a Cajun-grilled salmon filet on a crisp toasted bun with creamy avocado spread. Your grill will love you for it.
3. Salmon, wild-caught from Alaska. Wild-caught salmon are healthy for you, 1,200 mg of 3 omegas per 3-ounce serving and it explodes with flavor. Enjoy it as a filet after grilling or in a Roasted Butternut Squash Salad.

Whatever your choice of fish, break out the charcoal and do some “Grillin’ Chillin” this summer.

**Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit.
Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.**

SERREAM EDUCATOR AWARD

Due to the weather cancellation of the spring meeting of SERREAM, the 2018 Educator award will be presented to Kay Morcomb at the Fall Legislative and Health Conference in October. The poem in her honor will be printed in the December newsletter following the presentation.

Consider whom you will nominate for 2019. The criteria for the award will be printed again in the September newsletter.

Edna Thayer, Educator Awards Chairperson

Quotes

Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army.

Edward Everett

Why should society feel responsible only for the education of children, and not for the adults of every age.

Erich Fromm

If someone is going down the wrong road, he doesn't need motivation to speed him up. What he needs is education to turn him around.

Jim Rohn

Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterwards.

Vernon Law

Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.

Chinese proverb

Learning never exhausts the mind.

Leonardo Da Vinci

It's not just about looking and copying, it's about feeling too.

Paul Cezanne

Success comes in cans, failure in can'ts.

Unknown

Forgot your district number? Here's a way to find it. Go to Google. In the box enter, "Polling place finder – MN Secretary of State". The Voter Information Portal opens up.

Enter your zip code and click 'Go'. The next page asks for your house number. The box after that may not be necessary. The box below says 'Select your street'. Click on the check mark and a list appears that might be quite long. Scroll until you find your street. Click on your street and on 'Go'. If you do not live in a city it will ask for your township. Now you should have a page with the date of the next election, which may be a primary, your polling place, and your precinct and city folk have a ward. Scroll down the page and you can find your district number for Congress, MN Senate, and MN House. If you cannot find what you want, look on the row across the top on the Voter Information Portal and click on 'Find County Election Office'. The name and number of someone who can help is there.

Now that you know your Minnesota District Number close that page and go back to Google. This time enter 'MN State Legislature'. Several choices will appear. Find Legislative Roster and click. This page has a list for the House and for the Senate. At the top of each list is a place to enter your District Number. When you enter your number your representative's name will appear. Click on the name and your legislator's page with biographical information and all the ways your representative can be contacted – email, phone#, office and home address and maybe some Town Hall meetings and much more can be found. Do some browsing. There are many links about your representative's committees, bills authored or co-authored and other information.

Now you are ready to communicate with your representative with comments, questions, your perspective on issues, and hopefully thanks for supporting something important to you. You will be better represented in the Senate and the House if you have contact with your representatives. There are links on how to address representatives.

There are multiple paths to the same destination in a computer. The multiplicity is daunting. Likely more efficient ways than what I have presented are available. But to answer some questions on how to contact your legislator I practiced this path to explain the steps and it worked for me. I found some interesting links and learned from this and need to do more contacting of legislators too.

Kay Morcomb

MEMORIALS:

Leonette Eikens

Eleanore Bishop and Eileen Lapham Felten
From Shirley and Curt Schroeder

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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