

SERREAM

Newsletter

Winter 2018

President's Message: Kay Morcomb

September and October were busy and exciting months for me. David Morecombe from England came for a two week visit. Yes, we are related; and yes we spell our names differently. What do you do when you want to spend time with company and go to the REAM conference too? Do both! We both like history and spent the afternoon before the conference at the Mankato pow-wow, then took the conference tour to the lower Sioux Agency, the Renville County Museum and related places in the area. Education was not David's field but he was warmly welcomed and he enjoyed the conference. After finally having a pension bill passed, in great dramatic style, last minute, unanimously and with our REAM president, Lonnie Duberstein invited to speak at the signing ceremony, the mood of the conference was very upbeat. The conference was well planned. I particularly liked hearing the featured speaker, Brenda Cassellius, Minnesota Commissioner of Education. Comments I heard on various sessions were all positive. My registration was already made when I found out that I was to be one of the recipients of the 2018 REAM Educator Award. Wow! Another SERREAM member and former president, Cheryl Huettl also received an award. Double Wow!!

The SERREAM Educator Award for 2018 was scheduled to be presented to me at the April conference, which was cancelled because of a snowstorm. Therefore I received that award at the October 17th SERREAM Fall Conference. Diane Lindgren took pictures at the REAM Conference and surprised me with a poster to display at our local RARE meeting and at the SERREAM conference. I have received many congratulations. Anything I have done has been only a small part of the work of many, but feeling the support of many is heartwarming. Many thanks!

The Fall Conference went smoothly this time with no technical problems. Thankfully the first speaker was able to help the second speaker start her power point. The general consensus at our board meeting was that much could be learned from every speaker and the program moved along in a timely fashion. I hope everyone intending to get their flu shot was able to find another easy access to flu shots. Darryl Thompson had a medical situation arise in his family that he had to attend to. He wrote a note to tell Esther Pfeifer who arranged his coming that he could not come. Esther did not get the note until the next day. Columbus Day made mail a day late. The family was very apologetic when they found out what happened. Our board discussed whether to continue offering flu shots. The service has been well used, but more places are offering shots now (I don't know if they are free), so maybe the service at the conference is not as important. Give feedback to your SERREAM Board representative on whether to continue offering free flu shots as we will discuss this again as we plan next fall's conference. For those already filling in their 2019 calendar, the next Fall Conference is Wednesday, October 16th at The Rochester International Event Center.

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

SERREAM Spring Conference and Annual Meeting

hosted by the Winona Area Retired Educators at the River Port Motel in Winona

The banquet room will easily hold 100 people. Let's fill it!

Information on menu, presenters and registration will be in the March newsletter.

SERREAM Fall Legislative and Health Conference October 17, 2018

The SERREAM fall conference was held at the Rochester International Event Center. Pastries, coffee, and juice were provided before the meeting began. Kay Morcomb, SERREAM president, welcomed everyone at 8:25 AM.

8:30 AM. Dr. Laura Buehler, podiatrist at the Rochester Foot and Ankle Clinic, explained what a podiatrist does, how to prevent problems, and how she deals with problems related to diabetes, arthritis, and gout.

9:15 AM. Dr. Ruth Charles of Winona State is interested in building self-healing communities. She explained how adverse childhood experiences affect the brain and how a stable, caring adult can help a child build resilience.

10:10 AM. REAM past-president Lonnie Duberstein said that REAM is growing and is recognized as a significant voice for teachers. Some REAM members have spent lots of time at the legislature, which helped to secure the omnibus pension bill. REAM vice-president Paul Ehrhard said that the REAM Action Committee (RAC) is organizing the western part of the state. SERREAM is a model for this organizing. He also emphasized the importance of voting in November.

10:35 AM. After a coffee break, Edna Thayer gave us some humorous Thayer-apy.

10:45 AM. Jay Stoffer, TRA Executive Director, gave us a TRA update. \$1.8 billion in annual payments benefit the state economy. The average retirement age is 62.9; the average monthly benefit is \$2417. It took three years to get the pension bill passed, and it was passed unanimously. TRA members and retirees are living longer, adding significant cost to the pension fund. The investment return assumption has been lowered to 7.5%. We must insure that commitments to the fund are funded. The biennial budget for 2020 and 2021 will be set in the 2019 session.

11:35 AM. Because weather caused a cancellation of the spring meeting, Kay Morcomb called a business meeting to order. Minutes of the April 26, 2017 meeting were approved as printed. Sharon Baratto presented the treasurer's report. We have a balance of \$10,873.43. We have 664 members. So far 264 have paid for 2019.

Kay recognized the SERREAM board, the Spring Conference committee members, and the REAM board attendees.

Volunteers are needed for editor of the newsletter and the web master.

It was m/s/c to keep dues at \$10.

Kay Morcomb was elected president, Sylvia Swede was elected secretary, and Sharon Baratto was elected as treasurer.

The next SERREAM Board meeting is November 18, 2018, and the 2019 Annual Meeting and Spring Conference will be held Wednesday, April 24, at the Riverport Inn in Winona.

After adjournment of the business meeting, Kay Morcomb was presented with the Educator Award.

12:45 PM. After lunch, Senator David Senjem and Representative Nels Pierson spoke about the issues facing the 2019 legislative session, which included the state budget, tax changes, sports betting, capital investment, transportation, and K-12 funding.

1:30 PM. Chuck Hellie, REAM Executive Director, spoke of the role of the executive director, trips sponsored by REAM, and the website, MNREAM.ORG. The REAM conference will be held September 10-11 at the Prairie's Edge Casino, Granite Falls.

1:40 PM. Susan Brower, MN State Demographer, spoke of the demographic changes affecting our future. An aging population will affect the work force, health care, and pensions.

2:30 PM. Door prizes were awarded. 81 persons attended.

Sylvia Swede, Secretary

SEREAM EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 14, 2018

President Kay Morcomb called the meeting to order at 9:12 AM. Present were Barbara Hunter, Kathryn Lastine, Don Leathers, Ed Mikulich, Kay Morcomb, Lyle Olson, Phoebe Praxl, Sylvia Swede, Edna Thayer, and Don Zwach. Guest: Fran 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 The balance as of October 17 is \$10,873.43.

President's Report (Kay Morcomb) We need to continue to be concerned about our pension and stay involved.

Committee Reports:

- a. **Membership:** As of October 17 we have 664 members. 264 have paid for 2019.
- b. **Legislative (Don Leathers)** It is important that the employer contributions to the pension fund come from the state.
- c. **Health (Don Leathers)** He will write something about the importance of history.
- d. **Newsletter** The newsletter editor position is still open. Articles for the December 12 issue are due to Kay Morcomb by November 21.
- e. **Educator Awards: (Edna Thayer)** January 31 is the deadline for nominations.
- f. **REAM (Don Zwach)** Stay informed on public pension issues. Visit the REAM website: MNREAM.ORG

Check Pension News and PIN (Pension Issues in the News). An informed, active REAM membership can be a powerful force and make a difference in legislation that affects the TRA/PERA pension. REAM board members have visited Mankato, Worthington, and Blue Earth to emphasize the importance of active units. We need to reach out to other locals as well. We need another retired person on the TRA Board.

Continuing Business:

- a. September REAM Convention. It was upbeat and positive. 86 attended. How can we increase attendance? The 2019 convention will be held in Granite Falls.
- b. October SEREAM Conference. 81 attended. There was a good variety of speakers.
- c. Leadership needs. SEREAM needs a president-elect and a new representative from SEREAM to REAM.

New Business:

- a. The planning meeting for the SEREAM Fall Conference will be held March 27 at the Homestead in Rochester at 8:45 AM.
- b. Barbara Hunter has agreed to be the chair for the fall conference on October 16, 2019 at the Rochester International Event Center. It was m/s/c to keep the pre-registration fee at \$20 with \$25 at the door. There will be a buffet lunch.

Announcements:

The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 20, 2019 at 8:45 AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:39 AM.

Sylvia Swede, Secretary

SERAM Legislative Article Winter 2018

---Don Leathers
SERAM Legislative Chair

The 2018 Fall Legislative & Health Conference was held on Wednesday, October 17, at the Rochester International Events Center. The event was a nice success with 80 SERAM members in attendance from across the area. President Kay Morcomb welcomed the participants after coffee, juice and rolls at 8:25 am. An excellent lunch was served by Events Center staff. The day ended with door prizes from several area units being awarded to the Fortunate Few.

The conference's list of presenters and their messages were outstanding. Dr. Laura Buehler, a podiatrist from the Rochester Foot Clinic, started the presentations going with an detailed discussion of foot ailments that are commonplace in the lives of seniors. There were questions aplenty, and Dr. Buehler answered them all with thorough, visual examples. Next up was Dr. Ruth Charles from Winona State University who spoke on Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACE. She addressed how traumatic situations that a child experiences can have a profound impact later in life. She also discussed ways in which those early life events can be detected, and how therapy can improve a child's social/emotional life. Dr. Charles' presentation was relevant to all of the former educators in the audience, many of whom are grandparents. The emotional appeal of the subject made a deep impression.

REAM Past-President Lonnie Duberstein spoke next. Lonnie related how he was invited by Governor Dayton to speak at the 2018 Omnibus Pension Bill signing last spring. That recognition was a big deal for retirees of all stripes across the state. Lonnie shared how REAM's advocacy for the bill was instrumental in its eventual ratification. Edna Thayer followed with the latest edition of her outrageously funny roadshow: "Humor Thayer-apy." It is wonderful to see normally reserved seniors laugh until their faces turn purple. And, Edna pulls it all off without any notes. An amazing woman.

Next, Jay Stoffel, Executive Director of TRA, shared a PowerPoint with the group about how the new Pension Bill will work going forward. In a tongue-in-cheek manner, he reminded SERAM members in attendance that the new COLA will be 1% beginning January 1. Jay also shared some TRA Fun(d) Facts: Oldest Annuitant: 112 years old, and counting; How long a 2015 retiree can expect to receive benefits: 27 years; and, my personal favorite: Annuitant receiving benefits the longest: Since July 1, 1967. 51 years. Wow! Finally, Jay explained how TRA has freshened up the look of its website to make it more relevant and easier to navigate. It will have a more modern look designed to attract retirees and younger active teachers alike. Check out the newly designed website at minnesotatra.org.

Minnesota State Demographer Susan Brower rounded off the day with a spirited presentation of how an aging population will affect Minnesota's metro and outstate future. Of special significance is the impact retiring Baby Boomers will have on our state workforce, and how recruiting and training both young Minnesotans, out-of-staters and immigrants for jobs in the future will be crucial for our economic growth. Her work as State Demographer has a huge impact on industry, business, schools, medical institutions and virtually every aspect of Minnesota's economy. You can subscribe to the Center's newsletter at Minnesota.gov. It is a very thought-provoking and well-written publication.

The SERAM Spring Conference will be held in Winona in April. Winona is a great little city with tons of things to see and do. The local unit's Planning Committee is up and running, promising to host an outstanding conference next spring. Put it on your tentative calendar. More information will be available in the next newsletter. And, let's get to work early as well and shoot for 100+ participants.

Please have a Joyous Holiday Season. Merry Christmas!

SERAM Health Report Winter 2019

---Don Leathers

“Music Therapy”

As you, my most observant reader, will surely recollect, a year ago I penned a bit of tongue-in-cheek jabberwocky about how to keep one's wits when most Washington politicians are nitwits. Thus far, it appears that most of us have survived the last 22 months with our mental powers at least partially intact. Yet, I suppose we frequently find ourselves engaged in licking even our most superficial of wounds.

The constant bombardment of noise that is the daily newspaper, MSNBC, Fox and network news might force any sane person to take desperate measures. Our emotional circuits have suffered from acute, systematic overload. As a cure for this psychological malady, I have recently discovered a method to cheer the soul that requires no boobtube nor the ability to decipher printed text. My most accidental epiphany: music therapy. As songwriter Jerome Marsden opined: “Sit back, sip on your favorite drink and let the music soothe your soul.”

The GoodTherapy website (goodtherapy.org) defines music therapy as “a type of expressive art therapy” that utilizes music to enhance an individual's “physical, psychological and social well-being” by listening to or writing music, singing or learning to play any of a wide range of musical instruments. Music has been a therapy for centuries and has been demonstrated to “affect many areas of the brain involving emotion, sensation, cognition and movement.” Since music has so many diverse forms, it can be instrumental (Ha! Ha!) in treating many “physical and mental conditions, including hypertension, anxiety and depression.” Music affects people in a variety of ways.

My music therapy sessions actually first occurred quite by accident this October when my wife Marsha and I attended a performance of “Hamilton” in downtown Minneapolis. The life story of Alexander Hamilton, with his humble origins in a small Caribbean Island to become a Founding Father, a writer of the Federalist Papers and the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, was in the eyes of the musical's creator, Lin-Manuel Miranda, a “quintessential” American success story which showcased the triumph of diversity in creating our nation. And the cast reflects that diversity. Heck, how was I to know that Thomas Jefferson was really a Black man? Talk about epiphanies.

“Hamilton's” run in Minnesota is now over, but you can still pick up a copy of the two-disc CD for little over \$20. It contains 46 songs which are beautifully written, performed with elegance and full of historical tidbits from the beginning era of our republic. The politicians of the time are on full display in “Hamilton,” from the title role to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and the villified Aaron Burr. And the singing in the production is on a par with perhaps any musical ever performed.

Granted, “Hamilton” may not exactly be for you, but music therapy might suggest that we all turn off the TV, put down the newspaper and tune into some music. Whether it's your favorite CD, YouTube, Minnesota Public Radio or 105.3 FM, music abounds virtually everywhere in our culture. Plug in, tune in and get some of your own music therapy soon.

'Tis the Season and plenty of great Christmas music is on the airwaves this time of year. Take some time to enjoy it and block out all that noise.

Happy Holidays!

Tribute to Kay Morcomb, 2018 SEREAM Educator Award Recipient

The SEREAM Educator Award goes to Kay Morcomb for 2018.
She's no stranger – for over 4 years as our president she has been seen.
Kay graduated from Lewiston High School in 1958,
And received a B.S. and M.S. in elementary education from Winona State.
Although Kay taught third grade at Jefferson in Rochester for 35 years,
Her contributions were felt in grades K-6 during her career.
For her first sixteen years, Kay had eleven month contracts.
During summer she worked on curriculum planning K-6 sequence of skills and concepts.
She wrote guides for teaching science, English, handwriting, spelling--
Selected, created, & tried materials to use during the school year for teaching.
Kay helped teach nature study classes early when the director brought supplies in the back of
his pickup and taught even in the rain.
Kay served on the science committee to plan Quarry Hill Nature Center and the planetarium
center at Mayo – then helped plan 3rd grade curriculum for the same.
For twenty-two years since Kay's retirement,
RARE, SEREAM, & REAM have benefitted from her involvement.
Kay served on the RARE board and helped plan programs and meetings; for 2 years Kay was
RARE president.
At SEREAM as a 14 year board member and legislative chair from RARE, she did represent.
She chaired the spring conference in 2013,
And has completed her 4th year as president of SEREAM.
For 56 years, Kay has been involved in the AAUW organization.
She served as president for four years and went to D.C. for a national convention.
She worked on many fund raisers including house tour committees in the sixties.
She chaired a Peace and National security group, planned a peace conference and walk for
peace in the seventies.
She was a member of the U.S. Foreign policy group and book club for many years,
And continues her involvement as a volunteer.
In 1999, Kay started a special project in Fremont Township in Winona County.
In 1920, a vacated church property had been purchased by the township cemetery.
Kay initiated fund raising walks to raise funds to restore the building; for six years she was
cemetery trustee.
She recruited volunteers, scrubbed, sanded, painted, and worked to keep up the property.
To aid in her cemetery research she joined three historical societies –
MN State, Winona & Olmsted County, and Rochester Genealogy.
36 educational Road Scholar trips have been enjoyed by Nancy Kampmeier and Kay.
They prepared and presented programs for some along the way.

CONGRATULATIONS, KAY

MEMORIALS:

Everett (Ev) Mueller:

From: Esther Pfeifer, Shirley & Curt Schroeder, Mary Sorum, Gayle Goetzman

Luther Thompson: From: Carl & Rose Mary Most

Ward Huff: From Curt & Shirley Schroeder

SERREAM EDUCATOR AWARD

The nominations are due by the end of January, 2019 for the 2019 SERREAM Educator Awards. Think about whom you might like to nominate from your unit. Is there someone who is active in education and other organizations and who should be recognized for his/her service to the community? Many members are deserving of such recognition. The criteria are:

1. Personal endeavors as a school educator (includes administrative, teaching, secretarial, maintenance, or other support services.
2. Promotion of the causes of education within the community.
3. Services to schools and community as a volunteer worker.
4. Service to retired educator groups at the local, SERREAM, and/or REAM levels.
5. Must be a current SERREAM member.

Nominations may be sent any time before January 31 to the committee chairman:

Edna Thayer
Elysian, MN 56028
507-267-4588
ednathayer@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE

The Winona Retired Educators are hosting the SERREAM 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.

SERREAM 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 SERREAM.

Membership year: September 1, 2018–August 31, 2019

The newsletters can be found at SERREAM.org.

SOUTHEAST RETIRED
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