

# SERREAM

Winter 2019

## *Newsletter*

### **President's Message: Kay Morcomb**

#### **Coming to Us**

REAM's conferences are moved around the state. The 2019 conference was held in Granite Falls. SERREAM was well represented. The 2020 REAM Conference will be held September 28 & 29 at Treasure Island. Since this is in SERREAM's area, let's set a record number from SERREAM attending.

The October 16th SERREAM Conference went well, kudos to Barb Hunter who assumed leadership and organized the conference and to Don Leathers who made many contacts and gathered a great round-up of speakers. Thanks to all other helpers. Every job is important.

Now we look forward to the SERREAM Spring Conference and Annual Meeting. Faribault has been diligently planning for us to come to their community. I think they are ready now, but you will have to wait for the March newsletter for the agenda and registration form. At the April annual meeting we need to vote for a president-elect who becomes president the following year. There are no candidates as yet. To have several candidates would be good for our organization. Suggestions for nominees can be made through your local representative or contact me at kmor.nkamp2@gmail.com. I share a computer with a friend. The computer chooses to put her name at the top of all our correspondence confusing some people, as computers are prone to do.

Although REAM and SERREAM keep us informed through newsletters a conference is a great opportunity to interact with TRA and PERA leaders, legislators, educational speakers and the great volunteer leaders from REAM. Also we have the opportunity to show our support to them.

Volunteers in the past provided our pension system. Only volunteers can preserve it for the future.

Keep volunteerism alive. There is a variety of opportunities at all levels.

Please volunteer for REAM, SERREAM, and local units.

Also show appreciation to active volunteers.

See page 6 for one way.

Don't wait till the deadline to get suggestions to Edna. She needs preparation time for presentations.

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### **SERREAM Newsletter 2nd Save the Date for Spring Conference:**

The Faribault Area Retired Educators (FARE) have a great SERREAM Spring Conference planned with stimulating speakers, great food, and important SERREAM business. Mark your calendars today and spend Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at the Elks Lodge in Faribault for the Spring SERREAM Conference. Plan to spend Earth Day with us and watch for registration details in the next newsletter. Questions may be directed to FARE Co-President, Mary Osborne at 507-330-1992 or mary.osborne10@gmail.com.

# Winter 2019 SEREAM Legislative Report

---Don Leathers

The SEREAM 2019 Fall Health and Legislative Conference was held at the Rochester International Events Center on Wednesday, October 16. The day was packed with excellent speakers, a delicious lunch and opportunities to network with association members from around the area. 54 SEREAM members attended the conference. Admittedly a low number, but what was lacking in quantity was overshadowed by the interest shown by the attendees.

The day began with SEREAM President Kay Morcomb's presentation on the adverse effects of marijuana use, especially on young people. Kay cited research that demonstrated the potential physical and emotional impact that legalizing marijuana for recreational use might have on young people.

The next speakers were two staff members from the Southeast Service Cooperative (SSC) in Rochester. The Coop provides services to school districts and governmental units in Southeastern Minnesota, to ensure that they operate as smoothly as possible. SSC's Amy Grover led off the presentation by discussing the important initiatives the Coop provides its members, from group health insurance to teacher training and student learning activities. She further explained how the Coop is funded and directed attention to several of the staff who work there and their important functions.

Sarah Ness concluded the 45 minute presentation with an overview of two impactful enterprises she has been working on to enhance student learning. The first, STEM Forward, allows school districts and students to collaborate on science and engineering technologies that most school districts could not provide on their own. SSC maintains facilities and an intricate network of engineering "experts" to facilitate staff and student learning in the area of STEM technologies, which include lab work and robotics training. The other initiative Sarah has developed, FUTURE Forward, endeavors to connect high school students in Southeastern Minnesota with career specialists to further enhance student engagement and understanding of the world of business. Both presenters fielded several questions from the audience at the session's end.

Next up was Mansco Perry III, the Executive Director and CIO of the State Board of Investment (SBI). Mr. Perry manages the state's public pension portfolio whose monthly payments directly enrich the lives of SEREAM members. He pointed out in his pension discussion that SBI's portfolio has had returns of 10.5% over the past three years and 8.5% over the past 30 years, resulting in Minnesota's pension fund performance being in the top tier, nationwide. Currently, Mr. Perry is a member of the ultra-exclusive "100 Club" of public pension directors who manage portfolios of \$100+ billion dollars. Conference attendees were highly in tune with Mr. Perry's message.

Jay Stoffel, Executive Director of the Teacher Retirement Association (TRA), was the next speaker. Mr. Stoffel praised retirees for their sacrifice to make the pension fund sustainable by virtue of their willingness to accept the COLA reduction incorporated in the 2018 pension bill. He further pointed out that if all assumptions are realized over time, the TRA fund will be 105% funded by 2048. That is certainly good news, especially for active teachers and those currently entering the profession.

Mr. Stoffel also shared with the group several pension “Fun(d) Facts:”

\*Oldest annuitant: 114 years old

\*Annuitant receiving benefits longest: Since July 1, 1967 (52 years)

\*Number of annuitant age 100 or older: 199 annuitants

\*Lifetime benefits paid to member retiring in 2019: \$712,800

As in the past, TRA has been loyal to SEREAM and its members, and they have willingly travelled to our conferences to keep us abreast of what happening with our pension dollars. We are very fortunate that TRA is such a great teammate.

The final presenter was Angie Ellsworth, a mental health consultant in Southeastern Minnesota. Angie provided attendees with real-life scenarios concerning socio-emotional traumas that she has witnessed and worked on, especially those involving teenagers. Her presentation was thought provoking and rich in detail. Her Q & A with conference participants was, I am told, the highlight of the conference for many.

Before I conclude, I feel compelled to bring up two additional, excellent features of the conference. Humor Thayer-Apy was probably the best it's ever been. Edna Thayer had the entire group in “stitches,” especially the demure Mansco Perry III, who at one point, at least from my perspective, was wiping tears of joy from the corner of his eyes.

Way to go, Edna! You've still got it. Can we book you for next year?

My second, and final, observation concerns the Hospitality Baskets brought to the conference as door prizes. Several of the prizes were top-notch, but the final basket that was presented, (and you might surmise why it was handed out last), was the artful creation of Cheryl Dunlap and Katie Ulwelling from Austin. Way to go, girls!

And, the winner of the basket was Henry Carbone from St. Paul, who drove down to Rochester to talk with the group about the working of the Retired Educators Association of Minnesota (REAM). I couldn't imagine a more deserving recipient.

For those who attended the conference: Thank You.

And, to ALL: have a Merry Christmas and a Joyous Holiday Season!

# SERIAM EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

November 20, 2019

Kay Morcomb, president, called the meeting to order at The Homestead at 9 AM. Present were Ben and Sharon Baratto, Gayle Goetzman-Stolpa, Barbara Hunter, Keith Larson, Don Leathers, Ed Mikulich, Kay Morcomb, Lyle Olson, Sylvia Swede, and Edna Thayer. The mileage sheet and breakfast envelope were passed around.

**Secretary's Report (Sylvia Swede)** The report was approved as printed.

**Treasurer's Report. (Sharon Barrato)** Wells Fargo Checking: \$2884.98; Wells Fargo Savings: \$6877.85; Merchants National Bank Checking: \$369.47. Unit treasurers are asked to send in names of new members right after their first meeting. Persons who hadn't paid for two years were removed from the membership list. It was m/s/c to provide funds to send letters to those removed.

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

## Committee Reports

**Membership (Ben Baratto)** We have 496 members.

**Legislative (Don Leathers)** TRA has made good investments.

**Health (Don Leathers)** Watch for the article in the newsletter

**Newsletter (Open position)**

**Educator Awards (Edna Thayer)** Get names of nominees to Edna as soon as possible.

**REAM (Barb Hunter)** Check the website. The handbook is being updated. The next conference will be at Treasure Island, Red Wing.

## Continuing Business

**REAM Conference.** There were excellent speakers on demographics and dementia.

**Fall Legislative/Health Conference.** 51 attended. There was a good program. It was suggested that an evaluation sheet be given out at registration for more feedback.

**Spring Conference.** Faribault will host the conference on April 22, 2020. It was requested that addresses be put on the registration form. It was m/s/c that the board recommend keeping the dues at \$10 for next year. This will be voted on at the business meeting.

**Leadership needs.** We need a president-elect in 2020.

## New Business

Rochester will be hosting the 2021 Spring Conference.

Is Northfield a new unit? If so, they will need to appoint a member for the SERIAM Board.

The fall planning meeting will be March 25 at 8:45 AM at The Homestead.

The next Board meeting is Wednesday, February 5, at 8:45 AM at The Homestead.

**The meeting was adjourned at 11.**

Sylvia Swede, Secretary

## SERREAM Health Report Winter 2019

Ever have someone pull you aside and tell you that you were a pain..... **in the back?** Of course you haven't. Folks generally refer to some other aspect of the human anatomy when they're trying to lower the boom on you.

But, seriously, the back and, specifically, lower back **pain**, can become a serious issue as we age. We want to stay active and involved in the world we live in, but back pain can slow us down. And, we *don't* want that to happen. Not *yet*.

AARP has some excellent advice for seniors who want to stay on the move and live life fully. Their **#1 suggestion** is to "keep moving," whether it be simply walking, practicing yoga or tai chi, or biking. They are also true believers in the importance of stretching to keep muscles vibrant and functioning like they were when we were younger. Let's take a look at some stretches that improve back function and help us to get "back into the game."

**The Kegel:** This stretch strengthens the most significant muscle in the back, the "transversus abdominus," which kind of sounds like how we felt on Monday morning after a weekend-long keg party while we were in college. The description of the stretch is quite bizarre, so if you're a bit prudent, now is the time to put on the blinders or strap on the Noise Reducing Earphones. AARP suggests that, while toileting, stop your urine flow "midstream" and tighten the muscles around your abdomen for 5 seconds. Progress to 10 seconds and do 3 sets of 10 reps a day. That works fine with my "toileting" schedule. Okay, now take off earphones.

**The Super[wo]man:** This stretch empowers the entire upper and lower back. Lie on your stomach on a flat surface [floor or bed]. Raise your arms and legs at the same time, as though you are flying, for 5 seconds. Keep chin up. Return to start position and repeat 10 times. Almost feel the wind in your hair?

**The Bridge:** Lie on back with arms at the side, knees bent and feet flat. Lift pelvis "to the ceiling." [I'm only kidding]. As high as you can, suffices. Hold 10 seconds. Perform 10 reps. The Bridge has done wonders for my lower back.

**The Rocker:** Assume same position as in the Bridge, but slowly rock knees as far left as possible, hold 5 seconds. Then "rock" right as far as possible with similar "hold." Repeat 10 times. Seniors Citizens "rockin'! That a cool image.

**Posture Check:** One reason for back pain in seniors is poor posture. To perform an alignment check on your posture, work on the following stretch. Stand with back, buttock and heels firmly against a wall. Place a folded towel or two behind your head. Then, press head and back against the wall as if you are trying to bring your belly button to your spine. Repeat 5 times. This same posture check works well when lying flat on your back, either on the floor or in bed.

Now you have some simple stretching exercises to help strengthen your lower back and keep you more actively involved with family, friends and the activities you love. And, isn't that what being a senior is all about? Plus, eating, of course.

We just won't let an ailing "transversus abdominus" keep us down, will we?

## SERREAM EDUCATOR AWARD

The nominations are due by the end of January, 2020 for the 2020 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

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**HELP WANTED** Excellent opportunity for leadership

**Position:** President-elect of the board

**Qualifications:** SERREAM member

Committee experience, have you ever been on a committee?

**Benefits:** Meaningful work protecting the pension of thousands  
Leave a legacy of defined benefits for many thousands more  
Meet new friends  
Travel opportunities to conferences  
Meet your government representatives  
Fast advancement to president  
As president receive a stipend

**Election to position April 22, 2020 Job begins May 20,2020**

**Apply now by email to Kay Morcomb at kmor.nkamp2@gmail.com**

**HELP WANTED** Great opportunity to develop computer skills

**Position:** Newsletter Editor

**Qualifications:** SERREAM member

have a computer and know how to turn it on

**Benefits:** Maintain and/or develop computer skills  
Gratitude of many  
Meaningful work conveying important information  
Congenial co-workers  
Travel opportunities to conferences  
Meet new people

**Orientation April 22, 2020**

**Job begins May 20, 2020**

**Apply now by email to Kay Morcomb at kmor.nkamp2@gmail.com**

**We have received several new members and hope to meet them  
at the spring conference.**

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**MEMORIALS:**

Davis Gilbertson - from Albert Lea Retired Educators  
Dennis Lee Johnson - from Carl & Rosemary Most  
Verdel Sandsmark - from Albert Lea Retired Educators

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***SERAM 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 SERAM.

Membership year: September 1, 2019–August 31, 2020

**The newsletters can be found at [SERAM.org](http://SERAM.org).**

SOUTHEAST RETIRED  
EDUCATORS ASSOC. OF MN  
Ben Baratto  
779 Bluffview Circle  
Winona, MN 55987

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