

SERREAM

Newsletter

Summer 2021

President's Message: Kay Morcomb

After the drought of early May the gentle early rains of the latter part of the month transformed the landscape of Homestead into beautiful lush greenery.

Our deck was power washed soon after, so from our view the whole world had become clean and fresh.

The House Finches chattered and sang. I watched two finches have a conversation. One on the deck to our right would chat and the one on the deck to our left would respond not repeating but with its own answer in different notes. I seemed to be eavesdropping on a private conversation, except not knowing their language all I grasped was the cheerful mood and the responding to one another.

One can only wish that the whole world would be washed and cleansed and transformed so the new normal is beautiful and all inhabitants live in harmony with the earth and with one another enjoying the exchange of ideas.

While Zoom has been great to keep our organization together we look forward to gathering together in person for listening and sharing. Note these events and dates to gather together:

REAM Conference, September 20-21, 2021 in Walker MN

SERREAM Conference, October 20, 2021 in Rochester, MN

Watch for details in coming newsletters.

Please put Wednesday October 20, 2021 on your calendar! That is the date of the Fall Health and Legislative Conference held in Rochester at the International Event Center. It has been two years since we have been able to hold this event. We have informative and fun speakers lined up along with a delicious lunch. We look forward to seeing people!

Barb Hunter, Conference Chair

There has been good feedback over many years on the legislative and health reports by Don Leathers, so we need to let you know that Don has had to trim his commitments and has resigned from the board.

Reread the excellent reports by Curt Hutchins and Timoynihian in the May edition of REAM News.

SERREAM Executive Board Meeting

May 19, 2021

Kay Morcomb called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:20 AM. Present were Ben and Sharon Baratto, Barbara Hunter, Keith Larson, Kathryn Lastine, Kay Morcomb, Lyle Olson, Sylvia Swede, Edna Thayer, and Don Zwach. Guest: Curt Hutchins, REAM Executive Director. Kay sent a note to Don Leathers accepting his resignation and thanking him for his service.

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

Treasurer's Report (Sharon Baratto) We have \$11,742.99.

President's Report (Kay Morcomb) See message on the front page. We need a new president, a president-elect, a newsletter editor, a new secretary, legislative chair and health chair.

Legislation: (Open position) Curt spoke about what lies ahead for REAM to monitor.

Health: (Open Position)

Business:

The Fall Legislative/Health Conference (Barb Hunter) The fall conference is October 20 at the Rochester International Events Center. All but the health speaker have been confirmed. Registration information will be in the September newsletter.

Dates to remember:

Articles for the June newsletter are due May 26.

The REAM conference in Walker is September 20-21.

The next Board meeting is August 18.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10.

Sylvia Swede, Secretary

Health Report

Kay Morcomb

Watch your tongue! Your tongue is an indicator of your health. The size, shape and color of your tongue may indicate a medical condition.

Signs that your tongue needs attention:

White lumpy thick coating – Your tongue has a balance of bacteria and yeast. If the balance is interrupted the yeast may take over. This fungal infection called thrush may happen after an illness especially if antibiotics have been taken for some time. While not serious, it should be treated as soon as possible. Lichen planus, a white branch like white coating that cannot be scraped away may indicate an attack on the immune system. See your doctor.

Painful white patches – Lesions can be caused by irritations from teeth, braces, dentures, or smoking. Dentists should be able to alleviate irritation caused by physical irritation of the tongue. Lesions from smoking could lead to more serious problems.

Black or brown fuzzy tongue – Sometimes called “hairy tongue”, proteins in the mouth cling together in strands. It is not harmful but unsightly and may cause bad breath. Anti-acid medications containing bismuth may react with saliva causing this condition. It is more common in smokers, coffee and tea drinkers and by poor dental hygiene. It will brush away. If it cannot be scraped away the cause might be a virus and needs further investigation.

Strawberry red – A glossy bright red tongue could mean that Vitamin B12 and iron is needed by tongue cells. If these cells do not mature, they die off, causing the tongue to appear smooth. If your tongue is bright red ask your doctor whether you need supplements or a change in diet. Red lesions or growths lasting over two weeks could be a sign of oral cancer. See your doctor. These lesions are not always painful and more often occur in older people.

Geographic tongue – Irregular raised white areas that are sore may look serious, but are harmless and will appear and disappear. Indents on the side of the tongue from the teeth can be caused by stress or hyperthyroidism. The tongue like all body parts is aging and may develop wrinkles, ridges and valleys. Gently brush your tongue when you brush your teeth to clear food and bacteria. This will freshen your breath also.

Soreness – There are several causes of soreness of the tongue including canker sores, lichen planus, thrush, and geographic tongue. Sores may be under the tongue also.

Macroglossia – The tongue is swollen and there are imprints of the teeth on both sides. A doctor will try to figure out the underlying condition, hypothyroidism, infection, allergy or some other cause.

Mouth cancer – sores that don't heal, pain, trouble chewing or swallowing, red lesions or growths lasting over two weeks could be a sign of cancer.

A Bit of History

Ethel Percy Andrus was born in California in 1884. She grew up in Chicago while her father studied law. Her father instilled the idea that everyone should do some good, the only reward being the satisfaction of providing an important service. After an associate degree at Lewis Institute and a Bachelor of Philosophy from the University of Chicago Andrus began teaching. After teaching during the day Andrus volunteered evenings and weekends at two pioneering settlement houses, Hull House and Chicago Commons where many impoverished and uneducated immigrants lived.

In 1910 she moved back to California and taught in schools in the Los Angeles area. She was appointed principal of East Los Angeles High School becoming the first woman high school principal in California. The 2,500 students were mostly from poor families representing a range of ethnicities who spoke 32 different languages. The school faced problems of juvenile delinquency and ethnic and racial conflict. Andrus raised academic standards, started student community service projects, and established an evening program to assist immigrant parents. She changed the name of the school to Lincoln High School to inspire the students. She even broke up some street fights between boys and pleaded in court for some to have a second chance. Juvenile delinquency dropped. Test scores rose. Lincoln High School was selected by the National Education Association to be featured in its textbook "Learning Ways of Democracy".

Meanwhile she continued her own education earning a MA and a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California. Summers were spent teaching courses at USC, UCLA, and Stanford. She was concerned about the financial struggles of her retired faculty. In 1927 she organized the Foundation to Assist California Teachers and raised funds for two retirement homes.

In 1944 her beloved career came to an abrupt end when her mother became seriously ill and Dr. Andrus retired to become a full time caregiver. When her mother regained her health she urged Dr. Andrus to help the retired as she had done for students. Dr. Andrus began to examine pensions and other benefits provided across the country and believed a national organization was needed to address the needs of her peers.

A Bit of History continued

She learned from a local grocer outside of Los Angeles that an older woman who came to his store needed food, eyeglasses and dentures. Dr. Andrus set out to visit her. The address led to a sizable bungalow. No one was home. She inquired with a neighbor, who suggested she check on the old woman who lived “out back”. “Out back” was a chicken coop. Dr. Andrus knocked on the door of the windowless shack. The occupant, wearing a ragged coat, slipped out the door and closed it behind her. Upon learning the woman’s name, Dr. Andrus recalled the woman’s reputation as a Spanish teacher of some distinction. Settled in the Andrus’ car the woman told her story. Sales opportunities for the scenic acreage she had bought over time had been diminished by the Great Depression. While the retiree still had her \$40 monthly pension, she could not afford decent housing or health care. Dr. Andrus was shocked and took action. In 1947 she founded and became president of the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) in order to gain health care and better pensions for teachers.

At that time medicare did not exist and insurance companies felt insuring older people was too risky. Dr. Andrus contacted over 40 insurance companies. Continental Casualty finally agreed to underwrite a program for NRTA members in 1956, the first group health insurance program for retired persons over the age of 65. There were so many requests from other retirees that Dr. Andrus established another organization, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in 1958. She spent the rest of her life in service to retirees working right up to her death from a heart attack at age 83 in 1967.

NRTA and AARP shared many goals and collaborated in the development of countless programs. In 1982 the two associations merged at the national level and NRTA became a division of AARP known as NRTA: AARP’s Educator Community. Other organizations have the same initials, so spell out National Retired Teachers Association on Google to find the many amazing ways NRTA supports retired educators and learning. NRTA also maintains a working relationship with a network of state and locally based Retired Educator Associations. These state associations are independent self-governed non-profit associations of retired school employees who receive their pensions from TRA or PERA. REAM (Retired Educators Association of Minnesota) was formed in 1954. REAM volunteers monitor the actions of, and provide information to TRA, PERA, LCPR (Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement), Minnesota House/Senate and Governor, the powerful groups that control and vote on your pensions. Find more information on REAM at MNREAM.org. SEREAM is a regional group of REAM that supports the state organization and through conferences provides a connection between retirees and the pension decision makers. Don’t miss the opportunity to learn how your pension is determined.

MEMORIALS

Dorothy Meyering from Ruth Boser

How can we revive our organization after the shutdown? A continuing flux of new members and leaders in all organizations is what keeps an organization alive. The fact that there are a few dedicated leaders doesn't keep an organization going long term. Death of our retired organization means death of COLA's, death of good pensions means less young people entering our profession, death of good public schools means death of our democracy. I'm not exaggerating the importance of REAM and its regional and local organizations.

**More important now to show our strength in numbers to the
legislation to protect our pensions.**

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

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 SEREAM.

Membership year: September 1, 2020–August 31, 2021

The newsletters can be found at SEREAM.org.

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