

SERREAM

Newsletter

Winter 2023

President's Message: Barb Hunter

I hope you all had a happy Thanksgiving! It was nice to have good weather in Minnesota for traveling.

SERREAM is still here! We are searching for helpers and members. Please consider helping out whether or not you are asked. It is more than okay if you volunteer!

In January you will see a temporary increase in your TRA amount. Please keep in mind that we will receive a one time increase in January along with our regular amount. We hope things will get better for both retired and active educators. If we all work together, we have a better chance of that happening.

When the SERREAM board met in November we discussed our locals. Some are doing very well, some are holding, and some have disbanded entirely. We discussed how we could help. The locals that are still active are: Austin, Winona, Faribault, Rochester, and Waseca. We would like to start highlighting our locals to help provide ideas and inspiration to others. We would like to begin this in February 2024.

In October Tim Moynihan (REAM Legislative Chair) and myself, as President-Elect of REAM, traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend a National Retired Teacher Association (NRTA) Legislative Conference. We met a lot of people from different parts of our country, learned and exchanged ideas. I came home with lots of ideas. Our last day in D.C. we visited the offices of five Minnesota House and Representatives members and one of our Senators. It was a great opportunity to attend this conference.

I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

HAPPENING IN APRIL 2024

The SERREAM Annual Spring Conference will be held on Wednesday April 17, 2024 in Austin, Minnesota. Details are being worked on and more information will be released in the February newsletter. It looks to be a fun day!

Minutes of SEREAM Board Meeting on Wednesday November 15, 2023

The SEREAM board meeting was called to order on Wednesday November 15, 2023 at 9:03 AM at The Homestead in Rochester MN.

Members present were: Ben and Sharon Baratto, Kay Morcomb, Lyle Olson, and Keith. Additions to the agenda were to add after VII Continuing Business, B. Annual Meeting Plans to add Spring Conference 2023. Motion made by Ben Baratto and seconded by Lyle Olson. Motion approved. Secretary's report was approved as printed.

Treasurer's report was given by Sharon Baratto. Wells Fargo checking \$1,426.15, Savings \$7,692.97, Merchants Bank Checking \$1,473.52: TOTAL funds \$11,721.61 Motion to approve made by Ben Baratto and seconded by Lyle Olson. Motion passed.

Barb Hunter gave the President's report. She stated concern about fewer local units. We need to share what is working for those locals showing success. Personal contact seems to work best. Membership shows 588 members. In 2019 we showed a total of 496 members.

We have gained members. It was discussed how to maintain accurate mailing lists. Barb suggested trying to use AMBA's resources as they have offered to help REAM with this same issue. She will look into using this resource.

Legislative and Health- Don Leathers was absent. **Awards-** Edna Thayer was absent. It is possible that we have found a newsletter editor. Someone has inquired to Barb about the position and she will contact them within the next week.

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday February 22, 2024. This is a change to hopefully enable the Waseca representative to attend as he is unable to attend on Wednesdays. This February meeting will also be a planning meeting for the fall conference.

REAM division report was given by Barb Hunter. There is great concern about the number of locals that are struggling with membership. The Strategic Planning committee is trying to find directors for the areas of the state who have open positions. This is a struggle. The 2024 REAM conference will be held in St. Cloud. The 2025 conference will be held in Alexandria.

The SEREAM fall conference held in Austin MN on October 18 went well. We had about 40 people present. The spring 2024 conference will also be held in Austin MN on April 17.

Discussion was held regarding the misplacement of checks from the spring 2023 conference that took place in Rochester MN. The board concurred that the RARE treasury should be held responsible for this and not SEREAM.

A discussion was held on combining the spring and fall conferences. Further thought will be given before a recommendation from the board is made.

The next SEREAM board meeting will be held on Thursday February 22, 2024 at The Homestead in Rochester Minnesota. Meeting was adjourned at 10:21 AM.

Minutes written by Barb Hunter, acting as Secretary

Winter 2023 SEREAM Legislative Report

--Don Leathers

Before getting into the business of the day, I would just like to comment on a subject that is dear to all Minnesotans—the weather. This summer and fall has been a true roller coaster ride. In Mower County, where I live, we witnessed a summer drought for the ages—brown lawns, wilted gardens and corn/soybean fields that appeared to be in dire straits. But Nature did a 180 and rebounded in September and October. Timely rains fell, mowers roared again in lawns around town and the autumn daytime skies were a azure blue. November boasted two full moons. Farmers were amazed that their crop yields were surprisingly strong. And most of us were also amazed about how wonderful an experience fall in Southern Minnesota can be.

If you happened to pick up the most recent copy of the Teacher Retirement Information Bulletin (TRIB) you probably read TRA Executive Director Jay Stoffel's tribute to Marti Zins in the President's Corner. What a fitting salute to a committed educator and long-time steward of Minnesota Public pensions. Zins recently resigned from her position on the TRA Board of Directors.

Zins was the retired educator representative on the TRA Board. She began her teaching career in 1967 and was first elected to the board as an active in 1989. In 2009, Zins was elected as the retired representative and has remained on the board in that position since. Director Stoffel's description of Zins and her commitment to public pensions are as follows, "We were fortunate to have had Marti on the TRA Board for 34 years. Her service hallmarks were her professionalism, fairness and grace...and she focused on her duties as a fiduciary [for the pension funds]." A fitting tribute to an extraordinarily gifted and humble woman.

Just a reminder that the Investment Return Assumption for Minnesota public pensions has been reduced from 7.5% to 7% by statute on advisement from pension plan actuaries. The assumption puts a target on assumed rates of return on the State Board of Investment's SBI long-term strategies. Pensions are a shared responsibility. Out of every dollar, 73% is from investments while 14% and 13% come from employers (school districts) and employees (active teachers), respectively. The Assumption Rate has not changed since 2018.

Also, an important thing to keep in mind is the 1.1% COLA retirees will receive on their January 2024 payment. In addition, retirees will receive one-time lump sum payment in their January payment. The sum amounts to a percentage of your monthly payment times 1.4% (Coordinated) or 2.9% (Basic). Simply multiply your monthly payment by the percentage above that pertains to you. That number will be your lump sum payment. Be sure to carefully check your on-line bank account in early December.

Hope this article finds the turkey, dressing, potatoes and pie fully digested from the Thanksgiving meal. Now we can all laser focus on the Christmas delights we'll find conspicuously arranged at all of the Holiday events we encounter this Christmas Season. Enjoy.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to one and all.

SERREAM Health Report

---Don Leathers

As we age, it is important to stay active and incorporate balance and strength exercises in our daily routine. This month's Health addition will discuss why maintaining physical balance is so important for seniors, and we will explore exercises designed to improve overall strength and balance.

Being mobile and steady on your feet are important factors in seniors establishing their independence. As we get older, certain factors alter or diminish our sense of balance. Chronic illness, of course, affects our balance, but other factors may come into play, as well. They include: arthritis, migraines, cardiovascular disease, poor vision and the side effects of medication.

What follows are some tips to get you started on maintaining a healthy balance. Maintain good posture, focus your gaze on a fixed point in front of you, bend your knees and distribute your weight evenly between both feet. Then, try some of the exercises listed below. Remember to begin slowly and add new routines gradually over time.

Perform balance exercises either barefoot or when wearing shoes. Also, use a mat for padding and to reduce the chance of slipping. Incorporate some of these exercises in your daily fitness and stretching routine.

1. **Rock the Boat**-stand with feet hip-distance apart. Put hands on hips. Lift your left foot off floor and bend your knee to bring the heel toward your bottom. Hold position for 30 seconds. Do with right leg. Perform 3 reps.
2. **Weight Shifts**-Stand with feet hip-width apart. Shift your weight to your right foot and raise your left foot. Hold for 30 seconds. Do from the opposite side. Perform 3 reps.
3. **Tightrope Walk**-Lift arms and extend them to the side. Walk in a straight line with your eyes on a fixed point ahead of you (floor tape is optional, but effective). Each time you raise your foot, pause for 3 seconds. Take 20-30 steps. Rest. Repeat 3 times.
4. **Heel-to-Toe Walk**-Stand with heels pressed against a wall. Place right foot in front of left foot. Touch right heel with left toes. Then place left foot in front of your right foot and touch with right toes. Continue for 20 steps.
5. **Tree Pose**-From standing position, shift weight to right foot. Position your left foot to the side with heel lifted and place sole of foot either against your **ankle, shin or thigh**. Place hands in a comfortable position and hold for up to 1 minute. Do on opposite side. Perform 3 reps from each side.

Try some of these simple exercises in the comfort of your home. Start slowly and increase number of exercises gradually over time. You'll probably be surprised how much your balance improves and your self-confidence, as well.

Above all, remember: **Stay Active!**

Information taken from United Health Care, "11 Balance Exercises for Seniors," reviewed by Gregory Minnis, DPT, Physical Therapy, update March 13, 2023

2024 SEREAM EDUCATOR AWARD

Although the deadline for nominations and resume information for the 2024 SEREAM Educator Award isn't until January 31, 2024, now is a great time to decide whom you wish to nominate and start the process. The SEREAM award follows the REAM criteria and is based on the following four main points:

1. Personal endeavors as a school educator while employed.
2. Promotion of the causes of education within the community.
3. Service to schools and communities as a volunteer.
4. Service to retired or other educator groups at the local, division and/or state level.

The nominee must be a member of SEREAM.

Letters of nomination should include the following information:

1. Name, address, E-Mail, and phone number.
2. Education (place, dates, degrees)
3. Teaching or school related (places, level of work, dates)
4. Date retired.
5. Honors received, Organizations, Offices held, etc.
6. Volunteer activities (church, community, education related, etc.)
7. Experience other than school related.
8. Service to retired and other educator groups at local, division, state and National levels.

Nominations may be emailed or mailed to the educator award committee chairperson, Edna Thayer at ednathayer@gmail.com or Edna Thayer at 7 Roots Beach Lane, Elysian, MN 56028. Nominations may also be given to one of the other committee members: Nancy Reynolds, and Jeanette Bergler.

Congratulations to Margie White from Winona, who received the 2023 REAM Educator Award at the REAM Convention in September. It was well deserved.

Why should you be a member of SEREAM/REAM?

1. Keep up with pension information
2. Help protect TRA and PERA pension
3. Help maintain TRA and PERA pension
4. Meet new people
5. Eligible to participate in AMBA benefits

You are needed! Please consider being more involved with SEREAM by serving on the board. We continue to be in need of some officers. Please contact Barb Hunter via 507-440-4923 or hunterbarb41@gmail.com.

SEREAM BOARD MEETINGS

February 22, 2024

March 20, 2024

May 20, 2024

August 21, 2024

November 20, 2024



Spring Conference April 17, 2024

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to All!

SERREAM members may copy this page to give to potential members.

**CHECK YOUR RECORDS!!
HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES FOR
SEPTEMBER 2023 THRU AUGUST 2024?**

**Congratulations to the newly retired educators!
Please ask them to join SERREAM.
You could also gift them a SERREAM membership!**

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, 2023–August 31, 2024

The newsletters can be found at SERREAM.org.

SOUTHEAST RETIRED
EDUCATORS ASSOC. OF MN
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