

# SERREAM

## *Newsletter*

Summer 2024

### **President's Message: Barb Hunter**

The SERREAM Spring Conference and annual meeting was held in Austin in the Ruby Rupner Building at the Hormel Nature Center. There were 60 members present. It was a day filled with interesting and informative speakers. TRA and PERA representative updated us on pension issues. Emily Toland gave helpful tips on estate planning. Luke Reitz, Nature Center Director, gave helpful advice on dealing with the emerald ash bore. If you weren't there, I think you missed out on a great day!

The REAM Annual Conference will be held in St. Cloud this year September 30-October 1. Please consider joining REAM for the conference. Please contact me at 507-440-4923 if you need more information.

Another event coming up is the SERREAM Fall Health and Legislative Conference on October 16 in Rochester at the International Event Center near the airport. We have held conferences there in the past. We are working on speakers for this event. The featured speaker in the morning will be an officer from the Rochester Police Department. The afternoon speaker lineup is being worked on yet. We have invited TRA and PERA representatives to speak on pension updates. Please join us for an interesting and informative day. It is a chance to meet and mingle with fellow retirees. The August/early September newsletter will have more detailed information and a registration form. Please consider joining us on October 16!

## **SEREAM Annual Business Meeting Minutes April 17, 2024**

Edna Thayer presented the 2024 SEREAM Educator Award to Mark Sybilrud, member of the Faribault Association of Retired Educators (FARE).

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm by President Barb Hunter. A motion was made by Ben Baratto to approve the secretary report, seconded by Keith Larson. Motion passed.

Sharon Baratto presented the treasurer's report. She reported a balance of \$10,969.95 as of April 15, 2024. Membership was reported to be 597. Gail Goetzmann-Stolpa motioned to approve treasurer's report and Connie Simonson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Nominations and voting of officers was held. No nominations were presented for any officer position. Barb Hunter agreed to continue as President for a term of 2 years. Margie White volunteered to be secretary for one year and Sharon Baratto volunteered to remain as treasurer for a period of one more year. No volunteers were presented for newsletter editor, Barb Hunter will continue. Connie Simonson made motion to adjourn the meeting, Deedee Marx seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 1:22 pm.

## **Minutes of SEREAM Board Meeting on May 15, 2024**

The SEREAM executive board met May 15th. Present were Sharon Baratto, Barb Hunter, Kay Lastine, Kay Morcomb, Edna Thayer, Al Tonn, and Marge White.

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 by President Barb Hunter. Kay Lastine moved to approve the agenda meeting. Edna Thayer seconded.

Sharon Baratto noted that the treasurer's report was the same as reported at the Spring Conference. The current balance is \$10,969.95. Dues received were \$821.70. Newsletter cost and mailings were discussed. Ben Baratto sent letters to those who had not paid their dues. Sixteen replied with their dues. It was decided to continue to send newsletters to unpaid members for one year. Those who have not paid for two years would be cancelled. There are 597 members at present.

The Spring Conference in Austin was a success. There were 59 in attendance and 4 guests.

The Fall Conference will be held October 16 at the Convention Center.

The next meeting of SEREAM will be Thursday, August 22nd.

Edna Thayer moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50. Margie White seconded.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margie White

**TRIBUTE TO MARK SYBILRUD  
2024 SEREAM EDUCATOR AWARD RECIPIENT**

**The 2024 SEREAM Educator Award goes to Mark Sybilrud—**

A friendly man with the most generous, caring, and helpful attitude.

While growing up in Waseca, Mark worked for summer programs in community education.

He got the “teaching bug” and knew early that teaching would be his vocation.

He earned an elementary teaching degree in '83 from MSU

And moved to Fulda – his dream of teaching to pursue.

After 3 ½ years he moved to Faribault where he taught several grades in elementary

And settled in to teaching 4th grade most of his career at McKinley.

He received a Master's Degree in Experiential Education from MSU in 2002,

And coached varsity level cross country & track and Field for 15 years, too.

After coaching, he officiated both high school and collegiate cross-country track and field.

Mark excelled in high school sports and knew the value that sports for the students could yield.

He officiated high school basketball for 35 years.

While pursuing his Masters he coached the college team, receiving the Jim Schaffer Award as a volunteer.

The state H. S. league named him assistant coach of the year for track & field in '97 & '96.

While teaching, he served on the negotiations team for 25 years & various building & other committees for the district.

Mark was named to the MSU athletic Hall of Fame in 2016. After 34 years, he retired from teaching in 2017.

Since retirement, he has been an active member of FARE and a member of SEREAM and REAM.

He serves on the FEED (Faribault Educational Enrichment Program) committee.

This program raises funds where teachers can receive small grants for a classroom activity.

He serves on the Faribault High Flyer Distinguished Alumni Award selection committee.

This program honors Faribault alumni who excel professionally, and make significant contributions to the community.

Mark quickly became active in the Elysian community, when he & his wife moved there in 2002.

He serves on the Chamber Board, where promoting local business is one thing they do.

Helping with children's events & community celebrations, Mark is often seen.

Examples are 4th of July events., family night out, & the Trick & Treat Spook Trail for Halloween.

Mark serves as treasurer on the Lake Francis association Board, & devotes much time.

This board began over 40 years ago to help preserve the quality of the lake waters & shoreline.

Each year, he organizes the Lake Francis Boat parade during the 4th of July activities.

This yr. he wrote a grant & received \$5,000 to donate to a new sports complex built by the city.

Mark doesn't wait to be asked – he searches for ways he can be helpful, then serves--

His continual efforts to benefit education and the community are why this award he deserves.

**By Edna Thayer**

**CONGRATULATIONS MARK**

## Legislative Report

by Don Leathers

The SEREAM Spring Conference was held at the Ruby Rupner Auditorium at the JC Hormel Nature Center in Austin on April 17. A nice group of 60 members were in attendance, and they were treated to several interesting and highly informative speakers.

Emily Toland, an attorney representing the firm of Adams, Rizzi and Sween in Austin, spoke about wills and estate planning. Lonnie Duberstein, REAM Legislative co-chair, recapped the 2024 legislative session as it pertained to pensions, and a representative of the Nature Center spoke about invasive species and tree blight.

A panel discussion entitled “Life With a New Career” by SE Minnesota educators rounded out the day’s events. Members found the day to be stimulating, and they were able to network with retirees from around the area. If you didn’t attend, please plan on registering for the Fall Workshop in October in Rochester. See registration info in upcoming SEREAM newsletters. We would love to have you join in the fun.

Pensions-wise, the key presentations at the April 17 conference were made by TRA Executive Director, Jay Stoeffel, and Liaison Holly Dayton, as well as PERA Executive Director, Doug Anderson, all loyal, long-time presenters at REAM and SEREAM events. Each offered PowerPoint presentations to outline the current condition of Minnesota public pensions. Stoeffel pointed out that the State Board of Investment (SBI) experienced an 8.9% investment return for the fiscal year. The 5-year average return was 10.4% and the 20-year return, 8.2%, meaning the board is consistently making prudent investment decisions.

That 8.9% investment return is \$2.2 billion in SBI income. Combined with employer (school districts) and employee (teachers) contributions of \$987 million, the net TRA operating revenue was \$3.2 billion. Benefit payments were \$2 billion. The balance goes toward funding the plan, which is currently 76% funded. TRA actuaries project that TRA will be fully (100%) funded in 2049.

2024 was a Bonding Year, so no significant pension reform was introduced in the legislature. However, a few key TRA initiatives were enacted this spring. Legislation was forwarded to move the full benefit retirement age from 66 to 65, effective July 1 of this year. Also anticipated was a \$28.5 million one-time appropriation for TRA. Other pension initiatives were in limbo during the final, chaotic days of the session.

As we have stated in previous newsletters, please stay vigilant concerning public pensions in Minnesota, both for retirees and actives. Stay informed, access REAM and EdMinnesota Retired websites, and, if possible, maintain a working relationship with your legislators. One of the best ways to stay current on pension issues is to attend the SEREAM Spring and Fall conferences. There is Power in Numbers!

**Have a wonderful summer.**

## SEREAM Health Report

---Don Leathers

Do You Really Need Sunscreen Everyday?

On a cloudy day, when you're in the house word processing a health article for the SEREAM newsletter, should you apply sunscreen?

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the vast majority of American dermatologists, the answer is a resounding "Yes." Let's find out why.

"The sun's UV rays are potent, and just 15 minutes outside in the sun is enough exposure to cause tissue damage and potentially skin cancer," according to Jessica Diethart, MD, and board-certified dermatologist in Austin, Texas. And, according to a 2010 study, you don't just get skin cancer when exposed to the sun outside. The study suggests that men commonly get cancer on their left side from exposure while driving a car. Prevention is the best medicine when it comes to avoiding skin cancer. "Applying sunscreen to the face, neck and other exposed areas can effectively prevent long-term damage to the skin," says Erum N. Illyas, another prominent dermatologist. She recommends a morning application of SPF as a part of a person's skin care regimen.

The American Academy of Dermatologists recommends finding a sunscreen that is: SPF 30+; broad spectrum, which protects against UVA and UVB rays; and one that is water resistant. Both aforementioned dermatologists explain that there are two types of sunscreen available: chemical sunscreens that filter UV light and physical sunscreens that block UV light. Every person should experiment to find out which product is best suited to their skin type and level of tolerance. In addition to eliminating harmful UV rays, sunscreen has other important benefits.

It can delay signs of aging, like wrinkles. Sunscreen can also aid in fading scars, prevent discoloration of the skin and protect against blue light. Whatever benefit attracts you to applying sunscreen, be kind to your skin. A little prevention can go a long way to keeping your skin moist, healthy looking and cancer free. Start a sunscreen regimen today and enjoy those beautiful Minnesota summer days, whether you're inside or out of doors. Preferably at the beach or on the golf course.

## **Austin Area Retired Educators by Cheryl Dunlap**

The Austin Area Retired Educators has been in existence for over 50 years. Originally it was Austin Area Retired Teachers which was attached to TRA and also REAM. For quite a long time REAM was only dealing with Teachers' Pensions. When REAM included PERA along with TRA, the Austin Area Retired Teachers group chose to change to Austin Area Retired Educators which includes ALL retired school employees - Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Administrators, Secretaries, Cafeteria personnel, Custodial Personnel, anyone who has worked in a school and is receiving a pension from TRA or PERA. This group is open to any retired school employees not only from Austin but also anyone retiring from any area school.

In the early years the group met at the Senior Center in the afternoon once a month. Each meeting included a program and members would take turns bringing treats. There were usually 50 or more people attending. Over the years the group changed to morning breakfast meetings. We still have occasional programs. Generally, there are 25 - 30 people in attendance. We feel the most important purpose of the group is to keep people informed and updated on pensions, especially the latest legislative discussions and actions. However, members seem to most enjoy the Social aspect of the group.

The Austin Area Retired Educators has a number of causes we support. Four times a year we donate items and cash to the Riverland College Pantry. We periodically award a \$500.00 scholarship to a Riverland Community College student majoring in Education. Each December members donate to the Salvation Army Food Bank. Some of our members volunteer in the schools in areas such as reading with students, helping ELL students practice English, Bookfairs, etc.

We hope to grow our membership. We are still overcoming the idea that this organization is only for Austin teachers like it once was. We are constantly looking for ways to make all school retirees from Austin and area Districts know they are welcome to join this Retired Educators group. Along with keeping people updated on the status of pensions and social time, we need to know what other areas retirees would benefit from through this group - needs, community service projects, specific programs, etc. How can Retired Educators best meet retirees needs and expectations of membership?

## ***SERAM Membership Form***

Complete and mail this form 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, 2023–August 31, 2024

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

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EDUCATORS ASSOC. OF MN  
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