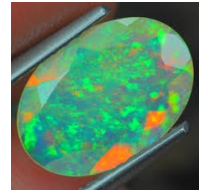


# GEMS



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## President's Message

Hi! Just a note from the President's Office.

We just held our yearly January Executive Board Conference Call Meeting. It seems to be the consensus that it was a good meeting and we did cover much.

One "buggie" on the list was accepting unanimously the revisions to our Standing Rules. Now it will go to the locals and hopefully be accepted by the membership by the end of February. We were tasked with spelling out more clearly, what and how things will be reimbursed for expenses by the State.

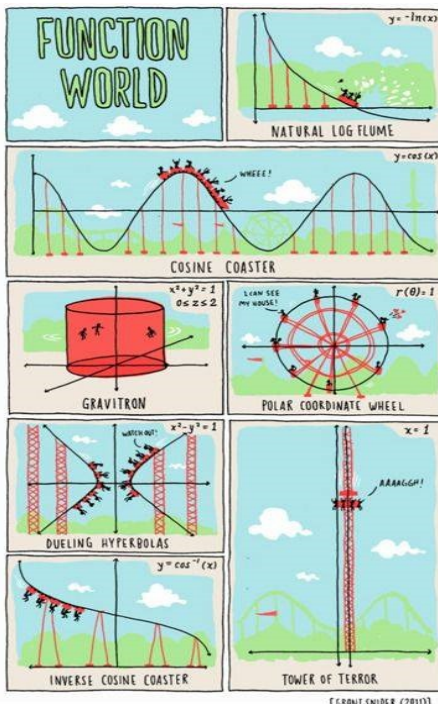
We also heard of all the great plans for this year's State Conference in

Boise. Charlotte Moore and her group have done a wonderful job of planning a meaningful, educational and fun conference. I encourage all members throughout the State to plan now to attend. It will be April 11-12, 2019. The cost is certainly affordable at only \$20 and then pick and choose meals and extras you wish. You can stay at the hotel or make it an opportunity to visit family or friends in the area while supporting our wonderful profession and organization of Retired Educators of Idaho!

Submitted by:  
Mona Alfrey  
President

## ADVICE FROM A TREE:

- Stand tall and proud.
- Go out on a limb.
- Remember your roots.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Be content with your natural beauty.
- Enjoy the view.



For those of you who go to Disney Theme Parks, or any park with fun things.

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## Executive Secretary's Message

In August, 2018 I attended the ASRTE (Association of State Retired Teacher Executives) Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

This group is comprised of the Executive Directors of the State Associations belonging to the NRTA (National Retired Teacher Association - AARP's Educator Community). In the REA-I State Board meeting minutes from August, 2018, I shared important ideas and concepts I brought back to Idaho. At the conference I expressed to the NRTA staff our goal to have more exposure to our association in our state. As a result, NRTA sent two boxes of NRTA promotional items to be used to promote awareness and membership. These items have been dispersed to the unit Presidents to use as they see fit.

In December, 2018, I attended the NRTA Leadership Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

All associations and organizations are having difficulty recruiting volunteers and members. Mary Beth Dixon, advisor from NRTA, suggested we read "The New Breed: Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century

Volunteer" by Jonathan McKee and Thomas McKee. The book provides our leadership the latest recommendations on how to recruit, engage, and effectively empower younger retired educator volunteers to serve in their local units and within your state's leadership structure.

I have sent books to all Presidents asking them to identify one or two members of their units to read the book and participate in conference calls with discussions led by Mary Beth Dixon. One or two chapters would be read at a time and the discussions would be brought back to each unit.

Be looking for information coming from AMBA this month. They have recently added vision and dental insurance to their insurance offerings. Our regional representative, Robert Lee, has recruited several new members to our association through AMBA. You must be a member of REA-I to buy insurance through AMBA.

Submitted by:  
Barb Blasch,  
Executive Secretary, REA-I  
[barconsul@aol.com](mailto:barconsul@aol.com)

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The 65th Idaho Legislature officially began January 7, 2019. Much will change at the Idaho Capitol. Brad Little will be the new Governor and Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin along with Treasurer Julie Ellsworth will join him.

Keep your eyes on Medicaid Expansion. The initiative passed in November, 2018 is already law but it must go through legal challenges. Then governor and legislative action on the budget item happens such as expenditure of federal Medicaid dollars and funding the state's matching share must be determined. It could be the Legislature will require people to seek employment.

Gov. Brad Little prioritized public education funding during his campaign. Watch his budget to see if this happens. Supt. Sherry Ybarra asked for 6.8% increase in her budget including funding for the fifth year of the current Career Ladder Plan.

The Funding Formula Committee has been working for two years and has made recommendations for how Idaho funds public school. Now watch for the analysis and discussions.

A new voucher bill could happen being presented as scholarships and tax credits.

Recruiting and retaining educators will be considered important and given much emphasis.

YOU have excellent ideas. Contact your legislators and offer your expertise.

LOBBY DAY is February 11, 2019 at the Capitol. Contact Barbara Blasch for more information. 208-229-4561. Many of your fellow educators participated last year.

At this time the Federal Government is partially shut down. Passing a budget is the responsibility of the Congress and the President. How do you react to our elected leaders not fulfilling their obligations that they swore to do? This requires your participation. Call, write and let them know what you want them to do and remind them you vote in every election.

### Idaho Representatives:

Rep. Russ Fulcher 202-225-6611,  
<https://fulcher.house.gov/zip-code-lookup?form=/contact/email-me>

Rep. Mike Simpson 202-225-5531, 334-1953,  
[www.simpson.house.gov](http://www.simpson.house.gov)

Sen. Mike Crapo 202-224-6142, 334-1776,  
[www.crapo.senate.gov](http://www.crapo.senate.gov)

Sen. Jim Risch 202-224-2752, 342-7985,  
[www.risch.senate.gov](http://www.risch.senate.gov)

BE STRONG, SPEAK UP

Submitted by:  
Barb Blasch  
Legislative Chair

## Contact Information

### President

Mona Alfrey  
509.499.5601  
[mona.alfrey@gmail.com](mailto:mona.alfrey@gmail.com)

### President-Elect:

Stan Cope  
208.237.0002  
[skicope@hotmail.com](mailto:skicope@hotmail.com)

### Executive Secretary:

Barbara Blasch  
208.229.4561  
[bearconsul@aol.com](mailto:bearconsul@aol.com)

### Treasurer:

Patricia Kluckhohn  
208.288.4295  
[pjkluckhohn@gmail.com](mailto:pjkluckhohn@gmail.com)

### Secretary:

Lois Treat  
208.789.7657  
[loisetreat@live.com](mailto:loisetreat@live.com)

### Pensions/Insurance:

Jim Coleman  
208.375.4576  
[jodacole@cableone.net](mailto:jodacole@cableone.net)

### Community Service:

Dennis Ohrtman  
208.743.0694,  
[dwohrtman@aol.com](mailto:dwohrtman@aol.com)

## Legislation:

Barbara Blasch  
208.229.4561  
[bearconsul@aol.com](mailto:bearconsul@aol.com)

## Blue Cross State Ins Rep.:

Volunteer needed.

## CO-Membership:

Betty Goetzinger  
208.743.1709,  
[bg4361@lewiston.com](mailto:bg4361@lewiston.com)

Josie Marshall  
208.743.4980  
[jmarshall49@cableone.net](mailto:jmarshall49@cableone.net)

## Western Region:

Charlotte Moore  
208.362.2133,  
[chmoore42@gmail.com](mailto:chmoore42@gmail.com)

## CO-North Region:

Betty Goetzinger  
208.743.1709  
[bg4361@lewiston.com](mailto:bg4361@lewiston.com)

Jossie Marshall  
208.743.4980  
[jmarshall49@cableone.net](mailto:jmarshall49@cableone.net)

Pat Hoch  
509.758.5674  
[patch232@yahoo.com](mailto:patch232@yahoo.com)

## CO-Eastern Region:

Margene Wafford  
208.237.4367  
[kwafford@cableone.net](mailto:kwafford@cableone.net)

Catherine Wilson  
208.233.0122  
[crwilson722@gmail.com](mailto:crwilson722@gmail.com)

Joann Dilweg  
208.322.2656  
[swede1@cableone.net](mailto:swede1@cableone.net)

## Webmaster:

Connie J. Bunch  
208.376.8325  
[jeanbunch@aol.com](mailto:jeanbunch@aol.com)

## Travel Adventures:

Margaret Reimer  
208.887.6747  
[reimem8@gmail.com](mailto:reimem8@gmail.com)

## GEMS:

Bill Kluckhohn  
[bkluckhohn1@gmail.com](mailto:bkluckhohn1@gmail.com)

## REAI Convention/Delegate Assembly

2019 is here and that means work on the REAI Biennial Convention/Delegate Assembly is kicking into high gear. The Convention will be held at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center 2970 West Elder Street, Boise. This year it will be held on Thursday and Friday, April 11 and 12. The theme for this year is **Educators are Super Heroes in Disguise.**

Early in February every Unit President will be receiving a packet containing a conference agenda, registration forms, and a list of reports needed for the

Book of Reports. Due dates for the reports and where they need to be sent will be included in the packet.

Please encourage your membership to attend! We are planning a field trip to the World Center for Birds of Prey and a guest speaker from the newly remodeled Idaho History Museum along with other guest speakers. We will also have a silent auction. Our plan is to make it a fun, educational gathering.

Charlotte Moore  
Western Regional Director

## **BOISE, KUNA, MERIDIAN REA-REA BKM**

Mary Poppins with her strange and magical powers is once again gracing the big screen in her new movie, *Mary Poppins Returns*. Still young and impressionable, my two grandchildren were awed by the fantastical adventures and extravagant special effects. Myself, not so much, except for the nostalgia of a couple memorable lines:

"Everything is possible." (the child, Annabel Banks)

"Even the impossible." (the nanny, Mary Poppins)

Mary Poppins notwithstanding, BKM will be focusing on fulfillment of endeavors, both old and new, that we deem achievable in the coming year. One, a newly adopted constitution and by-laws (11/13/18), require board and member participation to transform it into a working document. A Policy and Procedures Manual to reference working details needs to be produced.

Standing committees need to be populated to accomplish previously identified goals: (1) develop opportunities outside of the BKM general meeting for members' social and recreational engagement; (2) build BKM visibility via member presence at AARP events.

With eyes to the coming months, BKM will be selecting it's Hall of Fame candidate for award consideration at the April, 2019 state convention. Already in progress, Nominating Committee Chair, Jim Coleman, is speaking to the value of service and is encouraging members to seek a leadership position at the April, 2019 election of officers. As BKM President, I can't say enough about the tremendous dedication, creativity and generosity of association members. Recent donations of books, personal memorabilia and collectibles displayed for sale at our November and December meetings garnered proceeds that will enable growth of funding for our Teacher Grants and BSU Scholarship projects. Bags and boxes of new children's books for Operation Wishbook were accumulated and dispersed. A December bake sale with member provided pastries and treats that were offered for a donation per item yielded additional dollars for BKM coffers. BKM closed on a purposeful and productive 2018 and aims to continue the trend in the coming year.

Submitted by:  
Jane Brewer  
President

## **Travel Adventures**

Our 2019 trip is to Canada. It is the Maritime Coastal Wonders. The trip will take place September 9-19, 2019. This trip includes Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Cape Breton Island. Brochures for this trip were given to each unit president at our state board meeting in August. Remember this trip requires a passport that does not expire 6 months before the trip. A deposit of \$500.00 per person is due

by March 2, 2019. Optional travel protection of \$275.00 is also due at that time. Final payment is due by July 11, 2019. Deposits are refundable up until March 9, 2019. Payments should be sent to Collette, 162 Middle Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860

Margaret Reimer  
208.887.6747  
[reimem8@gmail.com](mailto:reimem8@gmail.com)

## **NIREA-North Idaho Retired Educators**

The Retired Educators of North Idaho met on October 22 at the Post Falls Senior Center. The program for the meeting was provided by our very own member, Ron Boothe. Ron talked to us about cowboy culture in America. To do this he entertained us with cowboy songs and poetry, interspersed with timely jokes. We appreciate that Ron's presentations are always entertaining and humorous. Shelley Ruff, a volunteer with the Post Falls Historical Society, talked about their organization and announced a fundraiser they were having for the museum. On November 26 we again met at the senior center. Our program was about a regional and statewide organization called Guardians of the Children. They are a motorcycle organization that provides support for children dealing with child abuse including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional mistreatment, and neglect. Most of us had never heard of this organization. In December we joined with the reg-

ular Post Falls Senior Center members for a Christmas dinner and musical program.

We did not meet in October with representatives from RENC (Lewiston) as originally planned. We will meet with them in March prior to the State Conference. We collected money at our meetings for the Post Falls, Coeur d'Alene, and Silver Valley food banks. Our treasury is in good shape. We started our discussion of the state proposed by-law changes that will be on the agenda at the State Conference. We will vote on those in January. Mona Alfrey (State President) and Doug participated in the REI conference call January 7. Plans for the State Conference seem to be moving along well. We look forward to being in Boise on April 11-12. See you there!

Submitted by:  
Doug Cresswell  
Co-President

## IDAHO FALLS REA

It has been a very busy time for us. We welcomed new members and had some great guest speakers.

Recently, we hosted Martha Washington, aka Vicki Bailey, who was highly entertaining and informative. Being the wife of the first president, she knew some interesting idiosyncrasies of her husband, George. He loved to dance and to talk with the ladies at parties. He owned more than 500,000 acres of land and approved of the westward expansion of the United States. He was the only slave-owning president who freed his slaves. These are just glimpses of Washington's character and life as seen through the eyes of Martha.

We had a fun-filled Christmas get-together, which was well attended. We sang Christmas songs led by

Virginia Berg, and played Christmas Bingo, which drew plenty of laughs. Tracy Dodge gave a humorous Christmas reading of the "12 Days of Christmas," and Cindy Messick recited the "The Night Before Christmas" while we passed around our white elephant gifts to the left and to the right as the story was read.

We are looking forward to the New Year. Our meetings will include diverse topics including a focus on the Women of Idaho Past, the troubling decline of honey bees, and tips for dealing with telemarketers and avoiding scams. We may also devote a meeting to spinning and baking our own pizzas.

Submitted by:  
Chris Blower  
President

## Squaw Butte REA

Squaw Butte Retired Educators kicked off the school year by helping to prepare and serve brunch to the staff members of Emmett School District. Back to school meetings are a lot more enjoyable when one is not going back to work.

August 27 was the "We are not going back to school" pot luck indoor picnic at the Presbyterian Church in Emmett. It was a great opportunity meet visit and meet new friends. No business meeting, no speaker, no agenda, just a good time had by all.

Cindy Wilson Democratic candidate for Superintendent for Public Instruction was the guest speaker for our September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Wilson proved to be a dynamic speaker. To raise money for the teacher grants, we were encouraged to bring the fruit, produce or something we made from the garden for the raffle.

As we are an equal opportunity organization, Sherri Ybarra, Republican candidate for Superintendent for Public Instruction was invited to speak at the October 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. But, alas, the best laid plans often do not work out. Ms. Ybarra was unable to attend. Our creative and over energetic president Joanne encouraged us to do a fun version of "speed dating" to make and meet new friends. (Author's note, all the people I "met" were people I grew up with or I thought I knew forever. It is amazing what you learn when you take the time to visit.)

We collected warm clothing for the Gem County public schools. The clothes were sorted and delivered to school nurses after the meeting. We are also collecting supplies for the school nurses. The theme of the grant raffle was household gadgets.

Our favorite beverage was the theme for the teacher

grant fund raiser at the November 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. (Another author's note. I was able to trade a Christmas mug and hot chocolate for a great bottle of Sawtooth wine. Thanks!) Our speaker was Linda Aman, a water color instructor and artist, who was an Artist in Residence at Yellowstone last summer. It was an interesting and informative program. We collected money, food and supplies for the Christmas Cheer baskets. These baskets are prepared with GCEA and in conjunction with the Gem County Friendship Coalition. In December, many members sorted, wrapped, shopped, filled in where needed and helped deliver the cheer baskets to needy families. Supplies for the school nurses are continuing to be collected.

On December 17<sup>th</sup> three band members played to show their appreciation for the teacher grant money awarded to the EHS Band. Music instructor, Katee Seubert, explained how the money given helped to fund an innovative marching band clinic at Emmett High School this year. The theme to raise money for the next teacher grants was "bring \$10-20 gift in brown wrapping". We played a version of "musical gifts" (chairs) to see who went home with the prizes. We ended the meeting with a cookie exchange for those who wanted to participate.

In November we had 88 members, thus more than likely continuing to make SBRE the second largest chapter of retired educators in Idaho. Quite an accomplishment for a small county. We look forward to finding ways to service while building upon old friendships and making new ones.

Have an extremely blessed 2019.

Submitted by:  
Betty Griffith



## SEIREA-South East Idaho REA

In September we were introduced to Dr. Julie Sorenson, new conductor of the ISU Symphony Orchestra. She shared with us her personal philosophy which is to create a community connected with a common experience with music and the arts. This year there will be an art component to complement each concert. Dr. Sorenson explained that the symphony will be involved in several youth programs. One in particular is the Link-Up program in which she brings in students to learn and perform pieces in the Stephens Performing arts Hall. This encourages young students to be involved in music.

In October our speaker was Catherine Ryder from the ISU department of Education. She thanked our organization for two scholarships awarded this year to education students at ISU. We were able to do this due to our successful December auction. We also received a presentation from Terry Bergmair from the ISU Museum of Natural history. Nancy Wheeler reported on PER-SI investments.

Our speaker in November was Dr. Alex Bolinger, son of one of our members, Ron Bolinger. Dr. Bolinger is an associate professor in the College of Business at ISU. He teaches classes on negotiation and decision making,

teamwork, and relational leadership. An advocate of student engagement with the community, his classes have written three books drawing on historical photographs. He showed photos of many sites in Pocatello as far back as 1880, contrasting these sites now and then. He also highlighted famous people who lived in Pocatello, including Roger Williams, Calamity Jane, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Jack Dempsey, and local celebrity and one of the first women doctors in the United States, Dr. Minnie Howard. All three books written by Dr. Bolinger's students are available through his website: [bolial2@isu.edu](mailto:bolial2@isu.edu).

In December our members were serenaded with beautiful Christmas music by The Highland High School Choir, conducted by Mr. Scherer. Then we conducted a silent auction which was filled with many beautiful hand-made and donated items. Hopefully we made lots of money for next year's educational scholarships!

In conclusion, our organization had a busy, educational and entertaining end to 2018.

Submitted by:  
Mary Ann Hansen  
Secretary

## Lower Snake River REA

LSRRE's unit has been busy! Our "back to business" fling in the fall was a picnic potluck at the President's home overlooking the beautiful Snake River. On the patio all enjoyed delectable food, great conversations, renewal of past friendships and establishment of new ones...PLUS a BONUS! Two new members, a former math teacher and a retired professor of entomology from the University of Idaho.

In October we were asked to become better stewards of our planet. Our presenter provided us with items we all purchase and use in our homes or businesses. She also informed us as to the number of year—eons or sometimes never—that it takes specific plastics, foil wrappers, saran wrap to break down. We were all amazed and in subsequent discussions found it so very hard to be good stewards as many items in stores are

packaged in non-biodegradable materials.

In November our unit toured a children's relief nursery whose vision is to partner and work with families at risk. The nursery has a strong teaching component for the children in their care as well as parents. Home visits is an integral part of their overall program.

LSRRE's Christmas gathering meant eating lots of goodies and sharing lots of stories. A silent auction was also held with proceeds earmarked for our scholarship fund.

Our membership is slowly increasing; our goal as current members is to be cognizant that we must nurture our new members and assist them in continuing to attend meetings and eventually assuming leadership roles in our organization.

Submitted by:  
Debbie Ujjiye

## **RENCI-Retired Educators of North Central Idaho**

Greetings from the mid-north! We have been experiencing mild weather so far this year, but I am thinking that is going to change starting today with snow predicted. Oh, well, it couldn't last forever.

Our RENCi unit has had an active fall. In October we painted ceramic bowls for the YWCA's Soupport fund raiser to be held in February. In November we had our well attended and well supported live auction to earn money for our scholarship fund. We surpassed our goal and had a fun time in the bidding wars on some very desirable items. December was our annual sharing of the Lewiston High School Gold Voices choir and McSorley Elementary choirs with the Lewiston Rotary. The sharing started several years ago when the Rotarians heard the choir singing to our group and wanted to

## **MVREA-Magic Valley REA**

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas! I now wish you a Happy, as well as a Great New Year!

Since I didn't make the fall issue, I'll start with the beginning of our current meeting season. We are still meeting at Idaho Pizza in Twin Falls at 11:30 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month. Last year we met on the third Monday of each month. The Optimists met weekly, so we had to give up our Thursday spot. They change venues yearly, so our spot opened up for this year.

We held our annual fall picnic at Rock Creek Park in September. It has really become a nice spot.

Fortunately, the weather was great. The previous two years it was miserable. But, as always, we have a good time, no matter the weather. Unfortunately, no candidates showed up, despite our sending out e-mails to retirees at the end of 2018 school year.

In October, while Barbara and I, plus several REAI members toured Boston, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts (Kinnebunkport), Dan Olmstead from Idaho Power met with the members and talked about the changes in public power, i.e. alternative energy sources, and the ways Idaho Power continues to serve the public. He was quite charming and entertaining.

be part of the festivities. So we opened the "wall" between the two meeting rooms and a custom was started. All enjoy the music.

Because of the early Thanksgiving and school letting out early for Christmas, we had to move our normally 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday meetings to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday. The Red Lion is very flexible when we plan our meeting dates for the year.

Coming up in the New Year, we plan a book sharing activity in January, crock pot cooking instruction in February, and how to declutter in March, whatever that means. It promises to be an interesting winter and spring. Stay warm and healthy and we shall see everyone in April at the state conference.

Submitted by:  
Pat Hoch  
President

For November, Bill Baxter, who is the utilities director for the City of Twin Falls, plus two supervisors from PSI, made a presentation on recycling and how market conditions influence whether materials are recycled or sent to the refuse dump. They had several amusing stories on the things people thought that they could recycle. The discussion was very informative. Hopefully, American companies can figure out how to develop new ways to recycle materials, rather than to rely on China.

Sharon Meeks, our new treasurer, hosted MVREA's annual Christmas Party. As always, the food and Christmas treats were fabulous. Sharon deserves a good pat on the back for her efforts. We continue to help a needy family with gifts for Christmas and can food supplies. This year it was a single mother and her two five year old twin boys. They were very appreciative!

Next month we will hear from Melissa Berry, the executive director for Southern Idaho Tourism, and Sean Stanley, the city code enforcer is schedule for February. Again, Have a Great New Year!!

Submitted by:  
Edward Arndt  
President