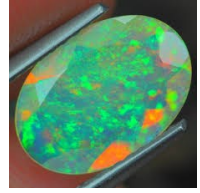




GEMS



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President's Message

As summer fades and the promise of autumn colors and cooler temperatures are in the air, our thoughts turn to resuming fall activities. Units around the state have or soon will hold their September meetings, and are planning service projects for the forthcoming months. Also on the minds of unit leaders is the matter of increasing membership, a challenge everywhere around the state. Hopefully many local units have put to use some of the grant money available for membership growth. This needs to be a priority for all units if we are to remain a vital and thriving organization.

Your executive board held a special meeting by ZOOM on Monday, September 11 to address the important issue of permitting the use of credit/debit cards to pay state dues for those individ-

uals who are not members of a unit, but must be state members in order to be eligible for AMBA benefits. Following discussion, a motion was made, seconded and passed that state dues of \$15.00 plus a \$1.00 surcharge to offset the fee may be paid with a credit/debit card. This decision does not pertain to members who belong to a local unit.

Host units should soon start planning regional conferences to be held in April of 2024. More information will be sent out at a later date,

We are wishing each and all of you enjoyable and successful activities as you continue the work of the Retired Educators Association of Idaho.

Your Co-Presidents

Linda Steele and Sharon Miller

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Executive Director's Message

Barb Blasch, Executive Director
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Barbara Blasch attended the annual ASRTE (Association of State Retired Teacher Executives) August 7-10, 2023 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. ASRTE's purpose is to share materials and information from state to state to improve the lives of retired educators. Many topics were presented and discussed. Most importantly were the topics of volunteers and membership. When looking for volunteers it is recommended to say: "WOULD YOU SUPPORT US AT A PARTICULAR EVENT?" You must have an event planned. Research says you must make an average of seven touches before a person joins an organization. There are three groups of potential members to consider when planning your membership campaign:

PRE-RETIRED - This group is still working in the schools and may not be thinking about retirement. This is a finite group. You can count them.

LAPSED MEMBERS - This group may have forgotten to pay their dues. How do you contact them and how often? This is a finite group. You can count them.

LONG FORGOTTEN RETIREES - This group has been missed. Maybe they never heard of REA-I. Maybe they were never asked to support REA-I. Maybe they moved to Idaho from somewhere else. They are in your family, in your neighborhood, at your house of worship, or at your senior center. This is an infinite

group. You don't know how many are out there waiting to be asked.

As Executive Director I participate in a zoom call the third week of each month with the 51 State Executive Directors of NRTA.

Barbara Blasch, Executive Director, and Sharon Miller, Co-President of REA-I, will be attending NRTA/AARP Advocacy Conference, October 2-4, 2023, in Washington, DC. October 2nd and 3rd will be preparation on topics of health, caregivers, and affordable retirement. On October 4th we have appointments to meet with Senators Risch and Crapo and Representatives Simpson and Fulcher.

VOLUNTEER SUMMIT

AARP, NRTA, and REA-I are jointly holding a Volunteer Summit on October 10th and 11th, 2023 in Boise, Idaho at the AARP Idaho state office. AARP and NRTA will be providing the speakers and trainers and the funding. The purpose of the Summit is to foster the working relationship between REA-I and AARP Idaho. The Summit will work through engaging volunteers leading to active members. Participants include: REA-I Presidents and Presidents-Elect, REA-I Executive Director, AARP Idaho Executive Council, AARP Idaho committee chairs, and AARP Idaho staff.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Senators:

Sen. Mike Crapo 202-224-6142, 208-334-1776,
www.crapo.senate.gov

Sen. Jim Risch 202-224-2752, 208-342-7985,
www.risch.senate.gov

Representatives:

Rep. Mike Simpson 202-225-5531, 208-334-1953,
www.simpson.house.gov

Rep. Russ Fulcher, 202-225-6611;
www.fulcher.house.gov

BE READY - VOTING RIGHTS

Someone will be approaching you with a clipboard asking you to sign a petition for a ballot initiative. These people are from Idahoans for Open Primaries and Reclaim Idaho. If enough signatures are obtained the initiative will be on the November, 2024 general election ballot and if approved by a majority of Idaho voters, the ballot initiative will make changes to our state's primary and general elections. The ballot initiative would replace Idaho's closed party primary elections with a single open primary election that all candidates could run in and all voters could vote in, regardless of party affiliation. The top four candidates from the primary election would advance to the general election. Next the ballot initiative would provide a runoff of a ranked choice system for voting. Voters would choose their first choice candidate and rank order their next three choices. If no candidate gets a majority of the votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and their votes are transferred to their second choice candidate. The process continues until one candidate has a majority of the votes to become the winner. To put this initiative on the ballot, 63,000 signatures from registered voters in at least 18 of 35 districts, must be collected by April, 2024 to make it part of the November, 2024 election.

A BALLOT INITIATIVE is your right to vote. Do not give it up. It is the voters' way to let the Legislators know the voters' ideas for legislation. You may not agree with the ballot initiative

but you can vote your conscience on November, 2024. Do let the voters have their right to vote on a ballot initiative.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

The Idaho Freedom Foundation proudly states its goal is to get government out of educating our children. They helped elect school board members to the West Bonner County School District in Priest River. The Board then voted to hire an unqualified candidate as Superintendent, according to the Idaho State Board of Education.

We as retired educators and Idaho voters need to review the credentials of candidates running to control local school boards. Share with others what you have learned. This will ensure that candidates who are dedicated to making our schools and kids successful. Become a candidate yourself. You know more about education than most candidates. School board elections are held on November 7, 2023. Don't let our school boards be stacked with people not interested in government public schools.

INTERESTING INFORMATION

Did you know that Idaho has an interim committee, The Committee On Federalism, that meets in the off season to discuss and listen to presenters that offer an early look at policy debates and legislation that later comes up during the legislative session. Do you wonder who the presenters are and who do they represent? Are these lobbyists or individual citizens? Ask your legislators how these presentations are balanced with each side being represented.

For more information call:

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IFREA IDAHO FALLS REA

We are looking forward to our first meeting in September hoping that our recruitment efforts will pay off with folks wanting to join. We went to all the local schools leaving "An Invitation to Join" along with an invitation to our first September meeting which promises "Stellar Get-to-know-you activities". We have a great speaker line-up for this year which listing we will hand out at our first meeting.

And all is well in Idaho Falls.

Constance C Taow

BKMREA BOISE, KUNA, MERIDIAN REA

BKM is beginning the new year with plans that include some new and some traditional activities. Our monthly meetings will be held at the Eagles Hall. We are looking forward to a new set of lunch menus they are offering. Some of our members will be leaving on August 25th for the Collette sponsored tour "Spotlight on South Dakota" which includes a visit to Mount Rushmore, the Crazy Horse memorial and Custer State Park. We are fortunate this year to begin with a full slate of program ideas lined up for members to enjoy. The September program, Fall Flowers, will be presented by a local gardener, Colette Peterson. Plans for our December program are in the works and will feature a quilt raffle, games, music and warm fellowship. We will continue to support our local food bank and the nonprofit learning

center, Giraffe Laugh, whose mission is to prepare underprivileged children for kindergarten. As in years past we will continue to work on funding grants to local teachers and scholarships to two BSU senior students who are completing a degree in education. We value the hard work and dedication of our membership whose contributions and participation help fulfill the goals and aspirations of our unit.

Jane Brewer, President, BKM

GEM COUNTY REA

On August 17th, our unit was represented at the state Executive Board meeting in Boise by Co-Presidents Sandy Baker and Rita Montgomery. Also attending were state Co-Presidents Linda Steele of Gem County and Sharon Miller of Payette's Lower Snake River Retired Educators Association

The Gem County Retired Educators held their annual Unback to School potluck August 22, with about 30 members attending. In September we will be hosted by the Ola Ladies Club for our luncheon and meeting, also an annual tradition. Our officers are making plans for the upcoming months, several service projects, and programs that promise to be entertaining and informative. Our current membership stands at 60 +2 honorary members.

Submitted by
Linda Steele
Gem County Retired Educators Association

NIREA-North Idaho Retired Educators

I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer trying to keep cool and avoiding the smoke and wildfires. The officers of NIREA had our annual summer planning meeting at Jeff Sherwood's house in Bayview. As always he prepares us a delicious lunch. We discussed and came up with tentative speakers for the coming year. In September we will have a social gathering. Then Norma and Doug will talk about their August meeting in Boise. We will present our ideas for programs to the members.

October-PERSI, Don Drum; November-Robert Singletary, local historian; January-Tom Richards, Snake Pit history; February-Nick Swayne, NIC President; March-Coeur d'Alene Garden Club; April-Regional Conference in Lewiston; May-Mullan Museum.

I hope you have a lot of rewarding , educational, fun meetings planned for the coming year.

Mary Williams, Secretary

SEIREA-SOUTHEAST IDAHO REA

We were privileged to hear from many great speakers during the year. In September Ronda Black gave an interesting history of AARP/NGTA/REA Ethel Percy Andrus. Roger Wheeler and Rita Haggard presented the Necrology of members that passed during the year. In October Dr. Nel Flanders, Director of the Idaho State Symphony spoke. She told of her background. Her goal is to bring people back to the music world.

Marjean Wafford updated members on the State Convention. Members were encouraged to bring items in November for the Silent Auction. This will be held in December. Mona Heen, Field Experience Coordinator for ISU spoke to us in November. Mona was born in Iran. Her father was executed. After a time she and her mother escaped to Pakistan. Imprisoned and sent to a refugee camp, they were finally taken in by Germany. She eventually made it to California. In December, we were entertained by the Pocatello High School Choir. They were great. We had our annual Scholarship fundraiser and \$3500 was raised. Everyone had a great time! January brought us to Arlen Walker. He is a historian of the Bannock County Area. He talked about the Triangle District. This area was populated by many ethnic groups. They included Greeks, African Americans, Hispanics, Chinese, Italians, and many others. A motion was made to allocate funds for four \$800 scholarships and one \$500 scholarship. The grand total would be \$3860. \$360 for the fees. It passed.

Pledge cards were distributed for a paver from SEIREA to be purchased for the new Alumni House. Phil Joslin

spoke about the United Senior Project in February. The goal of this project is to enrich lives through lifelong learning, health and overall wellness. A video was presented with information about this organization. In March, Ryan Sargent, ISU Alumni Director, presented an update on the alumni center. The place will serve as a gathering for alumni and friends as well as an event center, display honorary alumni and have meeting and board rooms. This will open in late April. April was a busy month. Hannah Sanger is the Science and Environmental Administrator for the City of Pocatello. The Portneuf River Vision is to improve water quality and provide recreation accessibility to the river. Centennial Rainey Park is currently in the planning stages. Sixteen members of our unit attended the State Convention at the Sho-Ban Convention Center. May brought Jean Haneke, Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Idaho, and talked about how the program is working in Pocatello. The program seeks to encourage underprivileged

Submitted by:
Frances Stephens
President SEIREA

NOTES FROM WEBMASTER

Our Retired Educators Association of Idaho Website is getting views from non-members taking a look at us. We have received several new members through our website. Have you looked at the website lately? Maybe you should. There is so much outdated information on there. Please send information and pictures you would like on your unit's section of the website. You have other ideas about what should be there? I'd like to have those too.

Bill Kluckhohn Bkluckhohn1@gmail.co

Magic Valley REA

No News to report

Submitted by:
Edward Arndt
President

Community Service

No news to report.

Submitted by:
Dennis Ohrtman
Community Service Chair REAI

Lower Snake River REA

No news to report.

Submitted by:
Connie Stein

Retired Educators of North Central Idaho- RENCI

No news to report.

Submitted by:
Dennis Ohrtman

PERSI

Travel Adventures

By the time you read this article, four BKM members will have traveled to South Dakota with Collette

Travel. But, there are two more trips that our REAI group will be enjoying in 2024. One is America's

Music Cities scheduled to start April 21, 2024. For high-lights and more information check the REA website.

In May the Memorials or World War II is scheduled for May 17-26 2024. We have two members taking this trip. This trip is also mentioned in the Gems.

For more information about these trips or any other trip of interest to you, contact Andy Boone Business

Development Manager at aboone@collette.com or call 866-669-5407 or 503-572-4203. Be sure to mention my name, Margaret Reimer, and that you are a member of Retired Educators of Idaho.

Submitted by
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