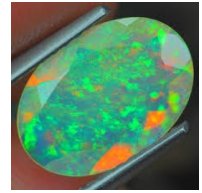




GEMS



The Official Publication of Retired Educators Association of Idaho

Volume 27 Number 1

14 September 2024

President's Message

Greetings REA-I members and friends,

As August brings signs of approaching fall, REA-I executive board members begin thinking and planning for our annual fall meeting in Boise. We gathered on August 14 at the AARP suite of offices in Boise to conduct the official business of the organization. We greatly appreciate the AARP staff for hosting us once again and even providing a very tasty lunch for us.

We had a very productive and informative day. Our executive director, Barbara Blasch, gave an interesting report on her April trip to the REA Volunteer Membership Training Conference in Charlotte, NC. Dennis Ohrtman, our REA-I president-elect, also attended. Barbara discussed ways to best reach potential new members, how to promote leadership in the organization, and how to reach the 50+ population through various technology sites. Also presented was Idaho AARP news/activities, AARP legislative priorities, and information on the Open Primaries Initiative that will be on the Idaho ballot in November. Her detailed report is on our website.

Lisa Anderson, AARP Advocacy Director, stated that AARP is working at the national level on issues of social security and caregiving.

Our guest speaker was Janie Ward-Engelking, District 18 Senator, Idaho Legislature, presented key items for the 2025 legislative session; education facility bill, vouchers, effect to education of tax cuts, and the issue of 60 per cent to pass a bond in Idaho. Ms Ward-Engelking has been a strong advocate for education in the legislature for six terms.

Of interest to some retirees might be the May 23-31, 2025, Collette Tour to Mackinac Island. More information is on our web site www.idahoretirededucators.org

Our next executive board meeting will be by Zoom on January 15, 2025. More information concerning the April 24-25, 2025, REA-I Convention in Boise will be shared. See you there!

If you are a new REA-I member, be sure to explore our web site and read about each unit's activities, learn about our mission/purpose and the benefits of being a member.

Happy fall ya all,
Sharon Miller
Linda Steele
REA-I Co-presidents

In This Issue

- President's Message
- Legislative Report
- PERSI Report
- Exec. Secretary Message
- Contact Information
- Collette Travel
- BKM News
- Idaho Falls REA
- Lower Snake REA
- NIREA
- RENCI
- SEIREA
- Squaw Butte REA
- Twin Falls
- Travel Adventures

Executive Director's Message

No information at this time.

Barb Blasch, Executive Director
c - 770-841-8582
Barconsul@aol.com

PERSI

It appears PERSI had a positive year as it finished the year at 9.2 return about 2 to 3 % above the goal.

Contact Information

Co - President

Linda Steele
208-86-1562
lpsteele500@gmail.com
Sharon Miller
208-707-0490 or
20643409
smidaho@fmtc.com

President Elect:

Dennis Ohrtman
208.743.0694
dwohrtman@aol.com

Executive Director

Barbara Blasch
208.229.4561
bearconsul@aol.com

Treasurer

Patricia Kluckhohn
208.288.4295
pjkluckhohn@gmail.com

Secretary

Maxine Hardy
208-201-1913
maxinehardy78@outlook.com

Community Service

Dennis Ohrtman
208.743.0694
dwohrtman@aol.com

Western Region

North Central Region

Pat Hoch
509-552-9480
patch232@yahoo.com

Legislation

Barbara Blasch
208.229.4561
bearconsul@aol.com

Webmaster

Bill Kluckhohn
208.288.4295
bkluckhohn1@gmail.com

Travel Adventures

Margaret Reimer
208.887.6747
reimerm8@gmail.com

GEMS

Larry Lee
208-390-0355
kleeidaho@gmail.com

Zoom Master

208-390-0355
kleeidaho@gmail.com

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

Submitted by:
Barbara Blasch
208.229.4561
bearconsul@aol.com

Travel Adventures

Good News!!

We are traveling again. I have booked a trip for our REA members to Mackinac Island in May of next year. The dates are May 23-31, 2025. Information including brochures and reservation forms have been sent to all the unit presidents. The information is also on our website.

Remember, if you want to book your own trip, contact Andy Boone Business Development manager, at 866-669-5407 (cell: 503-572-4203) or aboone@collette.com. Be sure to mention my name.

and that you are a member of Retired Educator's of Idaho, so that your unit will receive the 10% commission offered by Collette. You can also find more information about Collette trips by going on our website or simply google Collette Trips.

You can also contact me, Margaret Reimer at 208-887-6747 or cell: 208-350 9808 or reimerm8@gmail.com.

HAPPY TRAVELS!!

Submitted by
Margaret Reimer
208.887.6747
reimerm8@gmail.com

BOISE, KUNA, MERIDIAN REA-BKMREA

BOISE, KUNA, MERIDIAN REA is beginning 2024 with plans that include some new and some traditional activities. Our monthly meetings are held at the Eagles Lodge in Boise and the October – December 2023 programs were:

October – Legislative/Education review by Senator Janey Ward-Engelking, Idaho State Legislator, District 18.

November – Gabriel from the organization BECAUSE INTERNATIONAL demonstrated their product “Shoes that Grow.” The shoes are designed to expand 5 sizes and are donated to impoverished countries. To date, they have donated to 100 countries and distributed 400,000 pairs of shoes.

Also, a member reported on the “Volunteer Summit” sponsored by AARP. She explained the partnership between AARP and REA and addressed ways our unit could support AARP. She provided a survey to members to vote on the item(s) that they felt they may be able to support in this partnership.

December – Quilt raffle, games, music, potluck, prizes for all and warm fellowship

Future scheduled programs for the remaining 2024 year include: Information on Idaho ballot initiative, open primaries, and rank choice voting; New Knowledge Adventure – Master Gardeners; History and Culture of Saudi Arabia; Speaker on ACLU; and Fitness for Seniors

As in years past, BKM will continue to work on funding grants to local teachers and scholarships to BSU senior students who are completing a degree in education thru:

1) Donated books to sell to membership in support of BSU Scholarship

2) Travel through Collette sponsored tours – which funds Teacher Grants: (America’s Music City – April

2024 & 80th Anniversary of D-Day – May 2024)

3) Monthly door prize drawings to support the BSU Scholarship Fund

4) Christmas quilt raffle in support of the BSU Scholarship Fund

BKM will also continue to support our local food bank with food and monetary donations. We will also be supporting the nonprofit learning center, Giraffe Laughs, whose mission is to prepare underprivileged children for kindergarten through donations of food, products, money, and quilts made by the BKM Quilting ladies.

We value the hard work and dedication of our membership whose contributions and participation help fulfill the goals and aspirations of our BKM unit through events, such as, Volunteer hours and monetary donations; Clothing donations for Nicaragua mission trip of a Unit member; and Operation Wishbook – the collection of new or gently used children’s books which are given at Christmas time to children who have limited access to books. Currently, there is a plan to introduce to the membership an opportunity to gather informally to discuss personal opinions regarding “current events” and its affect on our society in general.

Finally, the membership is kept abreast of events and relative knowledge through the very informative monthly BKM Newsletter which regularly shares a variety of information with its membership – List of monthly “special volunteers” // Monthly unit volunteer hours & monetary donations // Pending and current events & programs // Luncheon menus // Fundraisers // Directory updates or changes // Financial statements // Fraud watch reminders // Legislative news // Medicare health insurance notifications // Persi notifications // Travel Adventures // Board meeting notifications // and \$ donations to our Local Food Bank or Giraffe Laughs

Submitted by Leigh Oliver

President Elect, BKM

SEIREA

SEIREA is looking forward to another year of gathering as retired educators. We enjoy each other’s company – if we can still remember who they are! We mourn together the loss of dear friends and former colleagues who have passed. We are always excited to support the ISU education department and foundation through the activities that occur during the year.

This year we have a slate of programs that will bring the world to us through a colleague’s climb to the top of Africa on Mount Kilimanjaro. We will get updates on local projects with the school district, the New Knowledge Adventures, and the community’s ongoing project to develop more open spaces for us to enjoy.

We have holiday activities to raise scholarship money for ISU education students, and we always have great entertainment to bring in the season. We wrap up the year with a report from one of our local legislators.

Our passion that led us into a rewarding careers in education continues to foster a desire to engage with the world around us and to stimulate our “Golden Years” by participating in our communities, faith groups, families and new learning opportunities. It is always rewarding to catch up and enjoy the company of people who embrace the world as we do. We wish all former educators around the state the very best and hope you each enjoy the same joy in your year ahead.

Lower Snake River REA

No information at this time.

Idaho Falls REA

No information at this time.

GEM COUNTY REA Gem County Retired Educators

The Gem County Retired Educators held their Not Going Back to School potluck Tuesday, August 27th, which was well attended. We also welcomed three new members.

Our first business meeting will be held September 27 when the Ola Ladies Club will host us at the Ola Community Hall for lunch and a surprise program.

The remaining monthly meetings have been scheduled, and a variety of programs are planned through May, as

well as our traditional community service projects. Thanks and appreciation to our officers and Randa George for their hard work in keeping our unit strong and growing.

Your state presidents, Sharon and Linda have been working on the state convention to be held April 24th and 25th in Boise at the Holiday Inn near the airport, 2970 W. Elder. More information concerning the state convention will be forthcoming within the next few months.

Submitted by Linda Steele

Retired Educators of North Central Idaho

We are creatures of habit in the beautiful valley carved by the Snake and Clearwater Rivers. We like what we like, and deviation from that seems to be difficult. This month, we are truly waiting for our annual book review by seasoned educator Marilyn Feeney who must carry books into the shower to achieve her annual review of dozens of books. She is always on such a roll that we don't ever have time to interrupt her, but we know where to find her for questions and to share with her after the meeting. We never tire of listening. I wish we had a fireplace, pjs and a glass of wine because we settle in as winter descends upon us to new book experiences.

I think waiting for our December program shared with the local Rotary Club is just like being a child waiting for the magic of Christmas. Two choirs, one from the local high school and another from a local grade school stimulated our Christmas spirit. Celebrating with one of the best parts of our life, children and young adults, re-

minds us that kids are good, generation after generation.

We also spent (some of us spent more than others) dollars on donated items to support our scholarship fund. I really didn't make a mistake when I gave \$300 to my teaching partner of 22 years to spend for me while I was at the Idaho Commission on Aging meeting in Boise. I knew she wouldn't be bashful. We were a much smaller group this year for the auction, but the generosity was still there. One of the baskets she bought had exotic spreads for crackers and pretzels. My wife didn't have to fight me very hard for the fig spread. Our adults draw for the baskets I buy on Christmas day. My daughter and I were the winners this year. She didn't share as much as I. Maybe it is coal for her next year.

Now we are on to the Spring and planning for the regional conference. More from RENCI soon.

Dr. Dennis Ohrtman
RENCI president

Magic Valley REA

Magic Valley REA held our regional conference on April 18th. It was very successful with a welcome from Mayor Ruth Pierce, and presentations on Chinese immigration and mining, and support for the Ukrainian people. We also had reports from PERSI, Margaret Reimer on Collette tours, and a report from three of our legislators. They focused on the Library legislation, hoping to improve it. The sad thing, all three were defeated in the primary. Barbara squeezed in some of her report, encouraging everyone to vote.

For our May meeting, we had a presentation from Professor Russ Tremayne from CSI on the Milago Labor

Camp Which was set up during the Great Depression, which was eventually known for providing housing migrant laborers. The area is now becoming a site for low cost housing, Professor Tremayne is very supportive local history.

For the upcoming year we are contemplating presentation from the editor of the Times News, the Habitat for Humanity store, the LDS ware house, and from the Twin Falls library on their programs and adjustments, etc.

Ed Arndt
REA of Magic Valley

NIREA-North Idaho Retired Educators

No information at this time.