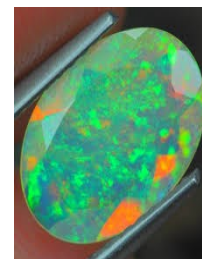




GEMS



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President's Message

Dear members and prospective members, I almost feel like a shadow organization. You remember the "Shadow" weekly radio mystery series that played from 1937-54? I listened to it at night while milking the cows... Our membership has been fluctuating between healthy and the ICU. We, as the highest risk group have experienced the Covid 19 and its variants with caution as we have tried to navigate the past few months. We have had to cancel meetings and conferences and survive by voiding of physical space. We continue to rely on ZOOM to communicate the business of the REI General Board. Most of the Units continue to observe protocol as the Covid lurks in the **"shadows."** We

are told everyday on the news to get vaccinated. The doses are CDC and FDA proven to be safe and effective. If everyone would do that, the virus would be limited in its places to host. I urge everyone to get booster vaccinated and protect yourself and others. As far as the future, it remains murky with the mutated variants undulating. Our Units are trying their best to operate in some manner to meet and protect at the same time. As retired teachers **we don't give up....**we learn to adapt and move forward. Most of you have been alerted to our next general board meeting by ZOOM. It will be held @ 1:00 Mon. Jan.10th. I look forward to your intuitive and profound strategies.

REI President,
Stan Cope

Executive Director/Legislative

This new year (2022) offers many opportunities for our members to be active in their communities.

First—you can engage in the planning and use of the \$5,000 grant awarded to REA-I to communicate with our members and the community.

Second—You can engage with AARP Idaho supporting their programs and activities that focus on the over 50 population:

Caregiving, savings and planning, fraud prevention, voter engagement, livable

communities, broadband, relationship with Hispanic/Latino community, and Idaho's military veterans.

The Retired Educators of Idaho was not in this list because we are 100% involved with AARP Idaho through the pilot project connecting the two organizations. Where do you fit in? What is your interest? How will you become active?

Barara Blasch,
Executive Director
208-229-4561

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TRAVEL ADVENTURES 2022

I now have a new contact with Collette. His name is Lucas Bi-alecki.

We have been in contact the past few days. I told him that there is some interest in the American Heritage trip and the Mackinac Island Trip in 2022. I have received information on both trips. The Heritage of America Trip is scheduled for Oct. 2-10 2022. Prices are: Double \$2748.00, Single \$3398.00, Triple \$2718.00. Deposit of \$600.00 is due by March 26, 2022. Optional travel protection is \$299.00.

Final payment is due Aug. 3 2022. The Mackinack Island Trip is scheduled for Sept. 25-Oct. 3. Prices are: Double \$3549.00, Single \$4549.00, Triple \$3499.00. Reservations are due by March 18, 2022. Final payment is due July 27, 2022. The deposit and travel insurance are the same as the Heritage trip. The prices for the trips include lodging, airfare, and some meals.

Submitted By:
Margaret Reimer
Travel Adventures

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COMMUNITY SERVICE

No news to report
Dennis Ohrtman
Community Service

INSURANCE

No news to report
Elaine Smith
Insurance/PERSI

SEIRA (Southeast Idaho REA)

In September we were able to meet in person since February of 2021. Our meeting presentation was from Dean Jean McGivney Burelle, the Dean of the college of education at ISU. She thanked our organization for the generous scholarships we have awarded to education students over the years. New officers were installed for the upcoming two years. They are: President Ronda Black, Vice President (President Elect) Francie Stephens, Secretary Mary Ann Hansen, Treasurer Judy Liday, and Past President Roger Wheeler.

We were unable to hold a meeting in October due to complications of Covid.

In November our guest speaker was Kim Stouse from the Pocatello Fire Department. She shared valuable information for seniors regarding 911 calls and emergency information to have on hand through the department's Red Folder Project. She made these folders available to all those members interested at our

December meeting. President Ronda Black introduced a new highlight for our meetings to spotlight members who have made outstanding contributions in community service as well as education. This month's members honored were Dr. Ron Bolinger and Mary M. Vagner.

In December we were treated to wonderful Christmas music by the Reflections Choir directed by Dee Dee Hegsted. We also held our annual Silent Auction to raise money for scholarships. This year we had many generous contributions. We made over \$2,100 so far with a possibility of more to come. It has been a challenging year for us all in the SEIRA, as I'm sure it has been for all of you. We consider every month we are able to meet in person a blessing! A Happy and Healthy New Year to everyone.

Mary Ann Hansen,
Secretary

NIREA

NIREA members hope you all had a very merry Christmas and that Santa was good to you. We haven't met as a group since February 2020. We are going to meet in January to plan for the rest of the year.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Submitted by:
Mary Williams
Secretary NIREA



DANCING IN A COVID FREE 2021

IDAHO FALLS REA

What a crazy year it has been. We cancelled our September meeting due to Covid-19. Several members wanted to continue hibernating in their homes rather than attend our October meeting, so only six members attended our usual meeting. The November meeting was well attended. We were honored to have Quilts of Valor members (Mimi Jones and Chris Blower) wrap Don Taylor and Les Backstrom (two of our members) and Kaycee Byron (the spouse of member Ruth Byron) in their Quilts

of Valor. (Three other members' spouses were also wrapped in their Quilts of Valor in their homes.) Our December meeting was our Christmas social. We enjoyed spending time eating, playing games and enjoying each other's company. We're looking forward to a brighter 2022.

Chris Blower
President, Idaho Falls

BOISE, KUNA, MERIDIAN REA

Given the challenges of COVID and finding a venue for our meetings, BKM has been successful with doing business as usual and more. Since September we've held monthly meetings with September and October meetings in a local park where members brought brown bag lunches. In October our guest speaker was Janie Ward-Engelking, Idaho State Senator for District 18. She enlightened us on current political issues and the upcoming ballot issues. In November the Eagles Lodge welcomed us back with a luncheon of sandwiches from a local Subway. We practiced social distancing and required wearing of masks. Our program for November featured Janet Worthington who entertained us with her portrayal of Jane Russell. In previous programs Janet had dramatized several prominent historical figures including Mary Todd Lincoln and Abigail Adams. Our December meeting was mostly about fun and games and socializing. We received generous donations of food for the Idaho Food Bank,

books for Operation Wishbook, and Christmas Basket items for Giraffe Laugh, our local nonprofit organization that provides early education for children whose families do not have the means to pay for private preschool. Since 2021, our Giraffe Laugh contributions of food and household products have accrued a value of \$884.51.

Aside from regular meetings, BKM has a group of ladies who meet weekly to design and sew quilts. From September to November, they made 20 Christmas quilts. Ten were donated to the MSTI pediatrics ward, and ten were donated to a church for distribution to groups who help refugees and families through the CATCH program. For the year 2022, BKM is set to stay strong and continue its focus on unit coherence, member needs and interests and philanthropic pursuits.

Keith Lee
BKM President

RENCI

Greetings from North Central Idaho. It has been snowing all day, but not much accumulation even though the temperature is in the low 20's. Brings back memories of having to walk a mile in the deep snow and bitter cold of North Dakota after getting off the bus. My sisters and I couldn't even argue about who's turn it was to do the dishes after dinner because it hurt to take deep breaths.

Our RENCi group has become more active since November. We met for the first time this year for our scholarship auction. We had a wonderful turn-out and raised more than \$1000 that is the amount of the scholarship. It was great fun and we had very active bidding on most items.

In December we met again and shared the entertainment with the local Rotary Club. We had an elementary school choir as well as the Gold Voices from the high school perform. We had the wall opened up between the meeting rooms and were able to listen to the groups sing many holiday songs. I think all of us went home with a smile on our face and with memories of children singing and performing for annual programs in our past teaching experiences.

We are going to continue to meet for the rest of the year. We have all the programs planned out and hopefully our members will continue to support the Retired Educators of North Central Idaho. We will also be working with NIREA for the April conference.

Reporting from snowy and cold North Central Idaho,
Patricia Hoch, co-president, RENCi

SQUAW BUTTE RETIRED EDUCATORS, EMMETT

Our unit in Emmett has continued to hold regular meetings since September. Although most of our members are vaccinated and boosted, we observe a protocol that requires masking and social distancing. We have continued performing our service projects such as our annual warm clothing drive for the district school children. Our members have also generously donated food items and cash for the annual Christmas cheer basket project, spear-headed by teachers and students at Emmett Middle School. Members have also volunteered to help with the delivery of the cheer baskets to needy families. We continue to raise

money for our teacher grants project, which helps fund special classroom activities. Interested teachers may apply for a grant by May. The committee meets to select the recipients over the summer, then award the grants at the beginning of the following school year. Accomplishing service projects has posed a bit of a challenge in the time of covid, but this is a dedicated group of 58 members who are willing to step up and see that our tradition of community service continues.

Submitted by
Linda Steele
Squaw Butte Retired Educators, Emmett

