

GEMS

The Official Publication of Retired Educators of Idaho

President's Message

Spring Greetings Everyone!

This will be my last Gems article as REAI President. Lots have happened over the past nearly four years! I came to the job as we lost our newly installed President, Elaine Kline, to her unexpected passing. Barbara Blasch was the newly installed President-Elect. Connie Bunch had just asked to be replaced as Executive Secretary. Barbara decided she would like to do the traveling that this secretary position required. Long story short, Barbara was appointed as Executive Director and I moved from President-Elect to President. For a while I had no President-Elect but thankfully, Stan Cope offered and he is from the correct region for becoming President and to host the State in 2023! Stan has also been a blessing and stepped up more than he had to as I have been dealing with this cancer. Thank you so much Stan!

More recently, Covid-19 has played havoc with all our units! With us being in the most vulnerable group for the virus, many of our units have had to host meetings on Zoom rather than in person. Some units don't feel as comfortable with the technology and have just not met! My unit was to host the State Convention this year. We are one of the groups that have not met all year. As a result, we will hold the first day of the Convention (the busi-

Executive Director's Message

No news to report.

Travel Adventures

The two trips for this year are the following. Heritage of America is to take place Oct.10-Oct. 18 2021. Mackinac Island's dates are September 25-Oct. 2- 2021. Collette will hold 10 seats for both departures. The brochure for Mackinac Island and Heritage of America is available via my email. Let me know if you are interested in the trip, and I can forward it to you. Deposit date for Mackinac Island is March 10, 2021. The deposit date for Heritage of America is April 3, 2021.

ness stuff) as best we can, on Zoom April 12th. The second day which is supposed to be all the fun and celebrating needs to be in person and we are still not ready to be face-to-face. Therefore, that day will have to be postponed and added to the next State Convention that Stan will be in charge of in 2023. (SAD FACE)

I do feel great about Stan taking the lead after me! He will do great and very much loves this organization as do I. I will miss all the close friends I have made these past "four" years. What an amazing group of individuals and awesome, important organization!

Sincerely,
Mona Alfrey
President REAI

Barbara Blasch
208.229.4561
bearconsul@aol.com

The Oberammergau Trip is scheduled for 2022. There are 7 different venues for the trip. You can contact Collette at Collette.com/passion play for more details. You can also contact Barb Blasch for further information about this trip at bearconsul@aol.com or 208-229-4561

Good health to everyone.

Submitted by Margaret Reimer
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PERSI

Please check the PERSI website for current information.

<https://www.persi.idaho.gov/investments/monthly-investment-report/> [Full Investment Report](#)

Legislative

Legislative Report, March 04, 2021

First of all, I **highly recommend** that each of our members go to: idaholegislature.gov to learn about what's happening in our legislature. You can find a list of all of the bills that have been proposed and what their current status is. An H indicates the bill was started in the House, and an S indicates a Senate bill. When you click on a specific bill number, information comes up about where the bill is in the process. You can also click on highlighted topics, such as Bill Text, to get more information. Currently the House has sponsored 281 bills, 3 joint resolutions, 3 house resolutions, 1 house joint memorial, and 12 concurrent resolutions. The Senate has sponsored 161 bills, 6 concurrent resolutions, 3 senate joint resolutions, 3 joint memorials, 2 resolutions, and 1 proclamation.

.Click on "Legislation by Subject" , for example Education, and you'll find 44 bills. Many of those are of interest to current and retired educators. One, HB 174, would take away teachers' rights to negotiate salaries and working conditions. HB 221 would allow school districts and charter schools to issue local teacher certificates to anyone with a bachelors degree who does not have a criminal record or a communicable disease. The legislators just turned down a 6 million dollar Federal Grant that would have provided funds for early childhood education. One of the arguments against accepting the funds was that it was feared the content would be a

tool to press a social-justice indoctrination program on Idaho's youngest children.

The state universities and colleges are currently under scrutiny as their budgets are being discussed. The legislature has already penalized BSU \$409,000 for supposedly pursuing a social-justice agenda. Stay tuned!

Additional issues that my interest our members:

Property tax relief

Tax issues

Legislative approval for changing LOCAL school names, streets, memorial

Powers for the legislature

BALLOT INITIATIVES

And So much more!!!

BE ENGAGED, READ THE CONTENT OF THE BILLS, CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS.

Submitted by:

Connie Jean

jeanbunch@aol.com

Idaho Representatives:

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

Community Service

How many oil changes are you worth a year? Strange question? Sure, it is strange question, but today I called my mechanic who faithfully keeps my mother's 1994 Ford Taurus I inherited in good shape. The mechanic provides a service and the shop has "service" in its title. Sunday, like many of you, I went to church where I am the assistant minister. We are streaming "the service" and at the very end of the service, I say "Go in Peace, Serve the Lord." I just got off the phone with my 99-yr-old friend who told me he taught for a couple of years before he went into the "service." And then I thought about our AARP calls with Governor Little, a "service" to all our members. Service is all around us and we are service all around.

The oil change costs about \$40 dollars—I used to lie on my back and do it myself for far less. I can't do that anymore. For a minute I was upset and feeling old. Then I hit myself in the head with my Tylenol bottle, and said: Get real, Dennis, you provide a service and so do so many of your retired educator friends. This is the month we think about the services you provide to the community.

REA asks each unit to collect data to show just how much the members give to the community. That is ammunition to use with legislators and Gov. when they think about people who are re-

tired and their PERSI plan. We give back hours and dollars to the community. Unfortunately many of us can't claim as many hours this year because of COVID, but do tell us what you have been doing. Tell us, anonymously, what you have been supporting financially. We just need hours, no names, and a good dollar guess for your gifts. We know many of you have remained very generous. Please don't include church hours unless the church is doing a community project like giving coats to local school children. For example, our church provides several thousands of dollars and several hundreds of hours packing back packs for public school children with weekend food—that counts.

Don't tell about the things we can't do. Share what we can and what we do. Thanks for sharing your information with your area community service person when asked.

Don't be shy. Think of how many oil changes your efforts represent. Be proud, report happily, and then return to the recliner with your Tylenol bottle for the arthritis if you must. Reflect on how valuable you are. You might want a sign on your lawn: "This retired educator still serves this community."

Submitted by:
Dennis Ohrtman
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damned sinker
@dansinker

It is staggering to me that not a single pro sport in the US has been able to successfully keep covid out with all their resources and desire to protect the investment made in their players and yet we're talking about in-person school like somehow that will magically fare better

2:47 PM · 7/7/20 · [Twitter Web App](#)

Article on Dr. Shinn

"I was a curious little boy in a rough & tumble neighborhood and books were who I was." Reading has been his joy in eight decades as community leader. RENC's founding father Dr. Marion L. Shinn turns 100 March 11th. At age 13, he and his brother left family farm experiences miles west of Whitebird. Treks to Lewiston where they were to study at Lewiston High and Lewiston State Normal School were "all day, seven flat tire" adventures.

Those books led Shinn on journeys not to be shadowed by his own. State champion debater in 1938, he landed in a one-room cold schoolhouse in Dixie, Idaho, before World War II and his service as a radar specialist on a US submarine in the Pacific. He captured that portion of his life in his first book: *Pacific Patrol*. Later he and his wife photographed jaunts to more than 70 countries, including many that were part of his naval days.



Shortly after returning to Idaho, Dr. Shinn secured a position teaching Chemistry and supervising vocational education at Lewiston High until he was tapped to begin a vocational school at LCSC by Governor Samuelson. He founded the Vo-Tech School and orchestrated the building of its first two vocational buildings with a faculty of 60 full-time, 200 part-time, and additional support staff. Shinn also became the first recipient of vocational education doctorate from the University of Idaho. He, himself taught evening and weekend classes for vocational certification in many areas including electrician preparation.

His forty years as an educator were augmented by two decades as a summer park ranger and interpreter at Glacier National Park. While at home in Lewiston, Marion belonged to dozens of clubs, most notably being a 68-yr-member of Kiwanis. He made over 500 presentations and speeches, many while serving as a city councilman for 9 years with two years as Mayor of Lewiston. Shinn wrote his second book: *Eye Witness to History*. Marion was appointed to task forces and commissions by five Idaho governors.

Service has been his mantra, receiving the National Service Award from AARP in 1973. At home he was helping seniors do their taxes, building a pergola and a wildlife shelter. He started early with his buddies placing street signs in the Lewiston Orchards later incorpo-

rated into Lewiston. The signs still stand as a reminder of those early expenditures of energy. He was, not only the founder of vocational education in Lewiston but also, a charter member of the Clearwater Economic Development Association, the LCSC Alumni Association, and the Retired Educators of North Central Idaho. He served as the Chairman of the Library Board of Trustees and Board Member/officer of the Nez Perce County Historical Society. He was a 2008 recipient of the Idaho State Esto Perpetua Award for his work on Nez Perce County history, authorship of two books, editing the Historical Society *Golden Times Journal* and for his extensive philanthropy.

Shinn and his wife Lorena established The Shinn Family Alumni Association Scholarship and the LHS Vocational Scholarship. He established an endowment for the Historical Society and this past year contributed \$150,000 to the Schweitzer Career & Technical Education Center at LCSC. Shinn and his wife have been recognized philanthropists for the Library Foundation and the new Library building. He has actively supported the LC Valley Kiwanis scholarship and the RENC scholarship of an education student at LCSC. Dr. Shinn recently purchased the property where the replica of the First Idaho Territorial Capitol (office for, and mostly likely, a residence for Governor Wallace appointed by Abraham Lincoln).

COVID and a stroke put Dr. Shinn on the sidelines for a very short time, but he looks forward to leaving the rocking chair, a rejuvenated man, to resume his active life as a community and educational advocate.



He often says he believes in education from the "cradle to the grave." Marion has more years to continue his journeys from that cradle at the bottom of the Whitebird.

Dennis W. Ohrtman, Ph.D.

RENCI—March 2021

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GEMS: In need of an editor

Boise, Kuna, Meridian REA-BKMREA

Happy St. Patrick's Day!!!

We at unit BKM are still sending out our newsletter every month and holding board meetings and presentations on ZOOM. This month our presenter is Dan Everhart, Outreach Historian of the Idaho State Historical Preservation Office, who will speak on the History of Ustick. We will join Dan, a native Idahoan, to learn the history of this township established in 1907, which played an integral role in the

development of the Boise Valley. This fading history is still visible in landscape elements of the area (buildings, open spaces, mature trees, open canals and more). Learn how historic themes shaped the evolution of a rural community and inevitably altered Ustick's unique character.

Hope to see many of you in April at the State conference.

Lois Treat
BKM unit President.

SEIREA

The Southeast Idaho Retired Educators' Association has not been meeting regularly during the pandemic, but the Board of Directors has met on Zoom several times. Our nominating committee met and lined up new officers for the 2021-23 year. These new officers will be voted on in May, possibly in a face-to-face meeting. Then we will be ready and anxious to start up, hopefully in the fall.

Our chapter faced the possibility of losing our meeting place as there was negotiations to sell The Clarion Inn where we have met for many years. The

Board looked around and had several possible venues that could be used; however, the negotiations fell through and so we will still be able to use The Clarion as usual. That was a relief.

Our chapter has a slate of delegates for the Spring Zoom State meeting, and we are looking forward to "seeing" everyone and receiving inspiration to continue this next year with renewed vigor and optimism.

Submitted by:
Ronda Black

Magic Valley REA

Greetings from Magic Valley,

Not much has changed here. Barbara and I participated (?) in the Zoom on- line presentation— Thanks to AARP. I haven't got around to practicing it...but we will see.

We do have meetings scheduled for March and April. For March--**Is Joe Namath for Real?** Hopefully, We will compare our coverage to what he is selling.

April is still to be announced. We are hoping for a police officer to present a scams alert.

Barbara and I are scheduled for our second vaccination shot Saturday the 27th.

Hope you are all doing well! Wear your Masks! We are getting there.

Submitted by:
Ed Arndt
President MVREA

Retired Educators of North Central Idaho- RENC I

No news to report.

Submitted by:
Pat Hoch
Co-president, RENC I

Idaho Falls REA

No news to report.

Submitted by:
Chris Blower –
Idaho Falls President

North Idaho Retired Educators- NIREA

No news to report.

Submitted by:
Mary Williams
Secretary

Squaw Butte REA

No news to report.

Submitted by:

Lower Snake River REA

No news to report.

Respectfully submitted by:
Sharon Miller

