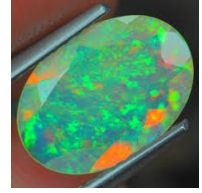




# GEMS



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## President's Message

Hello Gem-er's,

People have been asking me how my recovery is going. I went to the Doctor and he unwrapped it for the first time since the surgery to ex-ray it.

I'm going to be scarred for life, it looks like the ankle of Frankenstein, it will make you want to puke. I'm going to have to cover it up by wearing high top boots.

I've had 11 surgeries so far. I abused my body all my life and now it's finally starting pay off...for the Doctors.

So...friends we had our annual Board Meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Aug. via ZOOM. It's hard to concentrate when everyone is watching you and even more suspect when one turns off their video feed. Who knows what going on then? We were able to give reports, discuss business and plan for the future. I want to emphasize your Association's hand out "Jump Start". (*I wrote about this a couple of e-mails ago.*) There is money from a grant to help your Units advertise to recruit, re-unite and generate interest among those who may have chosen to drop out. I hate to see us lose memberships and we really need to add more

memberships to our roles.

We had two guest speakers that provided us with some answers to things that we were interested in. The Executive Director Don Drum spoke about the future of PERSI and how the investment funds are doing. (quite well!) The other person was Ms. Maggie Mann from the Southeast Idaho Public Health Department. She gave us the latest news on the Covid 19 and its variant. Double Vaccinations may require a third and will begin in late Sept. Also, mask mandates and social distancing may be required to help eradicate this awful pandemic. As your Unit's try to reconvene, it is a good idea to see the State's recommended guidelines.

I have heard that some are meeting with sack lunches in open spaces, less people per table and not allowing smorgasbords. All these are good ideas and the last thing we want to do is become super spreaders. It breaks my heart that we can't meet face to face and can't get back to normal. If everyone was vaccinated...then there would be no hosts for contagious attraction.

Submitted by:

Stan Cope  
State President of REAI

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## Executive Director/Legislative

Three groups to watch:

Public education and Teachers are facing very organized opposition in the upcoming legislative session from the IDAHO FREEDOM FOUNDATION.

RECLAIM IDAHO has been successful in rolling back the State ballot initiative law to its former numbers.

THE IDAHO 97 PROJECT works for education, health and other worthy projects. Go to their web site to read about their priorities and follow their actions to form your own opinion.

### Voting Rights:

Call, write, e-mail your two Representatives and two Senators asking them why they don't support voting rights for the citizens of the United States. They will ask you where you live because they only want to talk to citizens who live in their districts. You can talk to any elected official. Explain to them that their vote affects your life. Be firm. Ask them if they talk only to lobbyists who live in their district.

### Vaccinations and masks:

Actions show our government officials, elected and appointed, are not going to deal with the covid-19 pandemic. It is up to the free-market to fill the void with action. You are the free market. Speak up with your actions. Get vaccinated, wear a mask, support our teachers and students so they can stay healthy.

### AARP

Movies For Grownups:

September movies are celebrating Hispanic Heritage in Idaho.

Movie dates - 9/13, 9/20, 9/27, 10/5

Events for discussion - 9/14, 9/21, 9/28

Register here: <http://aarp.cvent.com/IDLatinos21>

REA-I and the State AARP are still involved in the pilot project to support each others priorities and activities. We have used monies from NRTA to print membership forms for members to use when talking to retired educators. Each State member was mailed a membership form last October and asked to share it with a potential member. Raise your hand if you shared this form. No hands-- Without new members the organization will die by lack of interest. We have applied for another grant for \$5000 to place ads in local newspapers letting the community know who we are, what our goals are, and where we are located.

At the August REA-I State Board meeting we heard a presentation from Maggie Mann, State department of Health for Bannock County. Based on her information and the latest numbers of covid-19 cases and deaths in Idaho, the Board is recommending no in house/in person meetings for the safety of our members. Last week's numbers published in the Idaho Statesman: almost 5000 new cases and 44 deaths in Idaho.

Please continue to read what is on our web site.

### Senators:

Sen. Mike Crapo 202-224-6142, 208-334-1776,  
[www.crapo.senate.gov](http://www.crapo.senate.gov)

Sen. Jim Risch 202-224-2752, 208-342-7985,  
[www.risch.senate.gov](http://www.risch.senate.gov)

### Representatives:

Rep. Mike Simpson 202-225-5531, 208-334-1953,  
[www.simpson.house.gov](http://www.simpson.house.gov)

Rep Russ Fulcher, 202-225-6611;  
[www.fulcher.house.gov](http://www.fulcher.house.gov)

Barb Blasch, Executive Director  
cell- 770-841-8582  
[Bearconsul@aol.com](mailto: Bearconsul@aol.com)

## TRAVEL ADVENTURES/COLLETTE

Due to the resurge of the Virus, travel is questionable. There still is the Oberammergau Trip scheduled for 2022. There are 7 different venues for the trip. You can contact Collette at [collette.com\passionplay](mailto:collette.com\passionplay) for more details. You can also contact Barbara Blasch for further information about the trip at [bearconsul@aol.com](mailto: bearconsul@aol.com) or 208-229-4561 or Margaret Reimer at [reimerm8@gmail.com](mailto: reimerm8@gmail.com) 208-887-6747.

Collette is planning a new trip to Montana for small groups.

Check our website for the information. There will be further information coming as the trip develops.

Submitted by  
Margaret Reimer  
208.887.6747  
[reimerm8@gmail.com](mailto: reimerm8@gmail.com)

## PERSI (per BKMREA Board Meeting minutes)

Current Value: \$24,232,394,708

Fiscal Year Net Change in Assets: \$751,075,777

Fiscal Year to Date Returns: 3.5%

Month to Date Returns: 2.3%

No meetings scheduled for September and November. The next board meeting is October 19 at 8:30 at the PERSI office.

Submitted by Connie Bunch

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**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

No news to report  
Community Service Chair  
Dennis Ohrtman

**Budding artist at work.**



**INSURANCE (per BKMREA Board Meeting minutes)**

Jim Coleman reported on Regence Blue Shield Insurance. November to early December is the timeframe

For members to make changes to Part D. He reminded members that if they choose to leave the plan, they may not re-enroll.

**IDAHO FALLS REA**

It has been a year since our unit has met. I am looking forward to seeing everyone and spending time getting reacquainted.

We have great speakers planned, and a special Veterans Day presentation, Quilts of Valor, for two of our members.

The Idaho Falls Unit meets at Dixie Diner, noon, on the second Wednesday of the month.

The schedule is as follows:

Sept 8<sup>th</sup> – Welcome back visiting time.

Oct 13<sup>th</sup> – Ronald McDonald Family Room presentation

Nov 10<sup>th</sup> – Quilt of Valor presentation to two members

Dec 8<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Social

Jan 12<sup>th</sup> – Holly Whitworth, District 7 Public Health speaker

Feb 9<sup>th</sup> – When Books Went to War presentation

March 9<sup>th</sup> – Open, TBA

April – Regional meeting, date to be arranged

May 15<sup>th</sup> – closing social, instillation of new officers

Submitted by:  
Chris Blower  
Idaho Falls REA President

**NIREA-North Idaho Retired Educators**

Some members of the Retired Educators of North Idaho got together in August to plan our 2021-2022 programs for the year. We met in Bayview at a member's home. He provided us with a delicious lunch.

We were going to have our first meeting the fourth Monday of September, but it got put on hold. Because of the health and safety of our members we decided to cancel our get-togethers until January. We will wait to see if it is possible to have a

meeting then.

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer and hopefully we can all get together this spring for our individual conferences. Take care. Let's hope we get to have our state convention in 2023.

Submitted by:  
Mary Williams  
Secretary



**SEIREA** Southeast Idaho Retired Educators Association

The SEIREA is alive and well, despite the whirlwind that is surrounding all of us at this time. Our association fully supports our educators as they start a new school year under some of the direst circumstances. Our board wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, The Idaho State Journal, expressing our appreciation for and support of the job that they all will be doing this coming year. We pray that all will be well and the students of Southeast Idaho will continue to receive the outstanding education of which they are entitled.

The SEIREA was able to generate enough funds last year to provide four scholarships to deserving ISU College of Education students. It is the association's great desire to be able to do so again. With those goals in mind, the board has opted to begin the year on Monday, November 30, 2020 with the annual Christmas Silent Auction and Raffle. This "kick off" will only take place should the state allow such gatherings to take place. So—WEAR YOUR MASKS!!

It is our honor to announce that Idaho State University College of Education has a new dean. Her name is Dr. Jean McGivney-Burelle and she comes to us from the University of Hartford in West Hartford, CT. She arrives with a most impressive background. Among her many accolades, she brings her most recent experience as the inaugural Executive

Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation at the University of Hartford. We welcome her and her family to our area and wish her the very best.

She has already made contact with our organization and pledged to join us for our meetings when possible and will be a member well. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the COE to enhance the students' education.

We would be remiss if we didn't take a moment to thank Dr. Mark Neill, Interim COE Dean for his interest and participation in our program last year. His attendance really indicated a desire for our two entities to work together. In fact, he was quoted as saying, "I loved the Christmas Silent Auction. I got all of my Christmas shopping done!" Thank you Dr. Neil for joining us.

Our treasurer has already received many membership applications even though we are not meeting yet. That shows our retirees feel a true dedication to the association. We are very proud of our groups both local and state for what they do for our retired educators. We hope we will all get back to normal soon.

Submitted by:  
Roger Wheeler  
President SEIREA

**Boise, Kuna, Meridian REA**

The board has been meeting throughout the summer to plan the upcoming year. The Board suggested an August get together for the general membership to be held outdoors. The August get-together was attended by 30 members and it was so successful that another meeting in the park is being

planned for September. Committee Chairs all reported on their activities. Several programs have been planned for our monthly meetings.

Submitted By:  
Keith Lee  
BKM President

**RENCI**

No news to report.



## Squaw Butte

During the summer, Squaw Butte Retired Educators met for their annual field trip in June. We toured the Idaho Historical Museum, ate lunch at Cottonwood Grill and some members toured some of the many attractions in the area. The rest of us got out of Boise before the traffic got worse. In August several members helped prepare, serve, and clean up after the "back to school" brunch for returning Emmett School District staff. On August 26, we had our annual "We are not going back to school potluck." It was bittersweet. Catching up with friends is always fantastic. Unfortunately, we will no longer be meeting at the Presbyterian church. Thank you, Sharon, for the many years of wonderful meals and a great place to meet.

Starting in September, we will be meeting at Cold Mountain Creek Restaurant in Emmett. Generally, we meet on the last Monday on the month.

In September, we will welcome Emmett's new school superintendent Craig Woods. We will also be collecting school supplies to distribute to the Gem County schools.

October the speaker will be the Curator of the Gem County Museum. Meg Davis will be speaking about the history of the fruit industry in the Valley of Plenty. We will be collecting warm clothing for Gem County students.

Our very own Pam Walker will be our speaker in November. She is going to share her trip to the Battle of the Little Big Horn. We will be asking for donations for the Christmas Cheer baskets.

During the month of December, GCEA, Emmett High School students, Emmett School District Employees and

members of SBRE will be shopping, sorting, wrapping and distributing cheer baskets to several of Gem County's less fortunate families. At our meeting we will celebrate with a cookie exchange and caroling.

In January we look forward to meeting representative students from Payette River Technical Academy (PRTA). We will also be collecting much needed supplies for the students of Black Canyon High School.

February the speaker will be Cat Tigerman from "The House Next Door" which provides housing for single mothers who are furthering their education. We will be collecting books and money for school libraries in both February and March.

Chane Nelson is the new 4H extension leader for Gem and Boise counties. For the March meeting Chane will be speaking about the many 4H opportunities in our community. (an probably ways we can help)

The most well attended meeting is usually held in Ola. The drive up Squaw Creek in April is beautiful as the arrow leaf balsam root is usually blooming. The Ola Ladies Club always serve a wonderful lunch. Emmett will be hosting the State Regional Conference in April.

In May we will take the time to remember and honor those members and friends who have gone before us.

At each meeting we will hold a raffle to help fund the State Conference and our Teacher Classroom Grant fund.

We look forward to helping students in Gem County, while building friendships and caring for each other. It will be an exciting year.

Submitted by

## Lower Snake River REA

The Lower Snake River Unit is going to Beverly Hills for a celebration on September 15<sup>th</sup>! Not Beverly Hills, CA, but Beverly Hills, Payette, Idaho. The celebration will kick off our 2021-2022 year and celebrate the birthday of our new President Ron Warzyn. The party is at his home and he is doing the BBQing! LSRRE expects its officers to multi-task, even if you are the guest of honor! Thank you, Ron and Cris for opening your home to members and inviting us to share Ron's special day.

LSRRE has some stellar programs planned for the year and we are all crossing our fingers and toes that the meetings will be face-to-face. One of our first programs will be presented by an organization, JEMfriends, that was honored by Channel 6's Shine A Light Program this past year. We will also learn about how our neighboring

state of Oregon is addressing homelessness through an education-based collaborative effort known as Tiny Houses. WICAP will share with us about the programs implemented to help build stronger families and community culture.

Hand-made meeting reminders will be given out at every meeting. The reminders will include a short synopsis of the next program as well as where and when information. Members are to take these home and write the date/time down on their calendars **AND** then give the reminder out as an invitation to an individual who they think may be interested in the program topic. LSRRE hopes that these invitations will spark an attendee's interest into becoming a member of the unit.

Submitted by:

Ed Arndt