



# STILLWATER AREA RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Jan Fischer/Marty Rossini, Co-Chairs

Fall 2017

## SO MUCH TO BE PROUD OF

When I came to teach and coach in District 834 in 1974, there was much to be proud of. There were outstanding music programs, outstanding athletic programs, visitors coming to the high school to view the innovative curriculum, elementary schools that were loaded with outstanding teachers, and so much more.

As I started coaching girls' basketball, I wanted a rallying cry as we broke our huddle during games. In my earlier time playing and later coaching in Catholic schools, we frequently would break a huddle with the words "Queen of Victory, pray for us." It seemed inappropriate - and perhaps illegal - to use that phrase at a public school event. In considering other mantras, I considered, in some form, the use of the word "pride" due to what I believed it stood for. First, it meant to me taking satisfaction in a job well done. Upon reflection, I considered its definition as holding oneself to a high standard. When combined with a derivative of the Ponies nickname, we started to use Pony Pride as our team's rallying cry.

Since then, many teams and marketing plans have used the idea of Pony Pride to motivate individuals and groups toward both satisfaction in one's performance and holding oneself to high standards. In looking over the many accomplishments of the past school year, Pony Pride is evident throughout the district schools. The following is but a small example of all the great things that took place:

- 1) A plan was put in place so that PreK will be part of all elementary schools starting in September. Our youngest learners will have a support system to help them with their social and academic needs before they begin kindergarten.
- 2) Spanish immersion is starting next fall with its first class of kindergartners at Lake Elmo. This optional program was created to improve the language skills of both English speaking and Spanish speaking youngsters.
- 3) During the past year, all elementary teachers have been trained in Responsive Classroom whose goal is to build community in classrooms and help students understand what is expected of them in their classroom.
- 4) The Stillwater Area High School concert orchestra traveled to Pittsburgh to participate in the American String Teachers Association's national orchestra festival. Our orchestra was the first from Minnesota to participate in the festival, and one of 15 orchestras from around the country to be invited.
- 5) Our high school boys' soccer team captured the Minnesota state title after an undefeated (22-0) season. Some of you may remember other state titles in Pony athletics.
- 6) The Stillwater Area High School debate team finished second in state at the Classic Minnesota Debate tournament. This recalls the many outstanding debate teams coached by Jim Graupner in previous years.
- 7) AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) graduated its first group of students. This group of 17 students, many who are the first in their families to attend college, were the recipients of a strong support system put in place in the district to help them succeed. All 17 of these students have been accepted into college.
- 8) The district graduated 665 students. These students were offered fantastic academic, artistic and athletic opportunities, thanks to the support of a community who sees the value of a strong, well-rounded educational program.
- 9) Finally, there were 8,400 students who attended District 834 schools. Their willingness to try new things, persevere when learning was difficult, and work with the staff who supported them, should make us all proud. Each of these learners is our child and deserves our gratitude for the effort each puts forth every day.

So much to be proud of! Just as you recall from your days of working in the district, we can be very thankful for the students and staff who hold themselves to a high standard and take satisfaction in a job well done. Pony Pride!

--George Hoepfner, District 834 Board Member/[hoepfner@stillwaterschools.org](mailto:hoepfner@stillwaterschools.org)/651-439-8422

## MEMBERSHIP AND DUES (Invite A Friend to Lunch!!!)



Welcome back for another year of luncheons with our Stillwater Area Retired Educators Association (SAREA). "Educators" include all of us who have helped our schools function for the educational benefit of students. As the year begins, please help by inviting any of your past educator friends to join SAREA and to attend our monthly events. After a number of years, some friends may wish to reacquaint themselves with their school friends. New retirees (those who have retired during the 2016-2017 school year), who pay their membership dues at or before our September luncheon, will receive a certificate for \$10 to be used at our October or November luncheon.

Annual dues for SAREA are \$5. Help the volunteer leadership by getting your annual membership paid on or before the September luncheon. Please complete the enclosed membership form and send it, along with a check payable to **SAREA**, to Jim Christopherson, 8665 Kimbro Lane North, Stillwater, MN 55082-4507 or bring your SAREA and REAM membership forms and checks to the first luncheon in September. Checks are preferred for bookkeeping purposes.

A special thanks to the generous members who have given additional donations. Because of their generosity, we have not had to increase our dues even though costs have risen. If you would like to help, please designate any extra amount above the \$5 dues that you wish to be used for organizational purposes. Our dues cover postage, memorials, printing, speakers, and other miscellaneous expenses. Checks written to our organization cannot be used as a tax deduction.

Since our last publication, our organization sent memorial checks to REAM in honor of Hazel Bonse, Dave Borg, Marian Carlson, Barb DeWitt, Julie Ehlinger, Jim Foley, David Herum, LoAnn Johnson, Floyd Keller, Karen Lampi, Ray Loida, Tom LeCloux, Dorothy Marty, Vern Pennie, and Jan Spreeman. During the year, we also helped a number of causes in our community. At our November luncheon, we collected \$807 for the Partnership Plan helping Stillwater Area Public Schools. In December, at our holiday gathering, we contributed \$1300 to Valley Outreach along with collecting \$500 for the Vagabonds. During the March Food Share Month Campaign, we took a special collection for Valley Outreach and provided them with \$700 in donations. Thanks to our membership, we reached out to the St. Croix Valley in many ways. Aside from reaching out, we included programs that gave our membership meaningful information for their ongoing retirement.

We encourage our members to join REAM (Retired Educators Association of Minnesota). If I receive your membership form and a separate check for REAM by our November luncheon, I will forward your membership to REAM, or you may mail it directly to REAM Membership, Box 130547, Roseville, MN 55113.

--Jim Christopherson



## LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS



Our SAREA season starts in September and runs through May with luncheons on the second Monday of each month. The cost for each lunch is \$19.

The following procedures have been set up to accommodate luncheon reservations:

**Lake Elmo Inn Event Center:** You will receive an email invitation directly from the Lake Elmo Inn Event Center inviting you to attend the SAREA Luncheon. **ONLY** reply to the email if you **WILL BE** attending the luncheon. If you do not have email, you will be assigned a caller who will contact you about the luncheon and notify the restaurant if you plan to attend. *Changes* should be EMAILED directly to the restaurant. This provides you with proof of reservation or cancellation. Members who do **NOT** have email should call the Lake Elmo Inn Event Center at 651-779-5994 with reservation changes. Changes will be accepted until 9 a.m. the morning of the luncheon.

**Lowell Inn:** You will receive an email from SAREA reminding you to reserve your lunch by **CALLING** the Lowell Inn at 651-439-1100. If you don't have email, your assigned caller will contact you. *Changes* will be accepted until 9 a.m. the morning of the luncheon.

**Important:** The restaurants need our count on Monday--one week prior to the luncheon. Please do your best to get your reservation in on time. It's easier to add a reservation than to cancel a reservation.

**Email Address Changes:** Notify Bob Peters, Membership Chair, at [robpeters46@comcast.net](mailto:robpeters46@comcast.net) with email address changes. He will forward them to the Lake Elmo Inn Event Center. By doing so, you will also have the advantage of receiving other special notices.

**Dietary Restrictions:** Dietary restrictions will be accommodated; therefore, make them known when you make your reservation. (Menu options are shown on the enclosed 2017-2018 SAREA Luncheon Schedule.)

--Jan Fischer

## 2017 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



With *sustainability* as the primary objective, the LCPR and TRA have always sought a **shared sacrifice approach** to pensions, with the burden falling not only on retirees, but also on employers and active teachers. Governor Dayton vetoed last year's 2016 omnibus pension bill, stating that the bill placed the responsibility for reducing liabilities solely on retirees.

This year the LCPR approved the 2017 omnibus pension bill (SF 545) on May 10, 2017 and sent it to the Senate. The majority party in the Senate removed the TRA portion and proposed unfavorable changes to the bill. The **original** bill (SF 545, third engrossment) was amended and approved in the Senate on May 21, 2017. The **original** bill had proposed lowering the COLA for **retirees** from 2% to 1% for 5 years, then phased up to 1.5% in 0.1%/year increments for 5 more years (until 2027). It also delayed the first full COLA until normal retirement age for those retiring early. In addition, the **original** bill increased **employee** rates from 7.5% to 7.75% beginning in 2022, and it increased **employer** rates from 7.5% to 8.75% phased in for 6 years from 2017-2023. (Note that the national average employee contribution rate is 6%, and the national average employer contribution rate is about 12.9%.)

The pension bill was reintroduced as the first 21 articles of SF 3 in the First Special Session. The other articles in it included language relating to employment. Although the Governor supported ratifying parental leave in state labor contracts, he did not support the controversial preemption legislation in it that bars local governments from adopting local ordinances governing minimum wage and benefits such as paid/unpaid leave and work hours. Thus, the Governor vetoed SF 3 on May 30, 2017. In his letter explaining the reason for his veto, the Governor cited his objections to the preemption provisions.

If the **original** bill had been implemented, the plans' funding levels would have improved. Due to changes in the assumptions for mortality and the investment rate of return decreasing to 7.5%, the state's four largest pension plans (MSRS, PERA, TRA, St. Paul Teachers) had proposed sustainability packages early in the session. The Governor had actually included aspects of these sustainability packages in *his* budget proposal. If they had been implemented, the funding levels were expected to be between 85-95% funded in 30 years.

So, what is the outcome of this year's veto? Proposed reforms will not go into effect. The state's pension plans could see a decrease in their funding ratios. This, in turn, could impact the state's bond rating and increase liabilities that districts must show in the required GASB financial statements. Finally, since the assumed rate of return will remain unchanged, TRA, at 8.5% is among a small number of pension plans nationally that are still higher than 8%. The 2017 pension bill will be reintroduced in the 2018 session (as it had been in the 2017 session following the 2016 veto), and, hopefully, needed changes will occur. REAM is our voice for pension sustainability.

--Glenda Strege (Resources include [www.mnream.org](http://www.mnream.org), [www.minnesotatra.org](http://www.minnesotatra.org), and [www.lcpr.leg.mn](http://www.lcpr.leg.mn))

## REAM STATE CONVENTION

The Retired Educators Association of Minnesota (REAM) State Convention will be held September 25 and 26 at the Grand Casino, Hinckley, MN. Check out the July issue of The REAM NEWS for further information. Please contact Jan Fischer or Jim Christopherson if you are interested in attending.

## SAREA'S "SUNSHINE LADY"

If you know someone who needs a note or card of support, please contact Sally Thomas by email at [SallyThomas224@gmail.com](mailto:SallyThomas224@gmail.com) or by phone at 651-413-0502.

## OUR GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

Our gratitude and appreciation goes to everyone who donates their time and efforts to support SAREA! Special thanks to John Johnson and our anonymous donors who have provided raffle prizes this past year. If you have an item to donate or would like to help acquire items for our raffle, please contact Jan Fischer ([r-fischer@comcast.net](mailto:r-fischer@comcast.net)) or Marty Rossini ([pmrossini@hotmail.com](mailto:pmrossini@hotmail.com)). We sincerely appreciate your help!

## EMAIL PROBLEMS

Some members MAY NOT be receiving email announcements from the Lake Elmo Inn Event Center or SAREA because their computers may be putting these notices in a "junk mail" file. Please "authorize" emails from these restaurants and SAREA by entering their email addresses in your "Address Book":

Lake Elmo Inn Event Center      [lakeelmoinnec@gmail.com](mailto:lakeelmoinnec@gmail.com)  
SAREA      [sarea.news@gmail.com](mailto:sarea.news@gmail.com)

**Mr. Jim Christopherson**  
**8665 Kimbro Lane North**  
**Stillwater, MN 55082**

**WELCOME--CLASS OF 2017!**

Best wishes to our 2017 retirees! Their impact on students, parents, community members, colleagues, and all of Stillwater Area Public Schools will be felt for many years to come.

Robert Bonine	Stillwater Junior High	Kimberly Olsen	Lily Lake Elementary
Kathryn Clarys	Lily Lake Elementary	Mike Oswald	Central Services Building
Carolyn Cunningham	Lily Lake Elementary	Susan Pater	Oak Park Elementary
Julie Edwards	Oak Park Elementary	Jacquelyn Patrick	Withrow Elementary
Ellen Eigner	Stonebridge Elementary	Sandra Pederson	Stillwater Area High
Lynn Garavalia	Oak-land Junior High	Jean Radke	Rutherford Elementary
Cathlene Gunvalson	Stillwater Area High	Marylyn Regis	Oak Park Elementary
Jill Hanson-Furlong	Oak-Land Junior High	Lisa Schoelerman	Stonebridge/Withrow Elementary
Wendy Hefflefinger	Central Services Building	Karen Schoemaker	Withrow Elementary
Jeffrey Hudson	Stillwater Junior High	Susan Sievert	Stillwater Junior High
Lynda Kemp	Withrow Elementary	Gloria Solum	Stillwater Junior High
Karlene Krick	Marine/Withrow Elementary	Carolyn Sorenson	Transition
Kathleen Lamanna	Rutherford Elementary	Lois Sortedahl	Afton-Lakeland Elementary
Nancy Leekley	Oak-land Junior High	Mary Straiton	Stillwater Area High
Karen Manske	Early Childhood Family Center	Susan Thiel	Lake Elmo Elementary
Margaret Meyer	Early Childhood Family Center	Theresa Tiernan	Stillwater Area High
Gloria Mueller	Early Childhood Special Education	Lisa Weyrauch	Marine Elementary
Maren Ogdie	Stillwater Area High		

**MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Don't forget to pay your membership dues! Your paid membership affords you the advantage of getting news and meeting information for one year only.

The memory of Mark Strege lives on through his artwork that is featured in our newsletters and on several of the notecards used by Sally Thomas, our "Sunshine Lady."

## 2017-2018 SAREA LUNCHEON SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	MENU	COST	PROGRAM
Sept. 11, 2017	Noon	Lake Elmo Inn Event Center 3712 Layton Avenue North Lake Elmo, MN 55042 651-779-5994	Italian Chicken with Red and White Sauces, Penne Pasta, Green Beans Almondine, Rolls/Butter, Apple Strudel, Beverage.	\$19	Denise Pontrelli District 834 Superintendent Topic: District Update
Oct. 9, 2017	Noon	Lowell Inn Banquet Center 102 2nd Street North Stillwater, MN 55082 651-439-1100	Option: Garden Salad, Almond Crusted Walleye or Grilled Chicken Breast with Lemon Rosemary Cream, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable Medley, Rolls/Butter, Dessert--Chef's Choice, Beverage.	\$19	Open
Nov. 13, 2017	Noon	Lake Elmo Inn Event Center 3712 Layton Avenue North Lake Elmo, MN 55042 651-779-5994	Roast Pork, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Butternut Squash & Sauerkraut, Rolls/Butter, Pumpkin Pound Cake with Walnut Caramel Sauce, Beverage.	\$19	Bev Petrie The Partnership Plan (Donations will be collected for The Partnership Plan)
Dec. 11, 2017	11:30	Lake Elmo Inn Event Center 3712 Layton Avenue North Lake Elmo, MN 55042 651-779-5994	Crab Cake and Sirloin Steak, Roasted Baby Red Potatoes, Honey Glazed Carrots, Rolls/Butter, Candy Cane Croustade, Beverage.	\$19	Vagabonds and Valley Outreach (Separate monetary donations will be collected for the Vagabonds and our Valley Outreach.)
Jan. 8, 2018	Noon	Lake Elmo Inn Event Center 3712 Layton Avenue North Lake Elmo, MN 55042 651-779-5994	Option: Panko Crusted Walleye w/ Wild Rice and Cauliflower Au Gratin or Cashew Chicken w/Veggies on Steamed Rice, Rolls/Butter, Sin of the Inn, Beverage.	\$19	Open
Feb. 12, 2018	Noon	Lake Elmo Inn Event Center 3712 Layton Avenue North Lake Elmo, MN 55042 651-779-5994	Chicken Rondele, Roasted Fingerling Potatoes, Broccolini, Rolls/Butter, Chocolate Truffle Pate w/ Raspberry Sauce, Beverage.	\$19	Jay Stoffel/John Wicklund. Minnesota TRA Topic: PERA/TRA Legislative Update
Mar. 12, 2018	Noon	Lake Elmo Inn Event Center 3712 Layton Avenue North Lake Elmo, MN 55042 651-779-5994	Option: Corned Beef/Cabbage or Braised Short Ribs, Baby Red Potatoes, Rutabaga and Carrots, Rolls/Butter, Irish Dessert--Chef's Choice, Beverage.	\$19	Open (To honor Food Shelf Month monetary donations will be collected for Valley Outreach) (Executive Board Meeting Immediately Following Luncheon)
April 9, 2018	Noon	Lowell Inn Banquet Center 102 2nd Street North Stillwater, MN 55082 651-439-1100	Caesar Salad, Pecan-Crusted Chicken with Cranberry/Mandarin Orange Garnish, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable Medley, Rolls/Butter, Dessert--Chef's Choice, Beverage.	\$19	AARP Topic: Senior Fraud Issues
May 14, 2018	Noon	Lake Elmo Inn Event Center 3712 Layton Avenue North Lake Elmo, MN 55042 651-779-5994	Turkey Picatta, Linguini, Vegetable Medley, Rolls/Butter, Dessert--Chef's Choice, Beverage.	\$19	Open (Executive Board Meeting Immediately Following Luncheon)

**SAREA does NOT meet in JUNE, JULY or AUGUST.)**

**STILLWATER AREA RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION (SAREA)**

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year of retirement \_\_\_\_\_

Retired from \_\_\_\_\_ Building \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year of retirement \_\_\_\_\_

Retired from \_\_\_\_\_ Building \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Please use email for my luncheon communications.  
\_\_\_\_ Please use a telephone call for my luncheon communications.

\* *Existing members:* If there are changes in your address, phone number, or email, please fill in the corrections below; otherwise, leave the next three lines blank.  
\* *New members:* Please fill in the information below:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Should you wish to make an additional contribution to SAREA, it can be added to your yearly dues. Your donation can help defray increased organizational costs such as postage and printing expenses without raising yearly dues. Please note that your membership fee and donations to the SAREA may not be used as a tax deduction.

\* *One membership dues per mailing address:* **Dues: \$5.00**  
(Free if you are over 90-years old) **Gift: \_\_\_\_\_**  
(Membership year is September 1 to August 31.) **Total: \_\_\_\_\_**

Mail this form and your check, payable to *SAREA*, to *Jim Christopherson, 8665 Kimbro Lane North, Stillwater, MN 55082*

**RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA (REAM)**

[www.mnream.org](http://www.mnream.org)

If you are retired or within 5 years of retirement as an educator (*any* school personnel), you are eligible for REAM membership.

*FOR AN EDUCATOR THE CHOICE IS EASY – JOIN REAM*

**MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION - RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA, INC.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Winter Address, if different \_\_\_\_\_

\*If winter address is not known at this time, please notify us when you do know it, either by regular mail or email: [jresler@comcast.net](mailto:jresler@comcast.net).

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

PENSION SOURCE: \_\_\_\_\_ TRA \_\_\_\_\_ PERA \_\_\_\_\_ St. Paul./Duluth \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK MEMBERSHIP DESIRED: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ \$175 Life  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ \$70 Five Year \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 Annual \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

**(Membership year is September 1 to August 31)**

Mail this form and your check, payable to *REAM*, to *REAM Membership, Box 130547, Roseville, MN 55113*. For membership card, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.