

Retired Educators Association of Minnesota



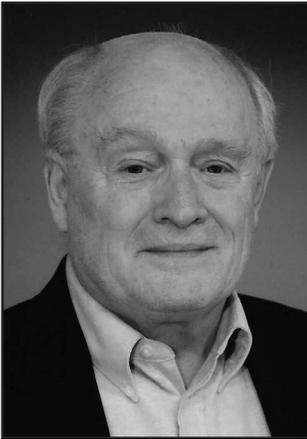
Volume 54, No. 2

<http://mnream.org>

March 2016

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

John Fisher, REAM President



*John Fisher,
President of REAM*

REAM has followed and will continue to follow and respond to the types of challenges identified by TRA. Minnesota is not immuned.

Public pension plans are under attack! REAM can defend public pension plans with your continued support. As mentioned in previous articles, your advocacy is vital and necessary for public pension plans to survive the onslaught of misinformation concerning our deserved and beneficial pension plans for us, for our current teaching colleagues, for future Minnesota educators and for the state of Minnesota.

Note the following excerpt of headlines from around the US describing plans to significantly modify/change public pension plans. These following headlines are provided by Susan Barbari (TRA) Minnesota News + Opinion—January 29, 2016.

Here are a few of these headlines:

[High life expectancy strains Minnesota pension systems](#)—Minneapolis Star Tribune

[Governor Christie pension commission calls for N.J. public worker health care cuts](#)—NJ.com

[Arizona House passes police and fire pension overhaul](#)—Washington Times

[Don't let Gov. Sam Brownback delay payments for Kansas pensions](#)—Kansas City Star

[The looting of US workers' pensions](#)—World Socialist Web Site

[Courts to consider New Jersey pension cases](#)—Pensions & Investments

[Is Colorado's public employee pension fund in peril?](#)—Marketplace

[Defined benefit pensions best for California teachers, study shows](#)—US Berkeley

[Pension Trouble Ignites Debate in Connecticut](#)—Nasday

[Pension Reform Failure Cost Michigan Taxpayers \\$6 Billion or More](#)—Mackinac Center for Public Policy

For more, go to the website: mnream.org

***Money can't buy happiness, but it sure makes
misery easier to live with.***

Signs of spring are beginning to show. As a former teacher, I'm thinking Spring or Easter break. I know my grandkids are thinking "break time". Two of them are coming to Minnesota from Maryland. The oldest (13) and the youngest (9). Grandpa has already booked theatre productions and he's working on other activities to keep them busy and not glued to their iPads, or arguing with each other.

Grandma has other ideas—books. It's not always easy getting boys into books. I taught reading and ran an elementary library for a few years. I recognized the glaze in the male eyes when I'd suggest reading a novel. I read a lot of novels to my students in my classes and they always enjoyed the books, even mentioned them years later. Getting boys to read on their own was another whole undertaking.

Well, Grandpas and Grandmas here's a book that will fit in the Easter basket for either upper elementary or junior high boys or girls. **Ice Dogs** by Terry Lynn Johnson. *Fourteen year old Alaskan dog-sledder Victoria Secord has felt lost since her father died and now she is having to deal with a "city boy", injured in a snowmobile accident, and a freak snowstorm which tries her dog sledding skills while she is trying to rescue the boy. They face temperature drops, shortages of food for both themselves and the dogs, and being lost in the frozen wilderness. Victoria is the one who has to save them.* Our eighth grade grandson had to read and do a project on this book for his summer reading project for school. We both enjoyed it.



Anita Hellie, Editor

In his Christmas stocking this grandson found the "#1 New York Times Bestseller: **The One and Only Ivan** by Katherine Applegate. This book won the John Newbery Medal Award. *"Through the eyes of a silverback gorilla, the one and only Ivan, we learn about the power of art, friendship, and love. Katherine Applegate's beautiful, life-affirming story will soar directly from Ivan's heart into your own. Read it out loud. Read it alone. Read it."* KATHI APPELT, Newbery Honor author of *The Underneath*.

Good books for kids are good books for adults.

Don't forget—**Beauty and the Beast** is at Chanhassen. How can you go wrong bringing kids to see that story on the stage? Good memories for everyone!

REAM TRIP TO LONDON AND PARIS

Through Collette, REAM is sponsoring a trip to London and Paris October 5 through October 12, 2016. This eight day tour includes round trip air from Minneapolis St. Paul International, air taxes, fees/surcharges, hotel transfers, hotels, 6 breakfasts and 3 dinners. Highlights: Pub Dinner, Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, London Theatre Performance, Eurostar Train from London to Paris, Eiffel Tower Dinner, Seine River Cruise, Arc De Triomphe and Paradis Latin Cabaret.

Cost: Double: \$3,899 Single: \$4,799 Triple: \$4,099. After April 6, 2016 the rates go up. The REAM website has more information: mnream.org. To request a brochure call Charles Hellie at 507-301-3609 or email: chellie@charter.net.

Please check out the new REAM website. The information there, especially on pensions and the legislature, are much more up to date than *The REAM News*. The website: mnream.org.

The Legislative session this year is a short one beginning March 8 and running about two months. Because both the House Members and Senate Members are up for re-election in November, they usually cut the session short so they can get out and campaign. Look for a big bonding bill, a transportation bill, and the lowering of your TRA Pension's Cola from 2% to 1% effective January 1, 2017. The 1% Cola will be in effect for several years. Employers of TRA members will pay 1% more to 8.5% from 7.5%. Active educators will remain paying 7.5% of salary to TRA.

Anita and I just returned from a two week trip to Thailand. It was a well planned trip with a good variety of scenery and activities. Bangkok has over ten million people and has a typical big city feel to it with its tall buildings and shopping areas. We spent time in Chang Rai which is in the northern part of Thailand. We spent some time in the Golden Triangle area which includes Myanmar (Burma) and Laos. This area used to have lots of drug trafficking. Poppies were grown

and they were made into opium and from opium comes heroin. Instead of poppies they grow and ship out beautiful flowers and much fruit.

We also visited Chang Mai which is also in the northern part of Thailand. This city attracts many Americans who either have moved there permanently or who spend several months there during our winter. I rode an elephant near Chang Mai. We saw elephants painting pictures, playing soccer, and breaking balloons with darts.

The temperatures were in the high 80's and low 90's, but we managed. Minnesota was having 10 to 12 inches of snow in the metro and some schools were closed. Thailand was a nice break for us, and a trip we'd recommend if you don't mind long plane rides.



*Chuck Hellie,
Executive Director*

REAM "CONFERENCE" NOT "CONVENTION"

The REAM Board of Directors on December 10, 2015 voted to change the name of the "Convention" to "Conference." Many educational organizations have changed their annual meetings to "Conference." Education Minnesota changed their MEA "Convention" to "Conference" several years ago. "Conference" should appeal more to our new retirees than "Convention." Teachers attend "Conferences", "Workshops" and "Clinics".

The Board also voted to make the "Conference" a two day event rather than three days. The dates for 2016 are Monday, September 26 and Tuesday, September 27 at the Holiday Inn in Alexandria. The REAM Board is moving their quarterly September 8 meeting to September 26 from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Alexandria Holiday Inn. REAM members are especially encouraged to attend this board meeting as observers. Registration for the "Conference" begins at 12 noon at the Holiday Inn. Save the dates. More information will be in the May issue of *The REAM News*.

***Evening news is where they begin with
'Good Evening',
And then proceed to tell you why it isn't.***

Minnesota's Public Employee Retirement Association (PERA) members received welcomed news last November when a new Executive Director, Doug Anderson, was selected to lead their pension fund. He replaced interim director, Dave DeJonge, after long-time director Mary Vanek retired in early 2015. Anderson comes to PERA with 28 years of private sector experience and a vast skill set of actuarial and managerial knowledge.

Doug's Minnesota roots run deep. A native of Columbia Heights, he attended the University of Minnesota and earned double degrees in mathematics and statistics. His dream job was to work as an actuary, and he was hired to oversee retirement accounts by Deloitte, a world-wide consulting firm with an office in Minneapolis. Doug's work in the retirement systems branch for a decade at Deloitte prepared him well for the position he currently holds at PERA.

"I remember being hired with one other actuary, at the time," Doug recalled. "Two areas needed positions filled at Deloitte: retirement and health care. They sent me to the retirement department and, the way things turned out, it is one of the best things that ever happened in my career. Over time I was able to see private pensions from a unique perspective. I also developed a core belief in the power of the defined benefit pension."

Doug moved to another Minneapolis-based company, Stanton group, which later merged with Arthur Gallaher & Co. At the firm, Doug still had actuarial duties, but he also took on



Doug Anderson

managerial responsibilities that included overseeing a team of actuaries. His work took him around the country where he was able to witness how pension plans were changing or, in many instances, being eliminated by private sector companies. Doug's travels around the United States convinced him that he wanted to work in Minnesota and make a difference in the lives of Minnesotans.

In the late summer of 2015, a PERA board member approached Doug and urged him to apply for the Executive Director position. He didn't believe he had the credentials to administer a large, public pension fund. However, his years of working in the area of retirement systems and his management of actuaries made him a great fit for the position at PERA. Doug was selected for the position. His first day on the job was November 1.

"My reasons for accepting the Executive Director position at PERA were twofold," Doug related. "First, I wanted to have the opportunity to promote and protect a retirement approach

that I believe in. I wanted to play a proactive role in sustaining PERA's defined benefit pension fund for its members well into the future."

He added, "I would only have taken on a challenge this important if it were in Minnesota. Everything just fell into place. I am very grateful for the chance to lead PERA in the years ahead."



Don Leathers, REAM Legislative Co-chair

PERA occupies the second floor of the Empire Building in St.

Paul, just blocks north of the Capitol. Doug oversees a staff of 95 employees who calculate benefits, communicate with its roughly 400,000 members, write benefit checks and make collections from employers, among other duties. In addition to its St. Paul location, PERA has satellite offices in Mankato and Duluth to better serve its members, and it regularly sends staff out in the field to consult with prospective retirees. There is also a Deputy Director and other staff who have helped Doug navigate the day-to-day challenges of his new position.

"I am extremely fortunate to have such a hardworking and dedicated group of people in our office. I really enjoy coming to work every day. The experienced staff here has made my job a whole lot easier from day one. Together, we are getting the job done," Doug observed.

Doug lives in south Minneapolis with his wife, Melissa, who is an elementary teacher in the Burnsville School District. Doug joked that she is doing her best to support public pensions. They enjoy taking long walks on weekends and love all of the amenities the Twin Cities has to offer an "empty nest" couple. The Andersons have four grown daughters. Two have embarked on careers; the other two are finishing college. Like Mom Melissa, two of the daughters have chosen to pursue careers in education.

Doug shared some final thoughts about public pensions that should hit home directly with PERA and TRA retirees.

"I believe that the defined benefit public pension is more cost-effective and it provides greater income security for retirees than a defined contribution pension because of the greater investment gains it can achieve.

And, let me emphasize, retirees can get involved by actively and loudly advocating for public employee pensions and, as a result of the advocacy, keep defined benefit pensions around for all our children and grandchildren."

Now, retirees, let's get to work standing up for the defined benefit pensions that we enjoy in Minnesota. And, while we're at it, let's be loud about it!

REAM UNIT CONTACTS 2016

CENTRAL DIVISON

BRAINERD AREA

Sherrí De La Hunt
218-831-2731

CROW RIVER AREA (Dassel)

Betty Hendrickson
320-275-3851

STAPLES

Gail Honek
218-894-1105

ST. CLOUD AREA

John Augustin
320-654-9428 or
Joyce Wittenhagen
320-252-3478

VIKING LAND AREA (Alexandria)

Keith Redfield
320-763-4126

WEST CENTRAL (Willmar)

Mike Norberg
320-235-6131

PAYNESVILLE AREA

John Janotta
320-243-3916

SAUK CENTRE/MELROSE

Carol Musburger
320-351-4565

NORTHWEST DIVISION

AGASSIZ AREA (Fertile)

Gary Werner
218-945-6766

CROOKSTON AREA

Leland "Bud" Ellingson
218-281-5440

DETROIT LAKES

Elaine Meyer
218-847-7269

MOORHEAD

Gerald Koenig
218-233-4774

NORTHLAND AREA (Thief River)

Jane Oberg
218-681-3532

ROSEAU COUNTY AREA

Elaine Lang
218-528-3650

NORTHEAST DIVISION

CARLTON COUNTY

Jennie Hanson
218-357-2385

DULUTH AREA

John Zallar
218-525-5819

NORTH CENTRAL AREA

Dennis Jerome
218-259-8795

IRON RANGE AREA

Lois Ferguson
218-744-3642

SOUTHWEST DIVISION

SOUTHEAST DIVISION

ALBERT LEA

Donna Widenhoefer
507-373-8459

AUSTIN

Ramona Swenson
507-437-4701

FAIRBAULT

Donna Crowl
507-332-7849

KENYON/WANAMINGO

Carol Lozon
507-789-6497

OWATONNA

Gary Schwartz
507-451-6676

ROCHESTER

Dorothy Norman
507-775-2950

TRI COUNTY

Gretchen Schade
507-875-2592

UPPER HIAWATHA VALLEY

Linda Ahlers
651-345-3851

WASECA

Don Zwach
507-835-1768

WINONA

Lyle Laturno
507-452-2481

METRO DIVISION

FOREST LAKE

Carol Martin
651-426-4765

HASTINGS

Paul Ehrhard
651-319-0777

MOUNDS VIEW

Myrna Strand
612-861-6697

NORTH ST. PAUL

Laura Lewis
651-739-2432

ROSEVILLE

Lonnie Duberstein
651-429-8009

STILLWATER

Jan Fischer
651-436-4093

WEST SAINT PAUL

John Hagman
651-454-1529

AHRSA (Anoka-Hennepin)

Lynn Montgomery
612-670-8281

CARE (Osseo)

Mary Jo Martinson
763-553-7998

BELLE PLAINE & JORDAN

Phoebe Einertson
952-873-6632

BLOOMINGTON AREA

Elaine Rothman
952-931-0843

RICHFIELD

Dorothy Pearson
952-943-8989

HOPKINS

Ronelle Laitinen
952-544-5025

MINNEAPOLIS

Patience Gall
763-420-4063

JOHN MORIARITY GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT AWARDS

Criteria for the REAM Educators and the John Moriarity Government Involvement Awards

The REAM Educator Award will be presented during the REAM State Conference in Alexandria on September 26, 2016. This award is given to a noteworthy REAM member who has contributed to the growth of REAM or a local REAM unit. To nominate an individual or individuals please use the following criteria:

- A. Personal endeavors as a school educator
- B. Promotion of the causes of education within the community
- C. Service to schools and community as a volunteer
- D. Service to retired educator groups at the local, division and/or state level.

Letters of nomination should be brief and concise, but include the following items in the individual's resume:

- A. Name, address education (place, dates, degrees, etc.)
- B. Teaching (or school related) places, level or work, years in service
- C. Date retired
- D. Experience, other than school-related
- E. Honors received, organizations, offices held, etc.
- F. Volunteer activities, church, community, etc.
- G. Service to retired educator groups at local, division, and/or REAM level.

The John Moriarity Government Involvement Award will also be presented at the 2016 State Conference on September 26. This award is given to any retired educator and member of REAM who is/was involved in local, county, state, and/or national government activities and political activities such as REAM/AARP legislative activity, political party involvement and/or campaign work.

Possibilities to consider for this award are those who are/were:

- *Elected or appointed to community government positions such as city councils, city commissions and board, or school boards.
- *Elected or appointed to county government positions such as county commissions and boards, or study or research groups.
- *Elected or appointed to state government positions such as state officers and commissioners, legislature, interns or advisors, or pension positions.
- *Elected or appointed to national offices such as cabinet members, Congress, staff assistants or interns, or those serving on boards or commissions involved in political activity such as REAM or AARP legislative activity, political party activity, or campaign workers.

Letters of nomination should include the same resume information as listed for the Educator Award nomination.

Please send nominations for both awards to: **Cheryl Huettl, 1909 N. Lakeshore Dr., Lake City, MN 55041** or email to hjhuettl@yahoo.com. For questions you may call 651-345-3585.

Please include the names and addresses for those who are submitting the nomination. The deadline is July 31, 2016.

The heaviest thing you can carry is a grudge.

MEMORIALS AND GIFTS — MARCH 2016

IN MEMORY OF:	FROM:	AMOUNT:
KATHERINE ARNOLD	CORRINE THOM, BROOKLYN PARK	\$25
SUSAN D. DOE	STILLWATER AREA REAM	\$10
TOM ENGLER	STILLWATER AREA REAM	\$10
JUNE LAMMERS	STILLWATER AREA REAM	\$10
DENNIS ROEMER	STILLWATER AREA REAM	\$10
GLORIA SHCRAMM-NELSON	JOYCE WITTENHAGEN, ST. CLOUD	\$15
WAYNE WAGSTROM	MOORHEAD AREA REAM	\$10
 GIFTS		
GRACE McGARVIE	PLYMOUTH	\$5
A. KRAMER	CHANHASSEN	\$5

REAM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REAM OFFICERS

President: John Fisher

1766 Linden Cove
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
651-653-9498
johnffisher@hotmail.com

President-Elect:

Lonnie Duberstein

491 South Oak Drive
Vadnais Heights, MN 55127
(c) 651-328-1094
651-429-8009
duberlmn@q.com

Vice President: Paul Ehrhard

2743 Rushmore Rd.
Hastings, MN 55033
651-319-0777
prhrhard@gmail.com

Past President: Curt Hutchens

614 N. Montrose Rd.
St. Cloud, MN 56301
320-229-8806
onthelake2@msn.com

REAM OFFICERS

Exec. Director: Chuck Hellie

1129 Heritage Drive
Northfield, MN 55057
507-301-3609
cchellie@charter.net

Secretary: Karna Brewer

431 Fremont St.
Anoka, MN 55303
763-427-8595
brewer.com2@juno.com

Treasurer: Gordon Wagner

317 Waite Avenue S.
St. Cloud, MN 56301
320-249-2719
gmkwagner2@gmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Legislative Chairperson:

Don Leathers

304 19th St. NW
Austin, MN 55912
(c) 507-219-0592
507-433-1119
dleathers@cleggithy.com

Membership Co-Chair:

Judy Resler

651-484-6030
jresler@comcast.net

Editor: Anita Hellie

507-301-3609
ahellie@charter.net



P.O. Box 130547
St. Paul, MN 55113



1-800-258-7041 | www.amba.info

REAM STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- Represent all school retirees, present and future, certified and classified.*
- Educate and inform all school personnel on matters related to the improvement of their economic and social status.*
- Assist and work to strengthen local and regional units in every way possible.*
- Monitor the actions of, and cooperate, with the legislature, all government units, and other organizations that deal with present and future retired school personnel.*

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.

Legal Name _____
 (Last) (First) (Middle)

Mailing Address (Street or Route Box) _____

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 or e-mail: jresler@comcast.net.

Phone _____ Email Address _____

CHECK MEMBERSHIP DESIRED: Please check appropriate box so that we can record accurately.

1. \$175 Life

2. \$70 Five Year New Renewal

3. \$15 Annual New Renewal

Membership Year Sept. 1 to August 31

PENSION SOURCE:
 TRA
 PERA
 St. Paul
 Other

Make check payable to REAM. Mail payment and form to: REAM MEMBERSHIP, BOX 130547, ROSEVILLE, MN 55113.
 For membership card, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. www.mnream.org