



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

At a recent pre-retirement seminar I was asked the question, "What makes REAM different from all the other retiree organizations out there?" I immediately started to rattle off a rehearsed list of reasons such as REAM is the oldest retiree organization in the state founded in 1951; REAM is the only retiree organization that is solely focused on the needs of retired education personnel; and REAM has 17 local chapters so it is convenient to members...and on and on. All of these ideas are certainly true and help to distinguish REAM from other retiree organizations, but I think a major difference is REAM's unique relationship with the Edith Stewart Chase Foundation.

I finally mentioned the Chase Foundation, but in hindsight it should be mentioned first. I truly believe in and whole-heartedly support the cause of the Chase Foundation. All REAM members can be proud of this organization, and we should work together to support its goals.

Most of you may be familiar with the types of resources that the Chase Foundation helps provide, but for those of you that may be new to REAM or not familiar with the Chase Foundation, let me briefly describe it. In past years, the foundation has offered financial grants to retired educators to help pay for real estate taxes, home maintenance, personal or medical expenses and items such as fuel and heating units. For some, the Chase Foundation has helped support their membership dues so that they can stay connected to colleagues and friends through REAM.

I mention the work of the Chase Foundation because I think that all too often we forget that the work of the foundation is done by a very small staff and some very

dependable volunteers. The Chase Foundation is vital to REAM's mission of protecting, promoting and providing for current retirees and future generations of retirees. It is organizations such as the Chase Foundation that help the very members REAM is in business for – retirees who gave of themselves for the sake of others who now in return may need a little assistance.

The Chase Foundation is a separate entity entirely from REAM but was founded from a gift bestowed by Edith Stewart Chase, a REAM member. In subsequent years, other donations and support from REAM chapters have allowed this wonderful work to continue. Most recently a gift from the estate of Marion Hardy was given to the Chase Foundation.



The Edith Stewart Chase Foundation is something that all REAM members can be proud to be associated with and should continue to support whenever possible.

A few weeks ago REAM chapter leaders had the opportunity to meet with the advisory council of the Chase Foundation. The focus of the meeting was to raise the awareness of the needs of both the foundation and of the members who receive benefits from the Chase Foundation. Representatives from almost all of REAM's seventeen chapters along with other REAM members who serve on the Chase Foundation Advisory Council and Board of Directors attended the meeting. I hope the work of the Chase Foundation continues and that the special relationship with REAM strengthens in the years to

come.

To learn more about the Edith Stewart Chase Foundation or to make an individual contribution to continue the work, please contact the Chase Foundation at (781) 893-5308 or via email at edithchas751@aol.com.

Hillari I. Wennerstrom

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REAM Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors meets quarterly—the next scheduled meeting is June 4, 2008. The Board of Directors meets at Assabet Valley Technical High School in Marlborough.

Lobby Day—May 13, 2008

REAM in conjunction with the Boston Teacher's Union and other retiree organizations will be co-sponsoring a Lobby Day at the Statehouse on May 13. Special arrangements for transportation is being coordinated by various chapters to help members attend this very important event. Please make sure to mark your calendars and read more about the event in the legislative update section. We are also asking that REAM members register

for this free of charge event in order to plan accordingly for the lunch that will be provided. You can register by calling the REAM Office at (508) 624-0233.

Spring Meetings around the Commonwealth

Many of our REAM Chapters are holding spring meetings during the month of May. If you haven't received your meeting notice from your chapter, please contact your chapter president or the REAM Office so that we can direct you to your local chapter. These meetings are often a great way to reconnect with the association and stay informed about important issues that affect you and your pension.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is fast approaching and its arrival will once again usher in some challenges for our organization. One major challenge will be our continued lobbying for the passage of a favorable COLA and a purchasing power study that is currently being considered by our state legislature. We will be joining with some other retiree organizations for a lobby day scheduled for May 13, 2008. Once again we feel that it is very important that all chapters be involved and support this effort.

Another major challenge will be the election of state and chapter officers. An announcement is included in this newsletter of the state offices open for election. Voting for these positions will once again occur by ballots that will be printed and distributed in the summer newsletter. Chapter presidents will often cite the difficulties in getting members to step forward and get involved. All chapters have officers, boards and committees such as legislative, membership, program, scholarship, etc.

Active participants are needed in all of these areas. Chapters will be holding elections at upcoming spring and fall meetings. Each of you has interests and strengths. Please consider serving as an officer or board member or joining one of the many chapter committees. We need your expertise and input.



**Each of you has interests and strengths.
REAM needs your expertise and input.**

Pelino Masciangioli, REAM President

Educators' Voice

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

What YOU Can Do To Pass the COLA Bill!

Public retiree's COLA base hasn't changed in more than 10 years! The Retired Educators Association has sponsored legislation to increase the base for COLAs and also to protect the purchasing power of retirees.

This legislation was combined with other proposals and now is a new bill, S2234. As it is currently written, the bill immediately increases the base of the COLA to \$16,000 and creates a formula based on CPI and a percentage of the Social Security to increase the COLA base over time. The purchasing power bill is carried with this legislation.

This bill is now before the State Senate. We need YOU to help pass this bill. If EVERY REAM MEMBER makes one phone call and writes one letter to their State Senator in support of S2234 it will be incredibly powerful.

Here's what YOU can do NOW to pass the COLA Bill, S2234:

- **Call your State Senator at 617-722-2000**
Share a personal story with them to provide them with some insight on the decreasing purchasing power of your pension. Tell them the COLA base hasn't changed in a decade. Tell them that the purchasing power of a pension decreases 60-80% over time. Tell them you support S2234, purchasing power and COLA legislation. If you need to know the name of your state senator, contact the REAM Office. We have listings for all the senator district across the Commonwealth.

- **Email your State Senator**
Every State Senator has an individual email address. Email them in support of S2234. Email addresses for every state senator can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/legis/memmenus.htm>

- **Attend Lobby Day May 13**

On May 13, we will join with other groups at the State House in support of S2234. Please save the date and come to the State House to advocate for the COLA bill.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

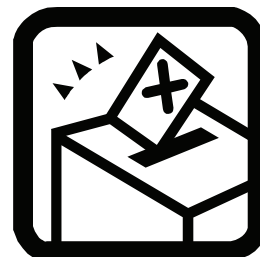
RePAC is the political action committee of the Retired Educators Association. It collects voluntary contributions from members. It uses those contributions to assist those candidates for state elected office that share and support our positions on pension, COLA, protecting purchasing power and retirement benefits.

RePAC is a separate political organization from REAM and is not part of your REAM dues.

RePAC protects your pension and benefits.

Our state leaders make decisions every day impacting YOUR pension, YOUR Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA), YOUR health insurance, and YOUR benefits. Some believe those pensions and benefits are too generous and should be curbed back. Others support our campaign to protect purchasing power of retirees and advance our interests by sponsoring legislation and voting for it.

We must assist those candidates that share our views on a fair and predictable COLA, a livable pension and solid benefits to ensure quality of life for those that have spent a lifetime



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS—SUFFOLK CHAPTER

The Suffolk Chapter of REAM held its fall meeting and luncheon on October 7, 2007, at Lantana's in Randolph, MA.

Chapter President Gloria DeAngelis opened the meeting with "Look Up with Joy," an inspirational poem by Vi B. Chevalier. After leading attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance and a rousing rendition of "God Bless America," the president got right down to business.

Special guest, REAM's Director of Legislative Services Charles Stefanini updated members on recent activities regarding legislative items that REAM is pursuing this legislative session. He urged everyone to mail postcards that had been printed specifically for REAM members to their legislators to voice support for Senate Bill 2234.

Ann Broder, Suffolk's chapter representative for the Chase Foundation, spoke about the benefits provided by the foundation for retirees and the need to increase contributions to the foundation. She also stated that there was a need for additional office help at the Chase Foundation office in Waltham.

The business portion of the meeting concluded with President DeAngelis calling attention to the need to locate the chapter's honorary members. In particular, the chapter would be honoring Dorothy Morrill at the REAM Annual Meeting.

Attendees were treated to a delicious meal followed by a presentation by travel writer Lori Hein. Lori shared her coast to coast trip with her two sons during the summer of 2007. Her trip slides and the journal she kept along the way led to the publishing of "Ribbons of Highway."

Suffolk chapter members are encouraged to keep May 14, 2008, open on their calendars. Following REAM's Lobby Day on May 13, chapter members will be invited to attend the chapter's spring luncheon. Invitations and meeting details will be forthcoming.

David Dingley

NOMINATIONS FOR REAM OFFICERS

Every two years the statewide officers for the Association must be elected by the general membership.

Nominations are currently being accepted for the following statewide positions: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Nominations will be accepted by the Nominating Committee through the month of May.

Ballots will be mailed with the June newsletter to all active members of the Association.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact the chair of the nominating committee, John Hopper at (413) 567-8013.

Position descriptions and nomination forms are available from the state office.

BYLAW AMENDMENT

The Board of Directors voted to change the Association's bylaws at their March 5, 2008 meeting. This change will need to be affirmed by members in attendance at the spring meeting, May 21, 2008. The proposed change is to Article II, Section 4, Dues.

The Present language reads: Members shall pay dues or membership fees as are voted by the Board of Directors. All dues for membership in the Association shall be paid through the state office or local chapters. Any member who shall be in arrears in payment of dues shall be ineligible for the benefits of membership.

The proposed change deletes the words "local chapters" from the second sentence.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

The *Educators' Voice* is the quarterly publication of the Retired Educators Association of Massachusetts. Deadlines for submitting items for publication are as follows:

June 2008 edition—May 10, 2008

September 2008 edition—August 10, 2008

Items should be submitted to Executive Director Hillari Wennerstrom. Items can also be sent via email, hillariwennerstrom@ream1951.org or via US mail to the REAM Office at 165 Lakeside Avenue, Marlborough, MA 01752. Items will be printed as space permits in any given issue.

LOBBY DAY 2008

REAM is working with other retiree organizations to sponsor a State House Lobby Day on Tuesday, May 13, 2008. We will be at the State House supporting the COLA/purchasing power bill. We need a strong presence to show legislators how important this issue is to retired educators.

Area transportation is being coordinated through some of REAM's chapters. If you are interested in finding out more information about what might be occurring in your area, please contact your local chapter or the REAM office. We are hoping this effort will allow everyone who would like to participate the opportunity to do so. There may be a nominal fee associated with the use of the transportation service.

We are planning to provide a small box lunch to Lobby Day attendees. If you are planning to attend, please contact the REAM Office at (508) 624-0233 by May 1 so that we can plan accordingly. Lunches will be free of charge and provided only to those who are registered to attend.

SPRING MEETING

Reservations are being accepted through the state office for our annual spring meeting on May 21 at Devens Commons Conference in Devens, MA. Registration and coffee will begin at 9:30 AM. The meeting concludes with a buffet lunch at 12:30 PM.

We are currently working to secure our guest speakers. The theme of the meeting will be the issue of the Windfall Elimination Provision/Government Pension Offset (WEP/GPO). We have invited guests from the Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security, US Senator John Kerry's office and members of the NRTA's Pension Roundtable. With so many REAM's members adversely affected by this issue and recent attention being given to social security reform, now is the time for retirees' voices to be heard.

Members will also be asked to affirm a change in the Association's bylaws that was passed at the March 5, 2008 Board of Directors Meeting. The exact language change is printed in this newsletter edition.

Please use the reservation form on page 7 to reserve your spot. The cost of the meeting is \$28 per person and includes all of the meeting materials, morning coffee and the lunch buffet.

REAM MEMBER ON NATIONAL PENSION ROUNDTABLE

REAM member Robert Brousseau was recently selected to become a member of the NRTA's Pension Roundtable. Bob was nominated for the position by REAM President Pelino Masciangioli because of his extensive knowledge and work on pension related issues as an elected member of the PRIM board. Bob is an active member of the Cape & Islands and Plymouth Chapters of REAM.

REAM has always supported the efforts of Bob for his work on the PRIM board and endorsed his candidacy for election to the board. Although Bob's seat was not contested this year, the REAM Board of Directors voted in December to endorse Bob for another term.

Congratulations, Bob, on your election to another term on the PRIM Board and for your recent appointment to the NRTA's Pension Roundtable. We know that you will represent our organization well.



Robert Brousseau

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Just a brief reminder to check your address label on the back of the newsletter. If you have a 2007 expiration date, this will be final newsletter you receive until your dues are paid for the current year. REAM's membership year runs from October 1 – September 30. Dues payments must be made to the state office for anyone who wishes to keep his membership active. Membership dues for the current 2007-2008 year are \$25. Payments can be sent to REAM, 165 Lakeside Ave, Marlborough, MA 01752. If you believe that there is an error with your expiration date, please contact the office. Anyone with an expiration date of 10/1/2007 will be considered inactive.

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

What are you reading?

Many of you are avid readers and are always searching for a good book. Here are some recent selections that were posted at area libraries and best seller lists:

- The Life of Pi* – Yann Martel
- The September of Shiraz* – Delia Sofer
- Middlesex* - Jeffrey Eugenides
- The Other Side of You* – Sally Vickers
- The Gathering* – Ann Enright
- The Double Bind* – Chris Bohjalian
- Water for Elephants* – Sara Gruen
- The Secret Life of Bees* – Sue Monk Kidd

Feel free to make suggestions to us about what you are reading and, as space permits, we will publish lists of what are members are reading. Reading is a great way to stay sharp and keep one's mind actively engaged.

DIRECTIONS & REGISTRATION FORM FOR SPRING MEETING

Directions to Devens Commons:

Our meeting will be at the Springhill Suites by Marriott Devens Commons Conference Center. The address is 29 Andrews Parkway, Devens, MA.

From the Mass Pike—Take Exit 11A for I-495 North to exit 29B, Route 2 West. Follow Route 2 to Exit 37B Jackson Road, merge left of the exit towards Devens. Follow approximately 2 miles; hotel is on right.

From Route I-93— Merge onto 495 South via Exit 44B towards Lowell. Merge onto Route 2 West via exit 29B towards Leominster. Take the Jackson Road exit 37B towards Devens, merge left off of the exit. Stay straight for about 2 miles. The hotel is on the right .

From Route 495– Take Exit 29B, Route 2 West. Follow Route 2 to Exit 37B Jackson Road merge left off the exit towards Devens. Follow approximately 2 miles; hotel is on the right.

Meeting Registration

Please use this form to register for REAM’s Spring Meeting at Devens Commons Conference Center on May 21, 2008. Payment and registration form must be received by 5/12/08.

Payment made payable to: REAM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

REAM Chapter: _____

Lunch will be a buffet. If you have any dietary restrictions and require special arrangements, please let us know.

Please register by May 12, 2008.
Payment (\$28) and completed forms can be sent to:

**REAM Spring Meeting
165 Lakeside Ave
Marlborough, MA 01752**

Questions—call the REAM Office at (508) 624-0233 or (800) 368-6782.



REAM

Retired Educators Association
of Massachusetts

Educators' Voice

Spring 2008 | Volume 4 | Issue 2



REAM

Retired Educators Association
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REAM

Retired Educators Association
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