

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The first year of my presidency of REAM is swiftly drawing to a close. As I look back at what we have accomplished together I can identify a number of areas of progress.

- Strengthening communication and coordination with REAM's chapters
- Employment of a Legislative Services Liaison
- Formation of a statewide legislative committee to coordinate work with our chapter legislative chairs and the legislative services liaison
- Coordination of a REAM Lobby Day at the State House
- Lobbying to move COLA and purchasing power study legislation forward
- Formation of a statewide membership committee to review membership recruitment, dues, and help coordinate activities with our chapters
- Streamlining our office procedures, updating equipment and technology

While we might feel good about the progress in the above areas brought about by the hard work and cooperation of chapter leaders and our operating team, we still have numerous challenges ahead.

Our legislative agenda both at the state and federal levels will require our continuing vigilance and determined efforts. We need to strengthen and expand our advocacy for moving the COLA reform and purchasing power study forward. We need to continue to advocate and lobby our federal legislators for the repeal of the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) legislation that so negatively impacts more and more public sector employees as they enter retirement.

Growing REAM's membership remains a continuing challenge. We need to strengthen and expand our membership recruitment and retention efforts. A larger membership will not only increase our voice but provide REAM with additional resources that we need to continue and expand our efforts to protect, promote and provide for current and future retirees.

In closing I wish to thank our office staff, officers and members for the support and encouragement extended to me this past year. With all of you, I look forward to meeting the continuing challenges facing us. Together we can and will succeed.



*I look forward to meeting the continuing challenges facing us.*

*Pelino Masciangioli, REAM President*

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

REAM's membership year is October 1 through September 30 and the membership continues to grow as we close out our current membership year (2006-2007). Members who have recently joined the association (after January 1) will not need to renew their membership until September 2008.

A renewal form was printed in the summer edition of the newsletter and can be used by all current members and former members to renew their memberships for the coming

year (2007-2008). Individual letters will be sent during the month of September to members whose memberships have not been renewed.

If you have any questions regarding your membership status, please contact the REAM Office at (508) 624-0233.

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Earlier in the spring the Public Service Committee reported out favorably the REAM sponsored COLA base bill in a redrafted format. The new bill, S2234, immediately increases the base of the COLA to \$16,000 then creates a formula based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and a percentage of the Social Security base over time. The purchasing power bill is carried with this legislation. Some have called it the best COLA bill in decades.

This bill has moved to the Senate, referred to the Senate Ways and Means Committee, where we have begun working to pass it. Over the past several weeks REAM officers have been meeting with each Senate office to discuss and lobby for the legislation.

Labor Day brings the return to formal sessions for the State Legislature. We need you to help advocate for passage of the COLA bill, S2234. With more than 6,000



bill filed each session, it is very important your elected officials hear from you, their constituents, to make this bill a priority.

It makes a difference – a big difference!

**Charles Stefanini**  
**REAM—Legislative Services Liaison**

# Educators' Voice

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

As I sit down and ponder what to write to you about this month I pause and take a deep breath. It seems like I just finished putting together the summer edition and now its time for the fall newsletter. So much continues to happen in the office, at the statehouse and at the local chapter level that it is hard to focus on just a few items – as it is all good!

Not only are we busy with our summer renewals, we are also busy processing many new memberships. If you haven't already, I would encourage you to renew your membership with the renewal form that was printed in the summer edition of the *Educators' Voice*. By renewing your membership with the form provided, you can save the organization the cost of printing and mailing an individual request. To date we have received over 900 renewals – saving the organization about \$900.

The new memberships that are coming in are a result of two activities that we have recently undertaken. Neither of these activities is new to the association; however, this year we have been paying particularly close attention to their success. The first of these activities is the coordination and participation with our business partner Needham Financial to host pre-retirement seminars. We have just concluded a series of six seminars and are in the processes of scheduling at least three more seminars. The target audience for these seminars is educators within three to five years of retirement. If you know of someone who could benefit from this information, please let us know so we can be sure to send them the information.

The second activity that we have focused on most recently is a mailing to over 1700 newly retired educators. With the help of the following members – Beverly Anderson, Sandy Martinez, Pat Pennucci, Jeannette and Pelino Masciangioli – we were able to get REAM information out to these folks within two weeks of receiving the list from the retirement board. Adding some of these prospects to our membership will help us finish our 2006-2007 membership year strong and hopefully exceed our goal of 6800 paid members for the year. I would ask that if you know newly retired educator, please personally contact them regarding REAM. Sometimes it is that personal

connection that draws people into the organization – just ask President Masciangioli how he got involved with REAM.

Shifting gears to our legislative agenda, it is worthy of mentioning that our efforts continue to be strong on Beacon Hill. During the past few months the statewide legislative committee has met to discuss the focus of our fall campaign. We experienced great success this spring with the favorable recommendation from the Joint Committee on Public Service on two main bills, the purchasing power study and the COLA. We are now looking at ways to successfully and effectively lobby the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees. More information will be available through chapter legislative chairs at area fall meetings and also at the statewide annual meeting on October 16.

Another area of interest for our members is long-term care. Again I would like to point to the business partnership REAM has with Needham Financial. In conjunction with Needham Financial, REAM will be hosting a number of long-term care seminars around the state. Information will be sent to chapter presidents regarding seminars in particular areas around the state. If you'd like to receive specific information about long-term care options, please call the office – we'd be happy to refer your name to Needham Financial.

On page 8, you'll find a registration form for our annual meeting. The Bristol chapter is graciously hosting the meeting for us in conjunction with their fall chapter meeting. I hope that many of you will consider making the trip to Benjamin's Restaurant in Taunton. In addition to updates from many of our statewide committees, we will be paying special tribute to some of REAM's long serving members – our honorary members.

In conclusion, I want to mention just two more items. The first being offering words of thanks to you...the reason REAM exists and I have the job I do. You deserve far more praise and thanks for the job you did than can ever be given and I see that everyday in the lives of my own school-aged children. The final comment I want to make is a welcome to those of you who have recently joined REAM.

Hillari I. Wennerstrom  
Executive Director

# HAMPDEN EAST & HAMPDEN WEST HOST PICNIC

The Hampden East and Hampden West REAM Chapters hosted their annual picnic summer picnic on June 13, 2007 at Stanley Park in Westfield. This event has been a long standing tradition for both chapters.

It was a cool day but the rain stopped early enough for one hundred and twenty retired educators and their guests to enjoy the lovely gardens at the park. The flowers were in full bloom and were a beautiful sight even without the sun.

The social hour gave everyone a chance to visit with friends they had not seen for a while. REAM President Pelino Masciangioli and his wife Jeannette and REAM Executive Director Hillari Wennerstrom also attended.

Entertainment was provided by the award winning Westfield High School Jazz Band.

*Submitted by: Ruth Hannum*



*L to R: REAM President Pelino Masciangioli, REAM Executive Director Hillari Wennerstrom and Hampden West Chapter President Robert Picknally*

*Photo by Beverly Pasternak*

## REAM FORMS A POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

At the March REAM Board of Directors Meeting, the board authorized the formation of a political action committee (PAC). This is a large undertaking for the association and your help is needed to get the PAC up and running. With the assistance of our Legislative Services Liaison Charles Stefanini, officers of the PAC will need to organize and register themselves with the Secretary of State's Office. Positions

available for nomination are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

If you have an interest in serving in one of these positions, please contact the REAM office by October 31, 2007. Names will be forwarded to the statewide legislative committee and the operating committee for appointment. Once established, the PAC will organize and operate as a separate

organization from REAM. In accordance with the law, REAM membership dues cannot be used to fund the PAC.

The PAC can only be established and exist if volunteers step forward. If you have questions related to activities and organization of the PAC, please contact the REAM Office at (508) 624-0233.

## OFFICE ASSISTANT POSITION

REAM is looking for a part-time administrative assistant for the Marlborough Office.

The position reports directly to the executive director and is responsible for the daily administrative tasks of the office. Applicants must be organized, work independently and have excellent computer skills. Prior experience working in an office setting is preferred.

The position will work 15-20 hours per week. If interested, please contact Executive Director Hillari Wennerstrom at (508) 624-0233.

## 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:

December 2007 edition—November 10, 2007  
March 2008 edition—February 10, 2008

Items should be submitted to Executive Director Hillari Wennerstrom. Items can also be sent via email, [hillariwennerstrom@ream1951.org](mailto: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.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Hampshire County Chapter

The fall meeting of the Hampshire County Chapter of REAM will be held on Wednesday, October 17 at the Hickory Ridge Country Club in Amherst.

Featured guests, and speakers for the day, will be REAM President Pelino Masciangioli and Hillari Wennerstrom, the Executive Director of REAM.

Coffee begins at 10:45 AM followed by the chapter meeting at 11:00. The program will begin at 11:30 AM and followed by lunch at 12:30. PM

Chapter members will receive additional information by mail in mid-September. Chapter members should use the renewal form in the summer edition of the *Educators' Voice* to renew their membership for the coming year (October 2007—September 2008)

*Submitted by Kathy Tudryn*

### REAM's Annual Fall Meeting

REAM's Annual Fall Meeting will be held on October 16 at Benjamin's Restaurant in Taunton. A registration form and directions are printed on page 8.

### REAM Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors meets quarterly—the next scheduled meeting is December 6, 2007.

### REAM Chapter Presidents Meeting

REAM Chapter Presidents meet twice a year to share ideas and information about what is going on throughout the association. These meetings are a great way to stay in touch with one another and keep up-to-date about what is going on at both the state and the local level. The next scheduled meeting of the chapter presidents is March 5, 2008 at Assabet Valley Technical High School in Marlborough.

### REAM Spring Meeting

We are still looking for a chapter host and location for this meeting. The meeting is usually held during the last two week in May. Please call the REAM Office if your chapter is interested in hosting.

# HEALTH CARE UPDATE—from AARP

## The US House Health Care Package—CHAMP (HR 3162)

*AARP's Grassroots Efforts Help Persuade House to Pass CHAMP Health Care Package*

The House of Representatives voted August 1 to pass HR 3162, the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP). The vote was 225-204. It was basically a party line vote, with five Republicans voting for the bill and ten Democrats opposing it. The CHAMP Act is a step towards fixing America's health care system by addressing the needs of the most vulnerable – lower income children and older Americans.

Lawmakers found two efficient and responsible ways to pay for the CHAMP Act: increasing Tobacco taxes and reducing excess payments to private Medicare Advantage plans. Some of the provisions of the CHAMP Act include:

- Reauthorizing the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP);
- Modifying the Part D asset test to allow for more low-income assistance;
- Strengthening the Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) so more low income beneficiaries receive assistance through Part B;
- Helping to maintain beneficiary access to physicians by preventing a 10% cut in Medi-care physician fees while minimizing the impact on beneficiaries' premiums.

The CHAMP Act helps to strengthen Medicare for both current and future beneficiaries by:

- Expanding Medicare coverage and eliminating cost sharing for evidence-based prevention services to promote more cost-effective efforts to keep people healthy, rather than high-cost treatments once people suffer from preventable conditions.
- Bringing parity to Medicare cost sharing requirements for mental health outpatient services.

- Expanding demonstration projects to provide Medicare beneficiaries with a "medical home" in physician offices that can help coordinate their care to improve quality and efficiency while encouraging participation by reducing cost-sharing responsibilities.

The CHAMP Act also includes several provisions that will help to increase the quality and efficiency of our entire health care system. These include provisions to:

- Fund a broadly representative non-profit organization, such as the National Quality Forum, to develop and promote use of consensus-based quality measures and advance the use of electronic health records.
- Establish a Comparative Effectiveness commission to promote objective research comparing various drugs and other treatments for specific conditions to determine which are most effective. This will help improve quality of care while reducing inappropriate, inefficient, ineffective care.
- Promote better understanding of racial and ethnic disparities in health care so that issue can be addressed.

While this vote moves the CHAMP Act one step closer to law, we are not yet finished. AARP will continue to press Congress to put a bill on the president's desk.

*This article was submitted by the NRTA: AARP's Educator Community— updated August 2, 2007. For more information regarding the NRTA or the AARP, please go to the website at <http://www.aarp.org>.*



# FALL BUSINESS MEETING INFORMATION & REGISTRATION

The Bristol County Chapter of REAM will be hosting the statewide fall meeting on October 16, 2007 at Benjamin's Restaurant in Taunton, MA. Registration and Coffee will be begin at 9:30 AM.

The program begins at 10:15 AM. Updates from many of our statewide committee will be given during this time— Legislative, Membership and Finance. The main focus of our program will be honoring the Association's honorary members.

Lunch will be served at Noon followed by BCTRA business. The cost of the meeting is \$20 per person and includes morning coffee and pastries, lunch and all other meeting materials.

## Directions to Benjamin's:

### Boston - North of Boston:

I-95 South to I-495 South to Exit 9 (Bay St., Taunton). Off Exit 9 bear right onto Bay St. toward Taunton. Approximately 3 miles to Benjamin's on the right.  
OR I-93 South to Rt. 24 South (Fall River). Continue to I-495 North Exit 9 (Bay St., Taunton). Off Exit 9 bear right onto Bay St. toward Taunton. Approximately 3 miles to Benjamin's on the right.

### Central & Western Mass:

I-90 East to I-495 South to Exit 9 (Bay St., Taunton). Off Exit 9 bear right onto Bay St. toward Taunton. Approximately 3 miles to Benjamin's on the right.

### Cape Cod and the Islands:

Rt 6 West or Rt. 28 West to I-495 North to Exit 9 (Bay St., Taunton). Off Exit 9 bear right onto Bay St. toward Taunton. Approximately 3 miles to Benjamin's on the right.

### Fall River / New Bedford Area:

Rt. 24 North to I-495 North to Exit 9 (Bay St., Taunton). Off Exit 9 bear right onto Bay St. toward Taunton. Approximately 3 miles to Benjamin's on the right.

## Meeting Registration

Please use this form to register for REAM's Annual Fall Meeting on October 16 at Benjamin's Restaurant in Taunton, MA. Forms must be received by 10/10/07.

*Payment made payable to: BCRTA*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

REAM Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch Options: choose one option per registrant

\_\_\_\_\_ Baked Haddock Filet

\_\_\_\_\_ Baked Stuffed Chicken

Please register by October 10, 2007. Payment (\$20) and completed forms can be sent to:

**Frances E. Ferreira**  
**199 Power Street**  
**Taunton, MA 02780**

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



**REAM**

Retired Educators Association  
of Massachusetts

# Educators' Voice

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## REAM

Retired Educators Association  
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# Educators' Voice



## REAM

Retired Educators Association  
of Massachusetts

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