

BREA Minutes

Meeting Date and Place: Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2015; Bldg.400, Rms RSB 1&2

Attendees: Arnold Aronson, Elliot Auerbach (by phone), Mulki R. Bhat, Violet Bezler, Robert M. Brown, Susan Carlsen, Nate Carter, Victor Cassella, Chellis Chasman, Anita Cohen, Cheryl Conrad, Ronnie Evans, Sheryl Gerstman, Louise Hanson, Georgia Irving, Joseph Indusi, Mark Israel, Robert Kinsey, Lillian Kouchinsky, Jim Lemley, Al Mallen, Ken Mohring, Lois Moller, Arnold Moodenbaugh, Bette Morgan, George Oldham, Arnie Peskin, Mona S. Rowe, Liz Seubert, Lloyd A. Schairer, John Skalyo, Joan Skelton, Richard Skelton, Tom Timko, and Elaine Zukowski.

Ken Mohring opened the meeting at 1:04 pm.

CAC Overview: Arnie Peskin began the meeting with description of BNL's Community Advisory Council (CAC). The CAC was formed 16-18 years ago during a time of great distrust of the Laboratory by many in the surrounding community. Its mission is to advise the Laboratory, especially on matters that might affect the surrounding community. It is also a means of keeping BNL's neighbors and local leaders informed. BREA is one of its founding members, through the initiative of Graham Campbell. CAC currently has about two dozen members, people who represent organizations that have a stake in maintaining good relations between the Lab and the community. These include groups with BNL-affiliations such as BREA, the Light Source Users Assoc. and the RHIC Users Assoc.; local civic organizations and environmental groups; businesses such as the TFCU; and representatives of local government. About one-third of the seats are held by the original founders, one-third by organizations who have been CAC members for the last ten years or so, and one-third by "new blood". Each organization that belongs can have one delegate at the table and any number of alternates. Arnie Peskin has served as BREA's delegate for a number of years. The first alternate is Eena-Mai Franz; Steve Shapiro has recently also become an alternate.

CAC continues to monitor the tritium leak from the High Flux Beam reactor (its original issue), the clean-up of the Peconic River, and the dismantling of "hot" facilities. BNL works hard these days to keep CAC informed. BSA managers and BNL scientists routinely give talks at the meetings. Over the years, the Laboratory and CAC have evolved from being adversaries to friends, and have created quite a partnership. The meetings are held once a month and are facilitated by an outsider with no affiliation to any of the participants. Only the delegates "at the table" may speak, but anyone may sit in the audience. Any BREA member who is interested in attending should contact Arnie.

Arnie is willing to continue as BREA's CAC delegate indefinitely, however, he would gladly relinquish the role if BREA wants "new blood".

Up until his retirement at the end of September, Mark Israel regularly attended CAC meetings as part of his job. He said he intends to continue doing so as an audience member.

Business:

Minutes: The minutes for September 8, 2015 were accepted as presented.

Treasurer's Report: Steve Shapiro was away, so Ken Mohring gave the Treasurer's Report. There have been no significant changes to BREA's finances. Any BREA member who would like to know more about the BREA accounts should contact Steve Shapiro directly.

Use of BREA Funds: Ken Mohring also mentioned that Steve Shapiro has been checking into the science center and museum that is being planned for the historic Nikola Tesla laboratory site in Shoreham. Steve will provide information about this at a future meeting.

Membership: Sheryl Gerstman, the new Membership Chairperson, reported that BREA currently has 423 members. Of these, approximately 115 are delinquent in their dues. She will contact these people to let them know they are in arrears. She does not have an email address for 125 members. To get in touch with Sheryl regarding BREA matters, please email her at sigronkonkoma@gmail.com or send her a letter addressed to BREA Membership Chair, 46 Richmond Blvd. Unit 3B, Ronkonkoma, NY 11779-3692.

Newsletter: Mona Rowe said that the upcoming "BREA News" Newsletter (Nov/Dec 2015) will include an article, including photos, on the Plum Island trip; an update on retirees' medical coverage for 2016; a description of the nominees and the ballot for the election of BREA officers for 2016 - 2017 (BREA officers serve two year terms); the "In Memoriam" column; a membership renewal form; and announcements of two upcoming Lab events: a post-doc research symposium and the BERA holiday party.

Mona asked whether the Jan/Feb 2016 Newsletter would be mailed to all retirees. BNL would handle the mailing, but BREA would probably have to pay for it. Ken Mohring said BREA still does not have access to or permission to use the email addresses of *all* BNL retirees. At the September meeting with HR (see below), it was not appropriate to bring up the subject.

All contributions to the Newsletter, including the new officers' slate and the candidates' biographical sketches, must be submitted to Mona *no later than* October 25.

Nominating Committee: On Ken Mohring's recommendation, Louise Hanson, Arnie Moodenbaugh, and Georgia Irving were elected to the nominating committee. Ken asked the committee to meet today (Oct. 13) because of the upcoming deadline in submitting the candidate slate to the Newsletter. He also asked anyone present who would like to run for an office to say something to one of the committee members. The elected offices are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

BREA Constitution: The nominating committee was created at this meeting because according to the BREA constitution, the nominating committee is elected in October. Ken Mohring would like this provision changed because it doesn't leave much time between the creation of the committee and the submission deadline for the Nov/Dec BREA Newsletter (the ballots will be counted at the Dec. meeting). Arnie Peskin thinks that the constitution in general needs to be "looked at", not just this provision. Louise Hanson and Bob Kinsey offered to work with Arnie in reviewing the constitution. It is accessible on the BREA website.

Human Resources Meetings on Medical Insurance Benefits for 2016:

(1) The BREA officers, Elliot Auerbach, and George Oldham met with HR [Denise DiMeglio, Melissa Schuchman (formerly Bittrolff), and Bob Lincoln] on September 8 after BREA meeting. They gave a presentation on the planned changes for 2016.

There is only one change planned for Medicare eligible retirees and spouses (a cohort of about 1700 people): a different company will service the Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs). The new company will be affiliated with SelectQuote Senior and will include an “all-paper” option. The transfer, if you already have an account, will not be automatic. You will need to fill out a form. Watch your mail! The reimbursement per eligible individual per month will remain at \$170. There are eligible people from 2015 who have not yet set up an account. The money has been set aside for them and can be claimed.

The healthcare exchange through SelectQuote Senior will continue for 2016. Those who wish to change their secondary medical insurer must do so through SelectQuote (SQ), if they want to continue receiving the HRA reimbursement. The Medicare open enrollment period is Oct. 15 – Dec. 7. Denise said that any retiree unhappy with a SG agent should let HR know the agent’s name. Those wishing to change their drug plan can do so either through SQ or on their own.

The major changes will be for non-Medicare retirees, retirees with non-Medicare spouses or dependents, and people on long term disability who are not yet eligible for Medicare (a cohort of about 185 people). The Lab is dropping its CIGNA and HIP Prime/VYTRA coverage and switching to Aetna. Under Aetna, people will be able to choose from among three different options. These differ in monthly cost, what’s covered, deductibles, copayments, out-of-pocket maxima/year for medical expenses and prescription drugs, etc. The open enrollment period is Oct. 19 through Nov. 13. If people don’t respond by Nov. 13, the Lab will choose a plan for them. The new plans will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2016.

(2) On Sept. 19, Denise DiMeglio hosted an informational meeting on-site for “Retirees, Participants Receiving Long Term Disability Benefits and Their Covered Family Members who are not Eligible for Medicare”. Liz Seubert and Louise Hanson attended as BREA representatives. The formal presentation was the same as that given to the BREA officers on Sept. 8. In addition, attendees asked a wide range of questions. Overall, about 80 people came. Modelling tools are to be made available through Aetna to help people choose the most cost-effective plan for their anticipated needs.

Further Discussion of Medical Insurance Benefits: Ken Mohring said that a document describing updated plan descriptions for the 2015 BSA benefit programs for retirees, dated October 2015, was recently mailed out by HR. Attendees said they had received it. He also mentioned that a document outlining 2016 was to have been mailed out by SelectQuote the previous Friday (Oct. 9). No one present had received that yet.

With regard to drug plans, as mentioned above, those wishing to change their drug plan can do so either through SQ or on their own. Arnie Moodenbaugh reminded people that the Medicare system lists *all* available plans, whereas SQ represents a subset.

Elliott Auerbach said that the Medicare Part B premiums for 2016 will be announced on or about Oct. 15. Also, there will be no Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) increases to Social Security payments in

2016. Arnie Moodenbaugh added that if your income has gone down since you retired, you should notify the Social Security Administration and your Medicare payments may be reduced.

Liz Seubert was concerned about retirees or covered family members not yet eligible for Medicare who may have trouble understanding the upcoming changes in medical coverage because of difficulties with English. She asked for a notice in the "BREA News" Newsletter offering to help these individuals.

Workers Health Protection Program: Victor Cassella reminded attendees of this program which provides former BNL employees with a free physical. The emphasis is on work-related illnesses. The free physical may be repeated every three years. Since the program started in January 2011, approximately 500 individuals have been screened. The local program is run by Queens College, 1-888-241-1199. Mona Rowe wanted to know whom to contact if you live in another state. Another individual said she had had a bad experience and wanted to know how to file a complaint. Victor said he would find out. Mona plans to have an article about both the compensation and screening programs in the Jan. 2016 "BREA News" Newsletter.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

November 2015 meeting: Tuesday, Nov. 10, 1 pm, Bldg. 400, Rms RSB 1 & 2

December 2015 meeting: Tuesday, Dec. 8, 1 pm, Bldg. 400, Rms RSB 1 & 2

Minutes submitted by Louise Hanson