

# BREA Minutes

**Meeting Date and Place:** Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2014; Building 400, Rm RSB 2

**Attendees:** Elliot Auerbach, Louisa Barone, Robert Barone, Carmen Benkovitz, Violet Bezler, Mulki R. Bhat, Robert M. Brown, Nate Carter, Victor Cassella, Chellis Chasman, Robert Chrien, Anita Cohen, Ronnie Evans, Sheryl Gerstman, Louise Hanson, Robert Kinsey, Ottmar Kistner, Lillian Kouchinsky, Regina A. Lukas, William (Bill) Lukas Jr., Al Mallen, Ken Mohring, Lois Moller, Arnie Moodenbaugh, George Oldham, Mona Rowe, Liz Seubert, Steve Shapiro, John Skalyo, Joan Skelton, Richard Skelton, Jackie Timko, Tom Timko, and Rich Tulipano

Ken Mohring opened the meeting at 1:10 pm.

The minutes of the Sept. 9, 2014 meeting were accepted as presented.

Steve Shapiro gave the Treasurer's Report. Since the last meeting (in July), BREA paid the postage for the Special Edition September 2014 Newsletter (it provided members with information about the major changes to retirees' medical insurance and benefits to take effect in 2015). BREA also took in income from dues as the membership continues to grow.

## **Business:**

Membership: Carmen Benkovitz said that memberships continue to be up, now approaching 400. She and Sheryl Gerstman are moving forward on new hardware and software for the data base.

DOE M&O (management and operations) contract solicitation for BNL: Ken Mohring has no news.

Medical Insurance Benefits: By the end of September, all retirees should have received mailings from BSA concerning the significant changes to retiree medical benefits starting Jan. 1, 2015. (If not, contact Human Resources, Melissa Bittrolff, 631-344-2877, [bittrolff@bnl.gov](mailto:bittrolff@bnl.gov), or Denise DiMeglio, 631-344-2881, [dimeglio@bnl.gov](mailto:dimeglio@bnl.gov) ASAP). In summary, BSA will cease supplemental medical and drug coverage through CIGNA and HIP VIP on Dec. 31, 2014 for Medicare-eligible retirees and their Medicare-eligible dependents. BSA has hired the firm SelectQuote Senior to facilitate the choosing and purchasing of a Medigap insurance plan for each eligible retiree, effective Jan. 1, 2015. BSA will subsidize a portion of the premium payments through Health Reimbursement Accounts *—only if* SelectQuote is used to select the new medical plan. In 2015, this amount will be \$170 per eligible person per month. BSA is to send out information on the Health Reimbursement Accounts in November.

BSA also held three on-site information sessions on October 6 and 7. A video of one of the sessions is available at [www.bsa.sqbenefits.com](http://www.bsa.sqbenefits.com). Ken Mohring said these sessions were well-attended.

Ken asked people present about their experiences with SelectQuote. His impression is that peoples' experiences have been uneven - some have been very pleased and others not so with the

SelectQuote agent who contacted them. This sentiment was echoed by today's BREA meeting attendees. They exchanged the names and numbers of agents they were pleased with. Another possibility for obtaining a different agent is to contact the company directly, at 866-479-8317.

A lively discussion took place.

- Bob Barone suggested that if you need more information about various Medigap plans, to contact the AARP (the American Association of Retired People). They will send you "scads" of info.
- Bob also said that if you live in New York State (NYS), you can change your medical plan after the first year – i.e., if you are unhappy with your 2015 choice, you can make a different choice for 2016.
- Elliot Auerbach said that for residents of NY, CIGNA cannot be one our new choices because it does not have Medicare supplement plans in NYS. Our current insurance with CIGNA is through the Lab, which is self-insured.
- How long will the \$170/month subsidy be in effect? Elliot said that the DOE contract says there must be a "program", but doesn't define the program. The answer given to this question at the Oct. 6/7 meetings was "We will review this each year".

Ken encouraged people to carefully review the various available plans, to be persistent in obtaining information, to sign up early rather than waiting until the last minute, and not to hesitate to contact Denise DiMeglio or Melissa Bittrolff with any unanswered questions or concerns.

Newsletter: The November/December will also be devoted to the major changes in retirees' medical insurance and benefits to take effect in 2015. It will summarize the changes and what retirees need to do now (before early December) to implement new coverage and to receive a Health Reimbursement Account from BSA. It will also include a Q and A based on the questions asked at the informational meetings held at BNL on Oct. 6 and 7.

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. To be eligible, one must have worked for BNL for at least 250 days. The free physical may be repeated every three years. The program is run by Queens College, 1-888-241-1199. More information is also available in BREA's July/August Newsletter. All BREA Newsletters are available on the BREA website at [www.bnl.gov](http://www.bnl.gov).

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 pm.

November 2014 meeting: Tuesday, Nov. 18, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2  
(BNL is closed on Tuesday, Nov. 11 – Veterans Day)

December 2014 meeting: Tuesday, Dec. 9, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

Minutes submitted by Louise Hanson