

# BREA Minutes

**Meeting Date and Place:** Tuesday, May 10, 2011; Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

**Attendees:** Elliot Auerbach, Dave Cox, Alyce Daly, Eena-Mai Franz, Louise Hanson, Ken Mohring, Martine O'Connor, Arnie Peskin, Frances Scheffel, Rich Skelton, Myron Strongin, and Joyce Tichler (by phone).

Eena-Mai Franz opened the meeting at 1:00pm.

The minutes of the April 12, 2011 meeting were accepted as presented.

Ken Mohring presented a Treasurer's Report for Jan –Apr 2011. There is not much change over that time period; just a small amount of additional interest monthly. The report was accepted as presented. The next due date for a BREA CD is July 2011. Alyce Daly suggested that Ken check into TIAA/CREF because they offer higher interest rates on CD's than the credit union on-site.

## **Old Business:**

SeniorNet: Eena-Mai Franz read an email from Ronnie Evans: The topic of the upcoming monthly SNUG (SeniorNet User Group) meeting is "cloud" computing, to be held on Tuesday, May 17 at the Huntington Family Service League Building at 3:30pm. These events are open to the public. There is also a workshop for SeniorNet volunteers on Friday May 13 in Yaphank from 1-3pm.

BREA newsletter: The current (May) Newsletter is out. The time frame for the next Newsletter is August.

E-mail/On-line communication between retirees and BNL: Bob Lincoln, the interim head of Human Resources (HR), could not attend today's meeting (or the April 12<sup>th</sup> BREA meeting). Since there appears to be a disconnect between what BNL is offering to do and BREA's original concerns on this issue, including the forwarding of emails after retirement from a bnl.gov account to a retiree's personal email account, BREA would like to meet with him. Eena-Mai Franz has proposed setting up a meeting in Bob Lincoln's office between him, her, and the BREA members especially interested in this issue. She asked Arnie Peskin and Dave Cox to stay and help her plan for such a meeting after today's adjournment. [As a historical footnote, Arnie Peskin said that an email committee was set up several years ago as a result of a meeting between senior BREA members and the Lab director. BREA was promised a formal proposal at that time - it never came.]

As part of the Lab's "Phase 1" – see the April 2011 minutes for a description of "Phase 1" – Mona Rowe had asked Joyce Tichler to send the BREA email list to Bonnie Miller (Human Resources and Occupational Medicine Division). Joyce did so and has had no feedback from anyone.

DOE's Former Worker Medical Screening Program (FWP): Queens College is coordinating the local screening program. Several people at the meeting (5) have been contacted; only one has been tested. The person tested has been told his results verbally, by the doctor, verified orally by Queens College. Written results are to be sent to him by Queens College, not directly by the doctor. He hasn't received anything in writing yet. Apparently Queens College is still ignoring the very sensible advice he gave them last January, based on his own experience, that before a person is screened Queens College mail the associated package of lengthy forms directly to the patient, rather than to the screening physician, so the patient can fill out the forms *before* arriving at the physician's office.

Annual Luncheon (Wed. June 15, Bellport County Club): Martine O'Connor reported the photo taken at the April meeting should appear in the Friday May 13 Bulletin. (It was to have appeared by now, but had been displaced by unanticipated last minute articles). Ronnie Evans has finished the photo collage using pictures from last year's event. Martine is concerned that so far, only 32 people have signed up. She has sent forms with a personal note to people who came last year but haven't signed up yet for this year. Alyce Daly offered to phone people. Dave Cox will forward phone numbers to her.

There ensued a discussion as to whether there should be live entertainment (there was none last year and there will be none this year) and whether the background music was too loud. Different people had had very different feedback from last year's participants – ranging from disappointment at the absence of entertainment to pleasure at having an extended opportunity to talk to one's friends.

BNL's Director, Sam Aronson, will attend. There will be one reserved table for Eena-Mai Franz, Sam, and whoever else wants to sit there.

Martine said she will need additional help on that day only.

Spring BREA tour of new BNL facilities (May 18): Ken Mohring reported that ten people have signed up so far. An announcement appeared in last Friday's Bulletin (May 6). The cafeteria needs a lunch head count by Monday, May 16. Dave Cox said he will send out an email reminder. People are to meet in the Bldg. 400 Conf. Rm 2 for a morning program consisting of an introductory talk, tours of Bldg. 400, the Nanocenter and NSLS II, followed by lunch.

Contact with retiree organizations at other DOE Labs: Myron Strongin had invited Bill Hempfling, BNL's retired HR Director, to today's meeting, but he was unable to come. Hempfling is willing to answer questions that may come up.

Dave Cox has looked at 16 National Labs using data assembled by Joyce Tichler. About half have active retirees' organizations. One of the most active organizations is at Savanna River. Retirees there are in a very adversarial situation, similar to that at Oak Ridge, wherein current managers have reneged on pension and benefit contracts that had been negotiated with prior managers. Neither Oak Ridge nor Savannah River provides for retirement through TIAA/CREF. The retirees' organization at Idaho mirrors BREA in many ways – it's similarly organized, has the same dues structure, and produces a newsletter. At Pacific NW there is a staff organization that includes retirees. Most of the retirees' organizations at the various labs produce newsletters, hold meetings, sponsor social events, and are concerned with benefits issues. Fermilab, National Energy Tech Lab, Princeton Plasma Physics Lab, and SLAC apparently do not have a retiree's organization. The home pages of the Labs often don't mention their retirees'

organizations, especially those, like the ones at Oak Ridge and Savannah River, that are adversarial. Dave will try to organize and make sense of all the information. He said this will take a while.

**New Business:**

Dave Cox mentioned that BREA should have a representative on the search committee for the Lab's permanent HR Director (Arnie Peskin had been on the search committee that resulted in Bill Hempfling's appointment).

Arnie Peskin said that BREA's officers should meet with the Lab director once a year.

How can BREA attract more members to come to meetings? Our meetings are *not* executive meetings. This point is stressed in BREA's membership materials. An "Open House" meeting with food and coffee was discussed for Sept. or Oct. Should an "Open House" meeting be coordinated with the Lab's Health Fest? Dave Cox will check on the Health Fest date, and mention the "Open House" at the luncheon.

A nominating committee for new BREA officers should be appointed in Sept.

Political action by BREA as an organization or by individuals – e.g. contacting politicians – is OK as long as BNL resources are not used. For instance, Dave Cox can send out emails from his personal computer calling for political action by BREA members on some issue, but he cannot put a notice in the Newsletter because BNL pays for its printing and distribution. The question arose as to whether links to Congressmen and Senators would be allowable on the BREA website. Dave did not know and said he would find out.

June 2011 meeting: Tues, June 14, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

July 2011 meeting: Tues, July 12, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

Meeting adjourned at 2:17pm

Minutes submitted by Louise Hanson