

BREA Minutes

Meeting Date and Place: June 9, 2015, Berkner Hall, Room B

Attendees: Elliot Auerbach, Arnold Aronson, Carmen Benkovitz, Nate Carter, Victor Cassella, Cheryl Conrad, Dave Cox, Leslie Fishbone, Eena-Mai Franz, Sheryl Gerstman, Georgia Irving, Bob Kinsey, Lillian Kouchinsky, Jim Lemley, Al Mallen, Ken Mohring, George Oldham, Arnie Peskin, Mona Rowe, Liz Seubert, Stephen Shapiro, Joan Skelton, and Richard Skelton.

Ken Mohring opened the meeting at 1:06 pm.

Minutes: The minutes of the May 12, 2015 meeting were accepted as presented with some recommended changes. Louise will follow-up.

Treasurer's Report: Steve Shapiro gave the Treasurer's report. About \$3,000 has been paid in by luncheon registrants. Annual dues are still being collected

Committee for use of BREA funds: It was agreed to spend about \$1500 of BREA funds, perhaps every year, to maintain goodwill within the Lab and gain some recognition of BREA. Christine Carter suggested we meet with Stakeholder Relations (SR) personnel. Steve and Mona met with Nora Sundin, head of SR, and Kahille Dorsinvil, a SR new hire (formerly with Office of Educational Programs) for outreach opportunities and/or for supporting part of the Summer Sundays program. After discussion, it was decided to pay for a portion of the light show on July 19, that Sunday the NSLS-II will be featured. 2015 is the International Year of Light. Cost: about \$2,000.

The volunteers' portion of the BREA outreach effort: SR suggested having retirees as volunteers, perhaps timed to the NSLS II Berkner light shows, which are three times that day, (10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and 1 p.m.) July 19, or seated at the entrance to the lobby at any time to interact with guests. SR would provide distinctive shirts for the volunteers, although BREA has T-shirts with its logo, which might be better to show off BREA's contribution.

Membership: Carmen has a database of information that is mailed to her. Mona will send some corrected addresses to her.

Luncheon: Lillian reported that all is prepared and 96 are coming to the luncheon. Peter Bond will give an address. Other guests will be Joanne Delles to represent BERA, and Joe Rubino, who will take photographs.

July/August newsletter: The President's message will recap the luncheon. Mona will include her notes on Peter Bond's talk and as many photos as possible of the luncheon. Other items will be the In Memoriam column if any are ready to publish, a Membership renewal form, and a reminder of Steve Shapiro's Plum Island trip (which is full but there is a waiting list).

Retiree email list: BREA should take over the existing BNL list of retiree email addresses. Ken will ask Bob Lincoln to allow BREA to get the latest lists from Bonnie Miller, who records new retirees' email addresses, but there is no procedure for the addresses to be updated. BREA would use the list to communicate with all retirees and return the list to BNL if they decide they wish to maintain it. Arnie warned that the Lab is unlikely to provide server space to hold our lists. There are also retiree approvals necessary for the Lab to release the information they currently have recorded.

Healthcare concerns: BREA had planned to have a survey on retiree experiences, even if Select Quote also performs one. Originally, we were going to survey ALL retirees via snail mail. Any survey has to be approved by Human Resources as it cannot appear that we are advising anyone on anything, or making pointed suggestions. Arnie reminded that we should start thinking about next year (2016). Questions that people may ask are: If you don't want to make changes, are you automatically renewed? What drug plans are available? Will BNL continue to use Select Quote as its exchange provider? Will retirees still get \$170/month?

Ken said that the BREA Medical Committee should meet again soon and asked if anyone else would like to join. Sheryl and Bob showed interest.

New Business

Current Employee Benefits: Ken attended the third All Employee meeting on benefit changes for employees -- standing room only, held in the Biology conference room. Focus groups had been discussing upcoming changes since spring. BNL has what is judged as a "Cadillac" healthcare plan, which in 2018 will be taxed at about \$4 million. DOE has determined this to be an unallowable cost; therefore fines would have to come out of the \$6M BSA fee. Also, DOE has its own, separate study on benefits, that includes vacations, health, and others. They want all the national laboratories to score 105 or less. BNL's score stands at 109. In the past, BNL was allowed a higher score. To get scores, DOE did Value studies. BNL is compared against ANL, AT&T, Cornell, Honeywell, IBM, Fermi, JPL, Stony Brook, and Motorola. The bottom line is there will be large changes to the benefit programs of current employees.

TIAA/CREF Statements: George and Ken both got statements that belonged to someone else. Everyone should check what they are receiving from TIAA/CREF.

Volunteer Work by BREA Members

At the May meeting, Les Fishbone volunteered to be the contact person in exploring how BREA volunteers could help getting out the Lab message. He proposed a focus on science and Laboratory publicity, perhaps to be done by having an information booth at Smith Haven Mall, where Lab staff and BREA members could present a topic in science to the public, distribute leaflets, etc. He has emailed a draft proposal to Ken and others. BREA members with experience in this sort of situation warned that volunteers would have to be carefully trained as hecklers can be a problem, as well as issues staffing such an undertaking.

Submitted by Liz Seubert and Ken Mohring 9/5/15