

BREA Minutes

Meeting Date and Place: Tuesday, Apr. 10, 2012; Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

Attendees: Elliot Auerbach, Carmen Benkovitz, Victor Cassella, Dave Cox, Eena-Mai Franz, Louis A. Graziano, Louise Hanson, Les Lawrence, Alfredo Luccio, Arnie Peskin, Mona Rowe, Ken Mohring, George Oldham, Steve Shapiro, and Joyce Tichler (by phone)

Invitee: Peter Bond

Dave Cox opened the meeting at 1:06pm.

The minutes of the March 13, 2012 meeting were accepted as presented.

Steve Shapiro presented the Treasurer's Report. It was also accepted as presented. Very little has changed since the previous month.

Old Business:

SeniorNet: There was no report.

Membership: Carmen Benkovitz reported on new and existing membership activity. Ken Mohring suggested that we consider a minimum of a 2-year \$20 membership to replace the current system of annual renewals. This suggestion will be discussed at a later meeting. Joyce Tichler asked Carmen how the new data base handled duplicates, such as married couples with the same address. Carmen said she would check with the programmer, Sheryl Gerstman.

Annual Luncheon: Ken Mohring reported on publicity for the upcoming BREA luncheon, to be held on Thurs. June 7. The guest list was discussed and the invitees will be notified by either Dave Cox or Ken.

Plum Island Tour: Steve Shapiro has arranged for a BREA tour of Plum Island on Wed. June 20. People attending the tour should meet at the Plum Island ferry dock at Orient Point in time to take the 9:30am employee ferry. For lunch, participants are invited to join a Plum Island staff BBQ (\$10). Attendance is limited to 30 people. Reserve by contacting Steve no later than May 15. Steve will place notices in the May Newsletter and the Brookhaven Bulletin. The tour will also be announced at the June luncheon.

BREA newsletter: Mona Rowe outlined the contents of the upcoming May Newsletter: some opening words from Dave Cox; the June 7 luncheon; the Plum Island tour; updates from several retirees; upcoming BERA events; and a membership renewal notice. She will put an update on the medical screening program (see below) in a later issue.

DOE former worker medical screening program: Victor Cassella, a BNL retiree himself, works for the Workers Health Protection Program (WHPP), the screening program of BNL retirees overseen by Queen's College. His mission - to encourage BNL retirees to go get screened. The screening is free and every retiree is eligible. Nonetheless, turnout has been poor, and it is not clear why. In addition to the over 3000 brochures that have been mailed out, advertisements are now being placed in local Pennysaver-type papers on Long Island, and he is making phone calls. He would like to see more on-site publicity.

Changes to retirees' medical benefits: Peter Bond joined the meeting at this point. He is the ombudsman for the laboratory. Dave Cox and Steve Shapiro have spoken previously to him about this issue.

Dave Cox, Steve Shapiro, George Oldham and Les Lawrence saw a labor lawyer last week. They had some difficulty finding one because most prefer to represent employers. The lawyer said that the affected retirees would lose a lawsuit and he didn't want to take money for what he considered a lost cause. The issue seems to be that retirees' letters promising health benefits "at no cost" do not specifically say *no premiums for supplemental health coverage over one's lifetime*. No timeline was specified. It appears that BREA can do nothing more to reverse BSA's premium changes.

In response to the question, what should BREA do next, Arnie Peskin replied that we should reply to members with the following: (1) that BREA took a proactive stance on the issue, and (2) outline the things we did do – such as consulting a lawyer, reading over 50+ years of BNL benefits booklets, multiple communications with BNL personnel over the issue, and communicating with our members.

Arnie further said he would like Peter Bond to take back this message: (1) the situation is unfortunate and (2) the situation was *exacerbated* by the way the Lab handled it. Peter agreed that the communication from the Lab to retirees had been very poor.

New Business:

Lunchtime Lectures: Ideas were tossed around for topics for BREA-sponsored lunchtime lectures. These included talks on the Shoreham Tesla facility, financial management, and Eldercare.

Mentoring: Eena-Mai Franz has a letter from Ed Kaplan outlining a proposal, based on an idea presented at a CAC meeting. It was suggested that Eena-Mai invite him to a future BREA meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:32pm.

May 2012 meeting: Tuesday, May 8, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

June 2012 meeting: Tuesday, June 12, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

Minutes submitted by Louise Hanson