

## **Minutes of the BREA Meeting: November 8, 2011**

Members present: Carmen Benkovitz, Dave Cox, Ronnie Evans, Eena-Mai Franz, Ottmar Kistner, Ken Mohring, Frances M. Scheffel, Steve Shapiro, Richard Skelton, Myron Strongin

Meeting called to order by President Eena-Mai Franz at 1300

The minutes of the Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> 2011 meeting were accepted as amended

There was no Treasurer's Report

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Senior Net:** D. Cox reported that the Yaphank office is under-performing, but the Huntington office is working well. Ronnie Evans reported that she had spoken with Bill Baker and Slava Vero, the co-coordinators of SeniorNet, who are very concerned about low attendance in computer classes. They asked for BREA's assistance in getting the word out about the Dec. 13th open house at Yaphank. Dave will send out e-mail to BREA members and a number of people at this meeting said they would post notices in area libraries.

**Newsletter:** The next issue is due in February 2012, but there is interest in getting one out earlier to report on the election and the changes in Healthcare for retirees.

**Membership:** Carmen Benkovitz will take over duties as Membership Secretary. She has received a lot of help from Tom Schlager's office. It was suggested that BREA publish addresses of retirees, as was done in the past, but this is not possible due to privacy issues.

**Tesla Science Center:** Steve Shapiro reported on the Tesla Conference 2011 held in Riverhead on Sat., November 5<sup>th</sup>. BNL was a co-sponsor. There were about 10 lectures covering Tesla's life and achievements, including three speakers from BNL. About 200 people attended the daylong event. The Tesla Science Center at Wardencllyffe has received about \$800K to acquire the Shoreham Wardencllyffe site of Tesla's laboratory and is expecting additional moneys to purchase the site for a museum. Many of buildings are in disrepair and the real work and costs will occur in trying to refit the site for the proposed museum.

**Retirees/Lab-mail issues:** At the moment retirees cannot have a bnl.gov e-mail account unless they also have a Guest Appointment. There will be further contact with the head of HR to see if this can be changed.

**Retiree organizations at other DOE Laboratories:** No action

**Offsite electronic access to Research Library:** This is not possible for general browsing due to contractual agreements with publishers. You need to have access inside the firewall. The Library staff is willing to search and send individual articles

if you contact one of the librarians. There is nothing that can be done to change this so the case is closed

**Former Worker Medical Screening Program:** This is still active and BREA should publicize this again for retirees

**Healthfest:** BREA had a booth at the Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> Healthfest. There was some interest and it was decided to do it again next year

**Tour of RHIC on November 8<sup>th</sup>:** 10 people have signed up for the tour of RHIC and PHOENIX and lunch.

**Election** is in progress and the votes will be counted after the December meeting.

There were no pictures placed in the Bulletin from the June luncheon. It was decided it is too late to do so.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

The new business discussion focused on the cost of healthcare insurance for retirees. BNL announced it is going to force those persons who retired before 1995 and had premium free insurance coverage to contribute 10% of the cost of the insurance. At a public meeting on Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> Bob Lincoln, head of HR, asked if there were any written documentation from retirees about any commitment made by the Lab to provide free insurance. BREA, led by Dave Cox, has accumulated 4 documents from retirees where there were written statements that insurance would be provided free of charge. It is unclear whether this would be in perpetuity or can be changed. D. Cox, E-M Franz and K.Mohring met on Monday, 11/7, with Lincoln to show him the documentation and discuss the situation. Lincoln and HR are now considering how to handle this. BREA is awaiting a response from HR.

There was additional discussion about getting legal advice, but the consensus was to await Lincoln's response and the legal costs would be prohibitive.

It was also felt that any retiree could access his/her personnel file at the Lab or respective Department to view any documentation they received on accepting a retirement.

The meeting was adjourned at 1430.

Minutes submitted by Steve Shapiro