

BREA NEWS

www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/

Volume 20, Issue 6

November/December 2020

BREA Meetings

BREA meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month (except for August), at 1 p.m. All BREA members are invited to participate. ***As long as the BNL site continues to be closed to retirees, BREA may arrange an alternate mode of communication. Watch for email notices.***

Meeting Schedule

November 10, 2020 ***via video link, BNL site closed to retirees***

December 8, 2020

January 12, 2021

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From around the country, BREA members report on voting, remote education and climate change. Their reports start on page 2.

From the President

by Arnie Moodenbaugh, moodenba@optonline.net

To fellow BREA Members,

BREA meetings are continuing on Zoom. The next Zoom meeting will be on November 10 at 1 p.m. EST. The meeting ID is 944 620 5124. The password is BREA. An announcement with agenda will be emailed the first week of November. The next meeting will be on December 8.

The Medicare open enrollment for Medicare B Supplement, C Advantage, and D drug plans began October 15 and ends December 7. Now is a good time to review your health insurance. The "Medicare and You" handbook is helpful. You can find it online as well as in print form, mailed to your home address. You also will be able to get a list of available plans in your area using this online resource: <https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare/#/?lang=en&year=2021>. Turn to the back of the 2021 printed handbook for a list of plans in your location.

WARNING: If you are eligible to receive the BNL retiree medical benefit for Medicare enrollees (\$180 per month through Taben/Navia) and want to enroll or change coverage, you must do so through SelectQuote Senior (1-866-479-8317, press Option 1). We all are being bombarded by TV and print ads for Medicare B Supplement and Advantage Plans through other companies. Ignore them. **You must use SelectQuote to enroll in or change plans. If you do not, you will lose your future BNL medical benefits for life!** Unfortunately, that has happened to one of our members. Contact BNL's Human Resources (631-344-3724, -5126, or -2877) if you have issues with SelectQuote service. Also, if you

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Retirees Report: Voting, Remote Education, Climate Change

We've heard from BREA members about living – and working – during the pandemic. Here's what retirees report about other issues during the year 2020.

Voting 2020

In Virginia this year, the Registrars have gone out of their way to make it easy and safe to cast votes, particularly in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic. Virginia early voting started September 18, 45 days before election day. By mid-October, over 35 percent of people in my county (York) had voted!

Paper ballots are used here. One can not only register online, but also check whether one's ballot has been counted. Electronic poll books are maintained to ensure accuracy, as I know first-hand, having volunteered to be a poll worker after retiring.

Absentee or early voting can be done either in person at the Registrar's Office, or by mail or drop-box. I voted on September 22 at the Registrar's Office. Signatures are required, but no witnesses this time, for added safety. The local Sheriff's Office helps in maintaining the security of all the polling places, as well as the drop-boxes. Deputies are not usually present, but can respond quickly. There have been no issues in my county.

– Gwyn Williams, Hampton Roads, Virginia



Michael Rowe votes early by mail in Honolulu, Hawaii. The state moved to mail-in voting in 2020.

Remote Learning/Teaching

Teaching in a time pandemic (sounds like a book title) is a challenge for instructors, but learning is even more difficult. The news of schools and universities opening with in-person classes, only to close a week later, tells the story of the times. While masks and social distancing reduce the probability of infection, isolation is the only complete protection. Students are pretty tired of that and, knowing they are immortal, are ready to party.



George Hendrey in July 2020, practicing extreme social distancing!

The City University of New York, CUNY, will have very few in-person classes, and none of those will be regular lectures. Classes such as advanced science labs and musical performance that require hands-on experience, individual instruction or auditions are allowed but only with widely spread participation.

In my department, we have developed labs for introductory classes that are all online. This required a lot of planning and revision of the usual curriculum, but much of the hands-on work is now replaced with extensive use of videos. Research labs, however, can be open with limited occupancy rules.

It is such a different experience, being more-or-less quarantined and no commuting, so now there is plenty of time to think about teaching and ways to make it work better for the students. I spent the summer developing all online, asynchronous teaching and revising the syllabus to make that work well for the students. The style of delivery is quite different. I make a number of videos of about 10 or 15 minutes that students can

study in place of a 75-minute lecture class. For the Earth Systems classes there are many resources available online that I bring in, from TedTalks to NASA data. I also hold synchronous ZOOM meetings as "office hours" Monday morning and Wednesday evening (many of our students have jobs or child-care responsibilities),

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and those are working pretty well for the students who log in. These meetings reach more students than actual in-person office hours, and quite a few students log in but are silent, just listening to the chatter.

I use the pandemic as a model for subjects such as population dynamics. Previously, for one of the introductory classes, we had the students collect data from tombstones in a huge cemetery a couple of blocks from campus, with an emphasis on 1900-1950, capturing the 1918 pandemic. Now, I will use the abundant data available from the current pandemic to illustrate some of the demographic subjects.

So, life goes on, we adapt to the condition of the times, and keep a positive outlook on how to make things better.
– George Hendrey, Port Washington, New York

Climate Change Part 1: Wildfires

Wildfires were events that happened in southern California not in northern California. However, in the four years that we have been living in Millbrae, 15 miles from downtown San Francisco, wildfires and the threat of fires has been the major challenge. The summers have been drier and longer, with the winter rains coming in November rather than October, leading to longer, more intense fire seasons. Last year, some areas saw rolling blackouts to conserve power or power shutoffs during high wind events to ensure that falling power lines do not ignite the dry brush.

Thus far, 2020 has seen the worst fire devastation, in terms of the area burnt and the homes destroyed. A number of fires started north, east and south of SF due to a lightning storm.

Though the closest fire was 30 miles south of us we could smell the smoke and the backyard furniture was covered in ash. The sky was grey not blue. Some of you may have seen pictures of SF with the tangerine-orange sky on September 9, 2020. I took this picture (left) of our backyard



around noon that day. Normally our backyard looks like the second picture. It took about a month before the fires were under control. During this time the air quality was really bad and often we were advised not to go out.

The drier, hotter summers have been attributed to climate change. The experts predict that this warming trend will continue and may even accelerate.

California is trying hard to combat global warming. Fuel-efficiency standards are higher than in the rest of the country. Almost 10 percent of new cars on the road are plug-in hybrids or electrical vehicles. There are battery charging stations at our local library, the grocery store and the downtown public parking lot. Many of our neighbors have solar panels on their roofs. Peninsula Energy Corporation, which generates our electricity, gets 50 percent of the power from renewable sources. In order to maintain our current lifestyles we will have to make intelligent personal choices and policy decisions regarding urban development, water management, energy generation and consumption.

– Vinita and Arup Ghosh, Millbrae, California

Editor's note: Watch for the next issue of BREA News, where you'll find more reports on climate change – from David Dougherty in Oklahoma and Gwyn Williams in Virginia.

President's Message (continued)

would like to report on your experience dealing with Select Quote, send me an email. We will discuss issues at the November BREA meeting.

At the October meeting, we talked about making a second donation to help Long Islanders impacted by the pandemic. We welcome suggestions either at the November meeting or by email to me.

I hope to see you at our Zoom meeting on November 10. Please stay safe and secure over the holidays.

– Arnie Moodenbaugh, moodenba@optonline.net

Membership Renewal

Look up what year your membership expires by going to BREA's website:
<https://www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/>

To renew, fill out the form below.

PLEASE PRINT

Last name: _____

First name: _____ MI: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership type:

☐ annual (\$10)

☐ 5 years (\$40)

☐ Life (\$95)

Date: _____ Check amount: _____

MAKE YOUR CHECK OUT TO BREA

☐ I want to receive BREA News by mail via the U.S. Post Office.

☐ I want to receive BREA News by email only. Do not mail it to me via the U.S. Post Office.

Mail form and check (made out to BREA) to:

Beth Lin, BREA Membership Chair
 81 Westchester Drive
 Rocky Point, NY 11778

– Beth Lin, Membership Chair
hellobylin@yahoo.com

In Memoriam

We deeply regret to inform you of the passing of the following BNL retirees.

Dennis Greenberg, 81, September 27, 2020

Walter Kunnmann, 86, September 12, 2020

Leigh Phillips, 92, May 15, 2020

Sharon Smith, 74, August 20, 2020

More information may be found at BREA's website:
www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea. To post an obituary for a deceased BNL employee or retiree, email information to msrowe.hi@gmail.com or mail it to BREA (see the panel below for BREA's address).

Open Enrollment for Retirees

Open enrollment for retirees and their spouses differs based on if they are eligible for Medicare or not.

Those who are eligible for Medicare would have received a letter from BSA and Taben/Navia on the Medicare Open Enrollment period 10/15/20-12/7/20. If anyone in this group wants to or needs to make a change to their medical coverage, they *must contact SelectQuote Senior* at 1 (866) 479-8317 (then press "1") to work with a licensed agent who will assist you with enrolling in a new plan through the SelectQuote Senior healthcare exchange. The letter contains additional information.

For retirees or spouses who are not eligible for Medicare, a booklet will soon be going into the mail for them. Their enrollment period is 11/3-11/13. If anyone in this group wants to or needs to make a change to their medical coverage, they *must complete and return the form* in the back of the booklet to the Benefits Office, Bldg. 400B. Contact that office at (631) 344-2877, -5126 or -3724 for more information.

– Denise DiMeglio, dimeglio@bnl.gov

Brookhaven Retired Employees Association

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