

# BREA NEWS

www.brea.bnl.gov

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## BREA Meetings

### Important message!

BREA meetings will now be held each month (with the exception of August), *on the second Tuesday at 1 pm*. Meetings are usually held in Berkner Hall. All BREA members are invited to attend and participate.

### Meeting Schedule

- February 9, 2010
- March 9, 2010
- April 6, 2010

## BREA Officers

President:  
Eena-Mai Franz

Vice President:  
Dave Cox

Treasurer:  
Ken Mohring

Secretary:  
Sonja Santos

Membership:  
Ronnie Evans

Interim Newsletter  
Editors:

Dave Cox  
Joyce Tichler

## New Officers Take Over

We are pleased to report that about one-quarter of the BREA membership returned ballots in the recent election of officers, a gratifying number in view of the dearth of candidates. We would like to express our great appreciation to those who took the trouble to participate. Favorable votes were cast for all the candidates on the slate, so in accordance with the procedure followed in previous elections - that a candidate shall be elected only if he or she receives a positive vote on a majority of the ballots returned—the duly elected new officers are:

President: Eena-Mai Franz  
Vice President: Dave Cox

Treasurer: Ken Mohring  
Secretary: Sonja Santos

Elected officers will serve terms of two years starting in January, 2010. In addition, Ronnie Evans has volunteered to assist Sonja Santos in handling membership records and renewals, a crucial part of BREA operations.

We would like to remind local members that our monthly meetings are open to all, so please feel free to drop in any time and make yourself heard! But—please note a change in the scheduled day and time to the second Tuesday of each month at 1 pm.

## From the President By Eena-Mai Franz

I wish a happy and healthy New Year to everyone! First, I would like to thank last year's BREA officers and committees for doing an excellent job. It will be difficult for me to fill Arnie Peskin's shoes as president and that is why I ask for everyone's help. I am lucky to have experienced officers to work with me but we will also need the membership's input and active participation in order to keep BREA a vibrant organization.

As you have probably heard by

now, the DOE contract with Brookhaven Science Associates to run BNL has been renewed. That should be good news for BNL retirees. We have not yet had a chance to meet with the administration to find out if any changes to benefits are in the works.

Remember, an organization can succeed only if there is participation by the members. So, come to our monthly meetings, meet some of your former colleagues, tell us what activities would be of interest to you and help us organize them. If not before, we will see you at the annual luncheon, now set for June 9.

## New Power-of-Attorney Law

By Frank Marotta

A Power-of-Attorney (POA) is a document that enables one person (the Principal) to give another person (the Agent) the authority to sign his or her name. A POA is basic and essential to any level of estate planning. But a POA can also be abused and create havoc for the Principal. A recent change in the New York State Power-of-Attorney law is perhaps the most significant change since its inception and could result in what lawmakers hope will be a “safer” document, reducing abuse while at the same time permitting greater options for an Agent to protect the interests of a Principal who has entrusted his or her entire financial health to the Agent.

Outside of the legal community, there was almost no buzz about the new law that changed the way a Power-of-Attorney is created and used. Intended to begin in the spring of 2009, the effective date instead became September 1, 2009, due to the controversy it created. While anyone can be an Agent, typically spouses give each other POA or parents give POA to their child (or children). If you have already created a POA, it remains valid indefinitely unless you revoke it. But here's the rub. Some POA's may contain language that restricts the amount of money an Agent may give as a gift. Frequently, that restriction is capped at whatever the taxable limit is that year. Today that limit is \$13,000. This all makes sense unless your Agent, with your blessing, is trying to qualify you for Medicaid assistance. To do that, your Agent may need to make much larger gifts.

The new POA contains a section called the Statutory Major Gifts Rider which you could initial and then describe in greater detail, allowing, for example, your Agent to give large gifts to your children in one year, effectively qualifying you for Medicaid. This should be done only with the assistance of a qualified estate planner, and the Agent needs to be someone you trust.

The new POA is designed to hold the Agent accountable by describing the Agent's duties and requiring the Agent's notarized signature on the same document, acknowledging the Agent's full understanding of his or her duties. Several other new restrictions too numerous to discuss here appear in the new PO, but in this digital age, you can look to your favorite search engine for the rest of the details.

*Editors' Note: Frank retired from the Emergency Services Division in 2006 and is now a partner in a law firm in Hauppauge ([www.mkesqs.com](http://www.mkesqs.com)).*

## Florence O'Brien 1930-2009

By Joyce Tichler and Yreana Flack

The Brookhaven Retired Employees Association lost one of its dedicated members on December 7, 2009. Florence O'Brien died that day of a heart attack following surgery earlier in the week. Flo retired from the Laboratory in 1996 following 17 years of service. She was a wonderful person to work with, always helpful and striving for excellence, and her versatility, and understanding of many Laboratory systems and procedures, made her an invaluable colleague. During her retirement she was a greatly valued and appreciated member of BREA, faithfully attending all the monthly board meetings and organizing the annual luncheon, always a highlight of the BREA year. In this capacity, Flo was not only an eager volunteer but also took great pains to ensure that the others on her committee knew “the ropes” so that the luncheons proceeded smoothly. It is because of the efforts of members such as Flo that BREA has been such a success, and we will sorely miss her.

## Annual Luncheon - June 9

We are delighted to report that Alyce Daly and Martine O'Connor have volunteered to serve as co-chairs for the annual BREA luncheon, which will be held at the Bellport Country Club on **Wednesday, June 9, from 12 noon to 4 pm.**

Further details will be announced in the next Newsletter. In the meantime, please make a note in your calendar and be sure not to miss out on a fun event and one of the highlights of the BREA year!

## 2009 at the Farm - Green Roofs are In!

By Ken Mohring

In 2004 I became a student in the Suffolk County NY Master Gardener program and volunteered at the LI Horticultural Research and Extension Center (LIHREC) in Riverhead ([www.hort.cornell.edu/departments/Facilities/lihrec/history.html](http://www.hort.cornell.edu/departments/Facilities/lihrec/history.html)). After the completion of the course, students are expected to donate 120 hours of community service, and I continue to support the display garden program. Currently, anyone interested in gardening is welcome as a volunteer, and members are active throughout the year (yes - even during winter!). During the growing season there are usually between 20 to 25 members working on a given Tuesday morning, but that number dwindles to 10-13 during the colder months. After 5 years of volunteering this has been one of the busiest years to date, although previous years of setting up gardens in what used to be a clay-packed potato farm was certainly no easy task!

What did we accomplish this year? Well, we held our annual public open house, put on a large display at the Bayard Cutting Arboretum Fall Flower Show, doubled the dahlia gardens for a planned fall visit from the national cut flower association that was meeting on Long Island in 2009, and maintained and improved the garden soil and plantings. However, by far our most ambitious project was to complete a 16 square foot "green-roof" equipment and tool storage shed.

Like many projects the shed started small and then just grew! What was to be a shed for a garden cart and some tools was changed to a larger unit that would incorporate a "green" aspect and provide an informative display for both professional growers and public visitors to the LIHREC. Green roofs have been around for centuries, but there has been a resurgence in interest because of their insulation, water holding, pollutant absorbing, and carbon reduction properties. The shed took a year to design, site, build and plant, and we were especially fortunate to have a member, Bill Wolkoff, who as a retired contractor did all the design and planning, and supervised all construction activities. Bill is a local legend in gardening circles for his knowledge of dahlias, photography, computers and construction. Most members learned to operate tools they had never used or even seen before (except on HGTV), and completed construction tasks they never thought they would encounter. The most interesting feature of the conventional part of the project was building the uniquely sloped roof using 16 foot lengths of 2X8 lumber that were twisted to lie flat



Master gardener hard at work in the Cornell dahlia garden

at the rear and front of the structure. This provided an amazingly smooth-sloped roof, on top of which a wet tar base and a rolled roof membrane were applied. 3X3 square -foot interlocking panels to hold the planting medium and the succulent plants were laid above the membrane. The planting medium is a heavy gravel mix that holds down the panels, and does not move within a panel's mesh system. A raised perimeter metal channel keeps the roof sections in place and provides drainage.

The roof plants are mainly different varieties of low growing sedums. In the fall of 2008, these were started in the greenhouse from cuttings. By March 2009, the plants were ready to be planted in the 3X3 roof panels, which were placed in a "hoop house", an outside plastic-covered growing area with no heat. This allowed a two-month growing period before the roof sections were scheduled for installation. An important issue with green roofs is weeds. In the hoop house, weeds from the previous growing season were carefully removed, and a landscape fabric was laid under the roof panels. So far, we are happy to report that there have been very few roof weeds! The entire building process with pictures and text is on the Cornell Gardeners website located at [www.gardencoaches.org](http://www.gardencoaches.org) under the Cornell section. Building a green roof building was fun and rewarding. If you feel like pursuing a green project yourself, a children's play house or pet enclosure are easy structures to build and have just the insulation properties to make the project worthwhile.

*Editors' Note: Ken retired from Staff Services in 2003, and is currently President of the Cornell Volunteer Gardeners. Fortunately, he also manages to find time to serve as Treasurer of BREA!*

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*BNL Retired Employees Association*



## Please Don't Forget to Renew!

This is the time of year to renew your annual membership for 2010 if you haven't already done so. The expiration date is displayed on the top right-hand side of the address label above. If the date is 2009, then please take a minute to complete the membership renewal form on the right and mail to the return address shown above together with your check. This would also be a good time to consider the option of joining for a five-year period or for life, and avoid these annual reminders.

Also, if you have recently moved or changed your e-mail address, please note any changes on the renewal form and mail as above.

Finally, we would appreciate it if you would consider contributing a short article about a noteworthy hobby, trip or adventure, or sending us a letter or comment. We can be contacted at the e-mail or mailing address above.

### BREA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

(Please print)

Membership type: *(check one)*

☐ Annual (\$10) ☐ 5-years (\$40) ☐ Life (\$95)

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip(+4):- \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Dues: *(Please make out check to BREA)*

Check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed