

BREA NEWS

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

Volume 16, Issue 2

March/April 2016

BREA Meetings

BREA meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month (except for August), at 1 p.m. in one of the conference rooms in Bldg. 400 (except where noted).

All BREA members are invited to attend and participate.

Meeting Schedule

March 8, 2016

April 12, 2016

May 10, 2016

BREA Officers

President

Liz Seubert

liz.and.ev@gmail.com

Vice President

Bob Kinsey

bobkin@optonline.net

Secretary

Arnold Moodenbaugh

moodenba@optonline.net

Treasurer

Steve Shapiro

shapiro@bnl.gov

* * *

Newsletter Editors

Mona S. Rowe

msrowe.hi@gmail.com

Anita Cohen

afcohen@optonline.net

Richard Hahn (right), with his wife Sheila, is greeted by well-wishers at the Chemistry Department's 2015 Nobel Prize celebration: (from left) Chair Alex Harris, past Interim BNL Director Peter Bond, and former BNL Director Nick Samios. See article on page 2.



From the President

by Liz Seubert, liz.and.ev@gmail.com

Greetings, everyone! I hope all members who broke their backs shoveling snow are doing well in their physiotherapy sessions. At least those who escaped to warmer parts can be satisfied that they did miss some rough winter weather. Our record heatwaves in December and January could have made them feel that they might as well have stayed home. Members in other states should write to us about their own winter-weather horror stories. You can likely outdo us!

The local groundhogs, however, promised an early spring, which leads to a major BREA event: the retirees' annual luncheon. That's when we meet old friends, renew ties with acquaintances, and eat, drink, and be merry without cooking or washing the dishes. The luncheon will be held at the Bellport Country Club on Wednesday, June 8, so please hold the date. Details coming shortly.

As usual, we have an issue packed with interest. Read about the Chemistry Department's celebration of the 2015 Nobel Prize that highlighted contributions from BREA member Dick Hahn; a feature on BREA member Rhoda Sparrow who turned 100 on January 1; an announcement on proposed fine-tuning of the BREA constitution, which needs your approval; and an article by member Joe Indusi on stolen personal information. In addition, check out BREA activities open to BREA members, and please heed a message from BREA Membership Chair Sheryl Gerstman.

The sad part of our news is the *In Memoriam* list. These retirees are all so much missed by their families and friends. I note in particular Elliot Auerbach, who never wavered in his determination to see that
(continued on page 2)

Saluting Richard Hahn for Neutrino Work



Front left to right, Dick Hahn, Alex Harris; back, retired chemists Louise Hanson, Eena-Mai Franz

BNL Chemistry Department Chair Alex Harris hosted a celebration on December 10, 2015 (see <https://www.bnl.gov/newsroom/news.php?a=26093>), to salute BREA member and chemist Richard Hahn. Hahn, Minfang Yeh, and other solar neutrino researchers in the department supported the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physics, awarded to two neutrino researchers, one from Japan and one from Canada.

“A few weeks ago,” recounted Hahn, “Art McDonald [the Canadian Nobel Laureate, from the Solar Neutrino Observatory, SNO] came to my home, and we had champagne. Art said, ‘You know, we value Brookhaven’s contribution. We didn’t start the experiment to win prizes. We wanted to study the science.’”

Hahn expressed appreciation to his mentors, especially to his former postdoctoral advisor, Gerhart Friedlander, who recruited him back to BNL to head up the solar neutrino group in the late 1980s. He also expressed appreciation to Dave Hendrie, former Director of the Office of Nuclear Physics

at DOE’s Office of Science, for steering him into the SNO collaboration. Finally, he thanked his wife, Sheila, who was supportive over many years as he traveled to work for extended periods at international collaboration sites.

– Mona S. Rowe, msrowe.hi@gmail.com

Theft of Personal Information

In late 2015, I received a letter from the federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM) notifying me that my personal information had been compromised by a malicious cyber attack, which resulted in the theft of background investigation records held by OPM. This issue was raised at the BREA meeting in December 2015, when several other BREA members revealed that they, too, had received the same letter. OPM offered free identify theft protection and monitoring services to everyone affected, and I signed up for them.

Certain positions at BNL require the employee to obtain and maintain an Access Authorization, commonly called a security clearance. While the Lab has only a small percentage of such positions, my guess is that several hundred people have had or currently have clearances. Most of these are so-called Department of Energy “Q” clearances, essentially equivalent to other U.S. government agency Top Secret clearances. The Q clearance allows the holder to access Top Secret classified information needed to carry out his/her job and, where necessary, access certain nuclear materials production and nuclear weapons data.

To obtain a clearance, the employee fills out a multipage form and authorizes the release of personal information. The form asks for personal data about the applicant, and his or her relatives – including the Social Security number of the applicant and the applicant’s spouse, education, military history, persons who know the applicant, employment history, membership in organizations, medical status, etc. The completed form is submitted to OPM for review and for use by OPM investigators who conduct a field investigation for each applicant. In some instances, the FBI conducts the field investigation. Approximately 22 million citizens nationwide have applied for a clearance over the last 10 years or so.

The OPM letter does not specify what type of data have been compromised – information in the application, information gathered through field investigation, or both.

I do not represent OPM in any official capacity. This is simply my attempt to summarize the issue to the BREA membership.

– Joseph P. Indusi, jpindusi@optonline.net

President’s Message (cont’d)

BREA members were kept well-informed on medical and other matters critical to BNL’s retirement community. We could not have weathered the past two years of medical insurance changes without him, and his dedication and intelligent, dry humor will be sorely missed.

Take care, be well, and stay in touch. Don’t forget that June 8 lunch date! – Liz Seubert, liz.and.ev@gmail.com

Happy Birthday to Rhoda, 100 Years Young!

On January 1, 2016, Rhoda Sparrow's four sons gave her a very special party at the Bellport Country Club. The occasion? On New Year's Day, Rhoda Sparrow celebrated her 100th birthday!

Sparrow started working at Brookhaven Lab in 1948, joining her husband Arnold three days a week in the Biology Department. "I think the Lab was a wonderful place to work. It was exciting and new. What could be better?" she said in a recent phone interview.

According to her son Carl, Sparrow abandoned her Ph.D. program at Harvard to follow her new husband to Long Island. Arnold, Rhoda and their colleagues did pioneering research in the field of radiobiology, studying the effects of ionizing radiation on plants.

Today, Rhoda Sparrow's only complaints are her greatly diminished eyesight from macular degeneration and crippling pain from arthritis. She copes, though.

With the help of a strong light and a magnifying glass, she can read. Best of all is the South Country Library, through which she can access the catalogues of public libraries in the Suffolk Cooperative Library System. "I borrow talking books on cassettes," she said. She favors history and mysteries. "I discovered the 'Cat' books six months ago. They are delightful! The writer's name is Braun, and the titles all start with 'The Cat Who . . .'"



Sparrow family



Rhoda Sparrow

As for the arthritis, "Friends come in or call if they can't get out. And telephones are great," said Sparrow. She's also glad to be a member of the Brookhaven Retired Employees Association (BREA). "The BREA newsletter is nice for people like me to keep in touch with the Lab," she said.

What's her secret for a long life? "I have no idea," said Sparrow. "My father died when I was two and my mother died when I was 14. I lived with my grandfather until I went to college. I can't point my finger at anything."

Then she added, "I've had a very good life. Husband, in-laws, children, daughters-in-law, now grandchildren — all wonderful!"

– Mona S. Rowe, msrowe.hi@gmail.com

Remembering Elliott Auerbach

Elliot H. Auerbach, a BNL physicist for almost 40 years and a founding member of BREA in 2003, died on December 23, 2015. He retired from the AGS Department on October 13, 1999.

Elliot's commitment to BREA was first recorded in the minutes of the BREA Executive Committee meeting of January 14, 2004, which noted: "Elliot Auerbach has agreed to be the fact finder on the new Medicare legislation and will probably put something together for the BREA website." For the next 12 years, Elliot continued to guide the BREA Board and BNL retirees through the medical insurance maze.

See full BREA obituary on BREA's website: <https://www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/Obits.asp>

– Anita Cohen, afcohen@optonline.net



Elliott Auerbach, also a board member of the New York Civil Liberties Union, receiving an award from the Suffolk Chapter.

BREA Membership

As the new Membership Chair, I am updating the information in the BREA database. Dues are expected by January 31. To keep the list current, if I don't receive your dues by April, I will assume you no longer wish to be a member. You will no longer receive the BREA newsletter or email notices from BREA. You are welcome to rejoin by sending a check. New retirees who join on leaving the Lab pay no dues through December 31 of their retirement year. Honorary and ex-officio members pay no dues.

The year your membership expires is printed on the mailing label of the newsletter, to the right of your name in the panel below. If the year is 2015 or earlier, you have not paid for 2016, and your membership may be suspended after May 31. If you think you are up to date but the number is 2015 or earlier, please let me know so that I can investigate.

– Sheryl Gerstman, sigronkonkoma@gmail.com

PLEASE PRINT

Last name: _____ First name: _____ MI: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ Zip+4: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership type:

annual (\$10) 5 years (\$40) Life (\$95)

Make check out to BREA

Date: _____ Check amount: _____

Dues cover year(s) _____

Mail form and check to: BREA Membership Chair
46 Richmond Blvd. Unit 3B
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779-3692

NOTE: When you send in your dues, please tear off and mail this entire back page with your check. It's easier to handle!

In Memoriam

We deeply regret to inform you of the passing of the following retirees:

Elliot H. Auerbach, 83, December 23, 2015
Vincent R. O’Leary, 87, December 4, 2015
George E. Schwender, 93, December 8, 2015

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, send name, date of death, any published obituary or a web link, and (optional) a photo to Anita Cohen:

Email: afcohen@optonline.net

Snail mail: Use BREA’s return address in the panel below.

Review Changes To BREA Constitution

Please go to the BREA website (www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/) to review proposed changes to the BREA constitution. The BREA membership will be asked to vote on these changes in the coming months.

Sr. Water Aerobics

Senior Water Aerobics starts on March 2 and registration is now open: <https://www.bnl.gov/bera/recreation/pool.asp>. Free Weight Room memberships and lap swimming for BNL retirees!

Brookhaven Retired Employees Association

BREA c/o BERA
Brookhaven National Laboratory
Bldg. 400
Upton, NY 11973

Phone: (631) 344-2873
E-mail: brea_bnl@aol.com
Web: www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/

