

# BREA NEWS

[www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/](http://www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/)

Volume 17, Issue 1

January/February 2017

## 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

January 10, 2017

February 14, 2017

March 14, 2017

### BREA Officers

#### President

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[liz.and.ev@gmail.com](mailto:liz.and.ev@gmail.com)

#### Vice President

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#### Secretary

Arnold Moodenbaugh

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\* \* \*

#### Newsletter Editors

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## From the President

by Liz Seubert,  
[liz.and.ev@gmail.com](mailto:liz.and.ev@gmail.com)

Happy New Year, everyone. Good luck with good resolutions!

You may be sunbathing somewhere or soon going south — enjoy gloating over us, the L.I. stalwarts who shovel snow and take baby aspirin against heat-bill shock. All of us, though, can celebrate 2017 twice: it's BREA's 20th anniversary and the Lab's 70th year of scientific discovery.

Among BREA highlights of 2016: We gave retirees important health news, kept abreast of BNL science, and reported on BREA volunteers. Member Rhoda Sparrow achieved her 100th birthday! BREA helped fund conferences held by BNL's Association of Students and Postdocs and also Summer Sundays, including giving visitors a fun science quiz with prizes.

Arnie Peskin led an update of the BREA Constitution, and, with a committee, recounted BREA's history for this issue. We thanked Arnie for many years as BREA representative to the Community Advisory Council (CAC) and Sheryl Gerstman for valuable work as membership chair. Eena-Mae Franz, BREA's CAC alternate, became CAC representative, with Mark Israel as alternate. Beth Lin is now membership chair. To save printing costs, if you read BREA News online or by emailed pdf link, contact Beth at [hellobylin@yahoo.com](mailto:hellobylin@yahoo.com) to stop your paper copy.

(continued on page 4)

### New BERA Group for Retired Employees

On August 14, the BNL Retired Employees Association (BERA) sent out a news release announcing its formation. This new BERA group represents retirees' interests in developing BNL and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) policy and encourages retiree involvement in local community relations.

The new organization was formed primarily, to protect BNL's 1,800 retirees' benefits during the contractor selection and management-contract negotiation process. But, according to BERA founder Graham Campbell, who retired from the Computing & Communications Division in September 1995, it will also serve many other purposes.



Graham Campbell

*Brookhaven Bulletin,  
Aug. 22, 1997 (cont'd p. 2)*

## The Brookhaven Retired Employees Association:

By Arnie Peskin, [arniepeskin@optonline.net](mailto:arniepeskin@optonline.net), for the BREA History Committee,  
also including: Anita Cohen, Dave Cox and Joyce Tichler

The year 1997 capped a turbulent time for Brookhaven National Laboratory. During that period, the Lab found itself embroiled in a bitter dispute with its neighbors regarding radiological and chemical pollutants in the groundwater. Community activists, many the same who mobilized a successful fight against a nuclear power station in Shoreham, took on this issue as well. The result was a serious strain between BNL and the greater Long Island community, a public relations nightmare, and, eventually, government intervention. In short order, the Lab's management and operations (M&O) contractor, Associated Universities, Inc., was replaced, as was BNL's management team.

As this was going on, Lab employees were very concerned that the new management would retain as much as possible of the good that the previous administration had done in terms of science programs and policies, and, not incidentally, employee and retiree benefits. Department of Energy staff thus organized an open meeting to discuss these concerns. A recent retiree named Graham Campbell, among others, realized that there would be no one who could officially represent the concerns of BNL retirees, and he resolved to try to do something about it.

And so BREA was born, chiefly to deal with this problem, and its formation was announced in a news release on August 14, 1997. Graham Campbell became BREA's first president. Over the next three years, he established regular meetings, a set of bylaws, a web page and a newsletter. BREA successfully petitioned to become an organization within the Brookhaven Employees' Recreation Association, and space was set aside for monthly meetings (in the old H Building, since demolished), along with an office and an old IBM PC to store records. However, following Graham's resignation as president in 1999, BREA entered a period of inactivity before it was successfully revived in 2003, with Joyce Tichler as the new president.



Several movers-and-shakers behind BREA's first annual luncheon in 2001 – (from left) Betty Pergan, Alyce Daly, Barney McAlary, Sonia Santos, Graham Campbell and Marge Stoeckel – pictured against the background of another photo showing many of the 230 retirees who attended the event.

– *The Bulletin*, July 20, 2001

### **BREA Begins, 1997** (continued from page 1)

Additional goals include: building closer ties between BNL and the surrounding communities, encouraging activities to bring retired employees together, offering retirees a newsletter dedicated to their issues, and encouraging retirees to support local community activities and charities.

Campbell sent out a letter on June 1 of this year to ask if retirees were interested in forming an organization, and he received a strong response — almost 400 positive replies.

On June 26, an organizational meeting for retirees was held at BNL, featuring a discussion with DOE representatives from the Source Evaluation Board, which will rate the prospective offerers' proposals to operate BNL.

As a result of the strong turnout at this meeting — some 200 attendees — and the discussions with DOE, Campbell said, the new association succeeded in having the language of the Request for Proposals recently issued by DOE modified from the original: The result is much more protective of the retirees' medical benefits.

BREA has initiated several noteworthy, continuing activities. In 1998, the Lab, along with the new M&O contractor, Brookhaven Science Associates, organized the Community Advisory Council to dialog with the community on the environmental concerns. Along with civic associations, environmental health organizations, and similarly concerned parties, BREA was given a seat at that table, which we retain to this day. It was felt (and it turned out, rightly so) that BREA had a unique role in that forum as an "honest broker," a group that was not composed of current Lab employees yet had an excellent understanding of Lab activities.

The second continuing activity involved social interaction. With a membership of so many people with similar

## Our Story – Providing a Voice for Retirees Since 1997

backgrounds and interests, BREA saw opportunities for organizing recreational events. So were born such traditions as annual luncheons and occasional field trips.

A third kind of activity soon also became evident: BREA could help with Lab-retiree communications (see sidebar below). This proved its worth in 2014 when BSA made a significant change to the medical benefits, and BREA and BNL management worked together to help retirees understand and cope with the new system. Another case in point is notification of the ongoing opportunity for those who qualify for medical screening and compensation from the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program, administered by the Department of Labor.

BREA members also give back to BNL by supporting the Lab's Summer Sundays tour program and serving as unofficial ambassadors to local communities.

To date, Graham Campbell has been succeeded as president by seven individuals: Joyce Tichler, Myron Strongin, Arnie Peskin, Eena-Mai Franz, Dave Cox, Ken Mohring, and, now, Liz Seubert. The original bylaws were revised in 2008 and 2016. Membership has grown from a handful at its inception to over 450 today.

Some years ago, BREA reached out to other DOE laboratories to find out which, if any, also had retiree organizations, with the thought of exchanging ideas and cooperating with each other. It turned out that several had well-established groups, and an informal network has since been set up, over which information about topics such as retiree benefits is exchanged.

As BREA approaches its 20th anniversary, we can take satisfaction knowing that the organization is thriving and continuing to provide a needed service to its members and to BNL. It is also clear that there are likely to be challenges ahead; we look forward to them with resolve.



*In August 2015, BREA sponsored a tour of Plum Island Animal Disease Center, a fascinating scientific facility and a beautiful location, which retirees enjoyed at this overlook.*

## BREA News: A Resource for Retirees

In addition to organizing the Brookhaven Retired Employees Association, Graham Campbell wrote the first issue of BREA News (left), eight pages published on July 15, 1997. He continued as editor until mid-2000, when he left "to take a prolonged cruise in his sailboat." During his travels, BREA News languished and wasn't published again until September 2004. Returning in 2005, Graham again became editor, until his untimely death in June 2009. Dave Cox and Joyce Tichler filled his big shoes as interim editors until August 2010. That's when Mona Rowe, still years from her 2014 retirement, became editor and created the newsletter's current design, while keeping the hot air balloon graphic, symbolizing the freedom of retirement, that Graham had introduced in 2004. I joined the staff in 2013 and have been proud to be associated with BREA

News, which, since its inception, has proved to be an important communication tool to retirees. Its significance increased with the Lab's decision to discontinue publishing The Bulletin at the end of 2012. In 2013, BREA News expanded from four to six issues a year, then took responsibility for publishing In Memoriam notices in the newsletter and longer obituaries on the BREA website, <https://www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/bera/default.asp>. With the medical benefits change for retirees in 2014, the newsletter provided a critical and trusted source of up-to-date information.

– Anita Cohen, afcohen@optonline.net

## Renew BREA Membership

Do you need to renew your BREA membership? Look to the right of your name in the panel below. If 2016 or earlier is on the mailing label, it's time to renew.

Membership expires on December 31 of every year no matter when you paid your dues (which are requested by January 31 of the following year). To stay on BREA's mailing list, complete the form below and mail it to me along with your payment. Include your email address so BREA can send you timely information.

If you have questions or if your contact information has changed, send me an email at [hellobylin@yahoo.com](mailto:hellobylin@yahoo.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:

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

– Beth Lin, Membership Chair,  
[hellobylin@yahoo.com](mailto:hellobylin@yahoo.com)

## In Memoriam

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

Peter Colombo, 92, November 11, 2016  
Regina David, 85, September 7, 2017  
Garman Harbottle, 93, November 4, 2016  
Norma Podlaski, 91, November 13, 2016  
Jack E. Phillips Sr., 94, October 14, 2016  
David Rahm, 89, March 20, 2016

More information may be found at BREA's website:  
[www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea](http://www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea)

To post an obituary for a deceased BNL employee or retiree, send information by email to [afcohen@optonline.net](mailto:afcohen@optonline.net) or by snail-mail to BREA's address in the panel below.

### *President's Message (continued)*

Other sincere thanks go to Lab Support Staff Services' Christine Carter, Joanne Delles, Ruth Comas, and Cris Caccavale, as well as many others for all their help.

Another top highlight was our June luncheon, organized by Lillian Kouchinsky for 100-plus attendees, with former Laboratory Director Nicolas Samios as speaker. As a spin-off, some are meeting for lunch on the first Tuesday of the month. Next date: February 7. To attend, contact Jackie Mooney, [jackiemooney124@gmail.com](mailto:jackiemooney124@gmail.com), or (631)928-3205.

On Tuesday, January 10, at noon in Berkner Room B, BREA's Les Fishbone will describe his trek up Kilimanjaro, highest mountain in Africa. BREA's monthly meeting will follow in the same room.

Till January 10, then. Take care and keep in touch!

– Liz Seubert, [liz.and.ev@gmail.com](mailto:liz.and.ev@gmail.com)

### *Brookhaven Retired Employees Association*

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