

# BREA NEWS

<https://bera.bnl.gov/brea/>

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November/December 2024

## BREA Meetings

BREA meets on the second Tuesday of every month (except for August), at 1 p.m. in the Eastern Time Zone. All BREA members are invited.

BREA meetings are held via Zoom. Some meetings will be hybrid so that retirees living on Long Island can attend in person. Contact any officer for help to join a meeting.

### Meeting Schedule

November 12, 2024

December 10, 2024

January 14, 2025

### BREA Officers

#### President

Arnold Moodenbaugh  
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#### Vice President

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#### Secretary

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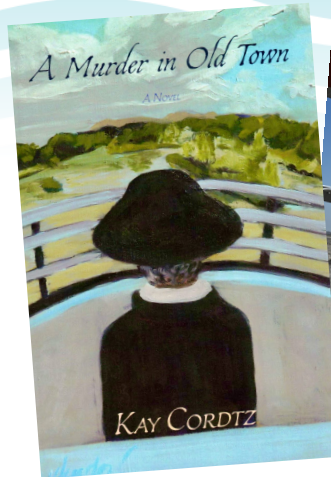
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\* \* \*

#### Newsletter Editor

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*A book and an airplane? Turn the page to learn about their stories.*

## From the President

by Arnie Moodenbaugh, [moodenba@optonline.net](mailto:moodenba@optonline.net)

I hope that retirees living in the Southeast have been able to avoid the worst of the recent extreme weather. A day before Hurricane Milton made landfall in Florida, two BREA members joined our October 9 Zoom meeting from Florida. We've heard that both came through OK.

The feature in this newsletter takes us to the Southwest, where BREA member Kay Cordtz relocated after her retirement. Her new novel, "A Murder in Old Town," incorporates people and events in Old Town Albuquerque.

Medicare open enrollment continues through December 7. That's the deadline to adjust your coverage for the year beginning January 1, 2025. Big changes are coming in Part D prescription plans. They are prompted by a new \$2,000 spending cap, which eliminates the doughnut hole in coverage. In New York, monthly premiums for prescription plans will rise about \$30 or more, with changes likely in deductibles, copays, pharmacy networks, and the drugs on specific tiers. If you have a MyMedicare online account, you can compare plan costs using your current drug list. For Part D plans, you do not need to go through SelectQuote (SQ) to select a different one. Some retirees have gotten poor advice from SQ in choosing Part D coverage, possibly because agents don't want to spend the extra time doing so.

*Note:* If you are age 65+, you should almost certainly retain a Part D plan. If you leave the plan without obtaining "creditable coverage"

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# Meet Kay Cordtz, Author

From her usual perch on the bridge, Fortuna, the main character in *A Murder in Old Town*, spots a boy splashing in the muddy Rio Grande. She sees his terrified face as he turns to look behind, then makes it up the far side. Soon, she hears shouting, honking and sirens.

In just the first paragraph of the book, you're hooked!

BREA member Kay Cordtz wrote *A Murder in Old Town*, published earlier this year (available on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Murder-Old-Town-Kay-Cordtz/dp/163293678X>). Her story unfolds in and around Old Town Albuquerque, where she was living, and was inspired by actual events there. Read the Q & As below for insights into the author's world.  
– Mona S. Rowe, [msrowe.hi@gmail.com](mailto:msrowe.hi@gmail.com)

**Q.** *A science writer and editor, you retired from Brookhaven Lab in 2017. You served in the same capacity at Los Alamos National Laboratory, where you also did community outreach. And you've written for various newspapers and magazines. What made you turn to fiction?*

**A.** During the COVID lockdown, I was isolated from family and friends. I also had a broken leg so I couldn't leave my apartment for weeks. There were things happening in my neighborhood that I didn't understand, so I started writing a story to explain it all. Over the weeks, it just grew into a book.

**Q.** *Each chapter in your book is written from the perspective of a specific character. What's that like, to organize a book by POV – point of view – chapters?*

**A.** Initially, I expected to write short stories about a few of the characters based on people I had seen around in Old Town before COVID. But I kept circling back to a murder at the diner. That's when the structure took shape. They were all connected to that crime.



Kay Cordtz with her granddaughter Sofia



Cordtz with grandson Martin

**Q.** *Some of the dialogue between certain characters is in Spanish. Do you speak Spanish or did you have to work out those parts with a Spanish dictionary?*

**A.** I don't speak Spanish well, but after living in New Mexico most of my life I do understand it. Also, I was married to a Hispanic man whose family spoke Spanish at home, so I had to learn enough to participate.

**Q.** *Are any of your characters based on real people?*

**A.** Fortuna was based physically on a woman I used to see on the bridge day after day, but I don't know her real story. Sofia and I walked out to the bench and tried to chat her up but she wasn't particularly forthcoming. So everything about her except appearance I made up. Rod is loosely based on a cad I knew in Santa Fe many years

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ago. The rest are figments of my imagination.

**Q.** *On Long Island, you lived in downtown Port Jefferson. At the time you wrote the book, you lived in Old Town Albuquerque. What is special about living in downtown?*

**A.** As someone who has recently moved to the suburbs, I really appreciate the energy downtown. Old Town Albuquerque pretty much shuts down at night when the tourists go back to their hotels, but during the day there's a lot going on, which I could observe from my balcony when I couldn't go out. Port Jefferson was similar except there was plenty going on at night also. I think it's easy to live alone in the city. It's harder in the sleepy suburbs.

**Q.** *Over the years, romance has been the most popular and profitable book genre. Other genres include fantasy, science fiction and mystery. Why did you choose murder/crime for your first work of fiction? What's next?*

**A.** I think I needed a foundation for a story, rather than inventing it from out of the air. After the murder happened right down the street, I kept wondering about it. They didn't catch the murderer for more than a year after it happened so there was a mystery around it. I had also been wondering about the woman on the bridge. Making up a story that drew a connection between the two began as an idle exercise to amuse myself. But I found myself wanting to work on it every day and it eventually it turned into a book.

Since I no longer have huge blocks of time for writing, I doubt there will be another novel but I'm always noodling around with short stories. And I still write reviews of my friends' Blues CDs.

## Andrew Feldman Honored For His Role in 9-11

*BREA Vice President Andrew Feldman was honored in September at the National Museum of the United States Air Force for his role in the aftermath of 9-11. Here's his account:*

On the morning of 9-11, 2001, I was in a classified meeting at my new job at Telephonics, on the grounds of Republic Airport, Rt. 110. Just before 9 a.m., my security director interrupted, telling us to watch the TV. I will never forget Bryant Gumbel on the Today show reporting that a light aircraft had crashed into the World Trade Center.

Most of us in that meeting were aviators and, looking at the footage, we exclaimed, "THAT WAS NOT A LIGHT AIRCRAFT!" Then our pagers and cellular devices were all blasted with alerts. I received orders from my Air Force regional commander to "go home, get into uniform and be prepared to fly."

For the balance of the day, I acted as the liaison communicator between our CAP National Operating Center and FEMA Region 1 in Maynard, Mass.

Wednesday morning, 9-12, I got notification to fly. I put on my flight suit, grabbed my flight bag and 35 mm camera, then headed to MacArthur Airport, arriving roughly at 10 a.m., followed shortly by my crew and mission support personnel.



*The flight crew of Cessna Skyhawk N9344L on 9/12/2001: from left, Lt. Colonel Andrew Feldman, Capt. Jacques Heinrich and Capt. Warren Ratis,*



*Photo taken on 9-12/2001*

I'm in the Air Force Reserves, assigned to the Civil Air Patrol. This was a CAP mission to do a photo reconnaissance. It was the first domestic non-peacetime mission flown in the U.S. since December 7, 1941. Our mission was requested by Governor George Pataki and approved by President George Bush.

Flying in from the south shore of Long Island, we always used the Twin Towers as a visual reference. This time, all we had in the west were two plumes of smoke. The familiar Twin Towers were GONE! Cabin comments during the flight ranged from OH MY GOD! to just dead silence. It was surreal.

– Andrew Feldman

## Renew BREA Membership

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 [bettyelder81@gmail.com](mailto:bettyelder81@gmail.com).

PLEASE PRINT

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership type:  
 annual (\$10)     5 years (\$40)    Life  (\$95)

Dues cover year(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check amount: \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE 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 to:

Betty Elder, Membership Chair  
 215 River Drive  
 Moriches, NY 11955

– Betty Elder, Membership Chair  
[bettyelder81@gmail.com](mailto:bettyelder81@gmail.com)

## President’s Message (cont’d from p. 1)

(a plan evaluated by Medicare to have benefits similar to Part D) and then later reenroll in Part D, you will be charged a lifetime penalty on the premiums.

*Another reminder:* If you change Part B Medigap (supplement), Part C Advantage, or switch between those healthcare plans, you MUST go through SQ in order to maintain the BNL retiree benefit of \$180/month. You can review available options on the Medicare website or by consulting the Medicare & You booklet. But DO NOT enroll using contact information provided online or in the booklet. To change plans, you must use a SQ agent. Call the special number for BNL retirees: (866)479-8317.

*A heads up:* Unlike the rule for Medicare Part D, which allows freely switching plans during the annual open enrollment, an individual’s Part B Medigap premium might increase above the base price for changing plans during open enrollment. New York and a few other states protect residents from those increases. The state where you reside may not.

For example, if you opt for a Part C Advantage plan, then after a year go back to Part B Medigap, you may encounter increases beyond the posted prices based on health evaluations or advanced age. (Medicare in some cases does offer an escape hatch if you decide in a short time after getting an Advantage plan that it isn't really for you.)

If you have Medicare questions or comments, we will be discussing Medicare at our next BREA meeting, on Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 1 p.m. EST (change to standard time), via Zoom. Open enrollment will end on December 7, 2024. So start to review your options now while you have time. We hope to see you at the meeting.

– Arnie Moodenbaugh, [moodenba@optonline.net](mailto:moodenba@optonline.net)

## Brookhaven Retired Employees Association

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