

BREA Minutes

Meeting Date and Place: Tuesday, December 10, 2013; Bldg. 400, Rooms RSB 1 & 2

Attendees: Carmen Benkovitz (by phone), Victor Cassella (by phone), Anita Cohen, Dave Cox, Maurice Dubois, Eena-Mai Franz, Louise Hanson, Robert Kinsey, Ken Mohring, George Oldham, Mona Rowe, Edward Schwaner, Liz Seubert, Steve Shapiro, Richard Skelton, and Alan Smith.

Invitee: Joseph Falco, Manager of BNL's Occupational Medical Clinic.

Dave Cox opened the meeting at 1:05 pm. He announced the recent death of Myron Strongin, a former President of BREA, and asked for a moment of silence.

The minutes of the November 12, 2013 meeting were accepted as presented.

Steve Shapiro gave the end-of-the-year Treasurer's Report. The expenditures this year were a subsidy for the June luncheon and the printing and mailing costs of the two additional Newsletters. Due to the number of recent membership renewals, in 2013, BREA took in more money than was spent.

Business:

Membership: Carmen Benkovitz said that there has been a substantial increase in membership renewals in 2013 relative to 2012. More than 300 people are now on the data base. (Mona Rowe mails the Newsletter to 352 people). She is still working on correcting bad email addresses.

Medical benefits: At the November BREA meeting, Dave Cox appointed a "Special Committee on Medical Benefits". One of BREA's ongoing concerns is that the new BNL M&O (Management and Operations) contract RFP (Request for Proposals) contain wording that protects BNL retirees' medical benefits. Dave reported that the committee met on Thursday, Dec. 5 and drafted a statement to submit to DOE.

On a different topic, George Oldham brought a disturbing letter he had received from CIGNA dated Dec. 4, 2013 concerning droppage of coverage of doctors and hospitals within LI's "East End Alliance" (which includes all the East End hospitals). Apparently, it was mailed only to residents of the East End. Later, it came to light that this letter can be ignored: it was mailed during a contract dispute that has subsequently been resolved.

Death and other notices: Dave Cox and Steve Shapiro will write up a memorial to Myron Strongin for the next Newsletter. This led to a larger question: if and how BREA should report the deaths of retirees especially now that the BNL Bulletin is gone. BNL hasn't updated its on-line obituaries – something that was promised when the Bulletin was shut down – since last spring. It was decided that the Newsletter should list the name, date of death, and BNL workplace of people who have died, as had been done in the Bulletin in the past. Mona Rowe will contact the appropriate people at the Lab to obtain the

information. Should BREA's website post obituaries? Anita Cohen offered to edit them. BREA has also been receiving requests to use its email list to publicize events such as retirement parties and fund-raising benefits.

DOE former worker medical screening and compensation programs:

Special Presentation on the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program (EEOICPA) by Joseph Falco, Manager of BNL's Occupational Medicine Clinic and BNL Point-of-Contact for the EEOICPA Program. The EEOICPA is a Federal program offering compensation (financial and medical benefits) to former and current workers employed at DOE facilities, including BNL, for radiation-related cancers and other occupational illnesses determined to have resulted from "toxic exposures" the workers received while working at these facilities. The speaker described the history of the program, who and what conditions/illnesses it covers, the benefits, the application process, and the number of BNL-related claims and payments to date. He can provide advice to potential applicants, but he cannot help with filling in the forms. The program is administered by the US Dept. of Labor. The program website is <http://www.dol.gov/owcp/energy/>. A copy of the presentation can be obtained by emailing Steve Shapiro.

EEOICPA is not to be confused with the Former Worker Medical Screening Program (FWP), a medical examination and testing program that looks for work-related illnesses. If an illness covered by the EEOICPA is found, then the individual is urged to apply for compensation. Victor Cassella, a BNL Point-of-Contact for the FWP, said that former DOE-site workers are entitled to a free physical every three years. He also offered to help people apply for EEOICPA compensation and not charge the customary 2% fee for doing so.

Election of Officers: Eena-Mai Franz counted the ballots for the new BREA officers. Their two-year terms will start in January 2014. There were 44 mailed paper ballots and 9 email responses. The result was unanimous. The new officers are

President – Ken Mohring

Vice President – Liz Seubert

Treasurer – Steve Shapiro

Secretary – Louise Hanson

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 pm.

January 2014 meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 14, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

February 2014 meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 11, 1pm, Bldg. 400, Rm RSB 2

Minutes submitted by Louise Hanson