

BREA Minutes

Meeting Date and Place: Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2015; Building 400, Rms RSB 1 & 2

Attendees: Arnold Aronson, Elliot Auerbach, Louisa Barone, Robert Barone, Carmen Benkovitz, Violet Bezler, Robert M. Brown, Victor Cassella, Chellis Chasman, Cheryl Conrad, Dave Cox, Kathy Einfeldt, Eena-Mai Franz, Louise Hanson, Robert Kinsey, Lillian Kouchinsky, Al Mallen, Lois Marascia, Robert Marascia, Ken Mohring (by phone), Arnie Moodenbaugh, Jackie Mooney, George Oldham, Arnie Peskin, Lloyd Schairer, Marie Schairer, Liz Seubert, Steve Shapiro, John Skalyo, Julia Skalyo and Elaine Zukowski. Anita Cohen, Sheryl Gerstman, and Mona Rowe attempted to join the meeting via phone, but could not get through. We were supposed to have six open lines.

Liz Seubert opened the meeting at 1:03 pm.

The minutes of the Dec. 9, 2014 meeting were tentatively accepted as presented, pending any emailed corrections. (There were none.)

Steve Shapiro gave the Treasurer's Report. BREA has a considerable amount of money set aside. Ken Mohring had hoped to have a discussion at this meeting as to possible ways to use this money. At the December 2014 meeting he had asked people to send him suggestions. Unfortunately, nobody had. He will set up a committee to look into the matter and make recommendations.

Old Business:

Membership: Carmen Benkovitz is still receiving membership renewals. She gave a number of new checks to Steve Shapiro. She and Sheryl Gerstman still need to meet to transfer BREA files to the new laptop (Carmen couldn't make the Dec. BREA meeting and Sheryl couldn't come today). Steve Shapiro has not yet received the invoice for the computer.

DOE M&O (management and operations) contract solicitation for BNL: BSA has been chosen by DOE to continue to run BNL. Their new five-year contract began on January 5, 2015. There will be some changes in upper management. Peter Bond has retired and his duties have been reassigned, as reported in BNL's Monday Memo. BREA members who wish to receive the Monday Memo by email can do so by following the instructions given on p.4 of the November/December 2014 BREA Newsletter.

Changes to Medical Insurance Benefits: Ken Mohring did not have updated statistics as to how many retirees did not contact SelectQuote Senior by Dec. 31, 2014. Melissa Bittrolff of BNL's Benefits Office has been away.

People present were asked about their experiences (1) signing up for insurance via SelectQuote Senior, (2) using their new medical and drug coverage, and (3) initiating and obtaining refunds from their Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs).

- (1) Experiences with Select Quote: Arnie Peskin has helped a number of people with their sign ups and found that the quality of the agents varied widely.
- (2) Medical insurance and drug coverage: In general, this seems to be going smoothly. For people with drug coverage through Humana/Walmart the recommended way to receiving one's medications is by mail order from Right Source. People have already received prompt shipments. Arnie Moodenbaugh said one can set up an account either on-line or by mailing in a form. Apparently starting on Jan. 1, 2015, New York State requires all prescriptions to be sent in electronically – they cannot be mailed in by the patient.
- (3) Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs): This topic generated a lot of discussion. Steve Shapiro reported that after the Dec. 2014 BREA meeting another meeting did take place between BREA's Medical Benefits Committee and HR's Bob Lincoln and Denise DiMeglio. BREA did not see the mailing HR sent out afterwards before it went out. Many people are still very confused as to how to set up an HRA and what documentation is needed to receive reimbursement. At least one person present has had his request for reimbursement denied. Some people who are now insured through AARP's United HealthCare had to get a letter from AARP stating that the payment was for both spouses. Several people have received reimbursement checks already, *checks*, even though they had requested direct transfer of the funds to a bank account. Again, people are receiving different information from different SelectQuote agents regarding the setting up of these accounts. One person was told that she and her husband had to set up separate accounts (not true). Another person was not "on the list" and therefore not allowed to sign up. Louise Hanson urged people to report problems such as not being "on the list" or SQ agents giving misinformation to HR.

Annual Luncheon: The luncheon will be held at the Bellport Country Club on Wednesday, June 10, 2015, organized by Lillian Kouchinsky. There will be a cash bar. The price of the luncheon will include hors d'oeuvres, a salad, a choice of one of four entrees (beef, chicken, fish or vegetarian), dessert, and tea or coffee. The specific menu items were chosen at this meeting. People liked last year's raffles, so they will be repeated this coming June. Lillian will choose the floral arrangements. She will also inquire about the availability of Lab Director Doon Gibbs to speak at the event. In the past few years, after initially accepting, Doon Gibbs has not been able to attend and has sent someone in his place. A member asked whether BREA could have more input into who actually comes to speak, someone who would address issues of interest to retirees. Suggestions were put forth as to whom BREA might recommend as a replacement if Doon Gibbs cannot attend.

Newsletter: Mona Rowe emailed Ken Mohring who read her report since she could not contact us at the meeting directly by phone. She discussed the upcoming Mar/Apr 2015 Newsletter. She is looking for travel photos. She will need them by Feb. 15. The Lab paid the costs for all six issues of the Newsletter in 2014. George Oldham asked for a paragraph outlining the health and drug benefits available to veterans through the VA in the next Newsletter.

Retiree Mailing List: Mona Rowe is working with HR to send out BREA mailings to *all* retirees, not just BREA members. BREA is to provide the mailing and pay for the postage, and they are to mail it out without divulging the names and addresses of non-members.

New Business:

“Retirees Helping Retirees”: Dave Cox has obtained information on Savannah River’s Resource Center, set up to help their retirees with recent changes that have occurred to their medical coverage. He would like to see BREA set up a similar program. He will present his findings at the next BREA meeting. Steve Shapiro thought a good place to start would be meeting with George Oldham’s group of 60+ people and offering to help them with the Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs), which many are finding very confusing to deal with. Anecdotally, some retirees are privately helping other retirees. At least one person is bringing retirees without computers to the library so they can set up their HRAs.

Tours: Steve Shapiro said that a tour of Plum Island may still be possible. People present expressed a lot of interest, so he said he would try to arrange something for mid-May.

Ken Mohring suggested a visit to the Cornell Extension Service in late summer or September.

Sailing video: People present at the meeting were happy to hear that Eric Forsyth has completed a video of his latest sailing adventure. He has offered to show it at the Lab under BREA auspices, in April.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:17 pm.

February 2015 meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 10, 1 pm, Berkner Hall, Rm. D

March 2015 meeting: Tuesday, Mar. 10, 1 pm, Bldg. 400, Rms RSB 1 & 2

Minutes submitted by Louise Hanson