



BCBSM Retirees Newsletter

*Produced for and by members of the
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Retiree Association*

Volume 21, Issue 2 • Spring/Summer 2012

Music lovers enjoy DSO concert and 'South Pacific'

Are you a classical music fan? Prefer Broadway tunes? Whatever your cup of tea, our 2012 schedule of Association events had something just for you.

To break up those dreary winter months, this year the BCBSM Retiree Association added two musical outings to its schedule of events: A morning coffee concert on Feb. 10 featuring the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at Orchestra Hall in Detroit, and "South Pacific" at Detroit's Fox Theatre on March 3.

The DSO concert began with complimentary coffee and donuts served at the Max M. Fisher Music Center. The concert-goers then proceeded to their balcony seats where they enjoyed a great view of the orchestra and Orchestra Hall's beautiful architecture.

The concert included Sergei Rachmaninoff's "Symphonic Dances, Op 45"; Dmitri Shostakovich's "Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op 99"; and a modern piece composed in 2005 by Cindy McTee called "Einstein's Dream." That last piece stimulated a great deal of discussion among Association members.

Following the concert, some attendees got together for lunch at Traffic Jam & Snug, a popular restaurant not far from Orchestra Hall.

On March 3, 53 retirees and their guests met at the beautiful Fox Theatre in downtown Detroit for a lively and thoroughly entertaining performance

of "South Pacific" along with a buffet lunch on the mezzanine before the show.

Whether or not they'd seen the show before (originally with Mary Martin and Ezio Pinza on stage and Rossano Brazzi and Mitzi Gaynor in the movies), attendees agreed that they could recall hearing many (if not most) of the show's hit tunes like "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair," "There Is Nothing Like a Dame," "Some Enchanted Evening," and "Younger Than Springtime," to name just a few.

With the success of these two musical events, the Retiree Association will look into adding similar outings to next year's schedule.

Richard Dow and his wife Eleanor enjoyed the DSO concert in beautiful Orchestra Hall. ➤



More photos on page 2...

Snowbirds gather in Florida

For the second year in a row, Remington's Steak House in Wesley Chapel, Fla., was the site of the annual Snowbird Luncheon, now in its 26th year.

"Everyone said what an enjoyable time they had and how they look forward to next year's luncheon," said Dee Stilson, who coordinates the annual get-togethers.

"Everything was great and we had a good time playing a trivia game after lunch.

Sue Davidson won first place with the most correct answers."



▲ Front row from left to right: Catherine Pantalone, Joyce Pankner, Conchita Riparip, Nicole Decker, Cindy Warf's guest Richard, Cindy, Sue Loren Davidson and Dave Garner. Back row from left: Tom Swift, Dee Stilson, Raleigh Gresham, Lowell and Liz Wolfe, Liz Gresham and Heather Garner.

According to Dee, there were some new attendees this year. Tom Swift and Raleigh Gresham and his wife Liz attended for the first time, and Dr. Conchita Riparip returned after about a five-year break.

"Several retirees who usually attend weren't able to make it this year but are looking forward to coming again next year," said Dee.

Music lovers...

(continued from page 1)



▲ Attendees enjoyed coffee and donuts in the lobby of the Max M. Fisher Music Center before the DSO concert.



▲ A view of the lobby of the Fox Theatre.



Enjoying a buffet lunch before "South Pacific," from left to right, John and Kathleen Finazzo and Chris Howard.

Bowl-a-Rama nets \$469 for charity

It was a successful day all around. Members, their families and friends who turned out for our second annual Bowl-a-Rama on April 14 had a great time, and the event raised \$469 dollars for charity.

"I was really pleased with the turnout this year. We had more bowlers and volunteers," said Beleta Williams, coordinator of the event and Fundraising chairperson for the Association.

"Many thanks to everyone who participated, gave donations or just came out to cheer everyone else on. We had a good time."

Adding to the fun were lots of prizes, all donated from individuals and local businesses. There were three high scorers:

- Kay Jones scored 228 in the first game and won a night shirt.
- Jack Dougherty scored 223 in the second game and won a barbecue set.
- Pat Cooley scored 236 in the third game and won a bottle of wine with decanter and glasses.

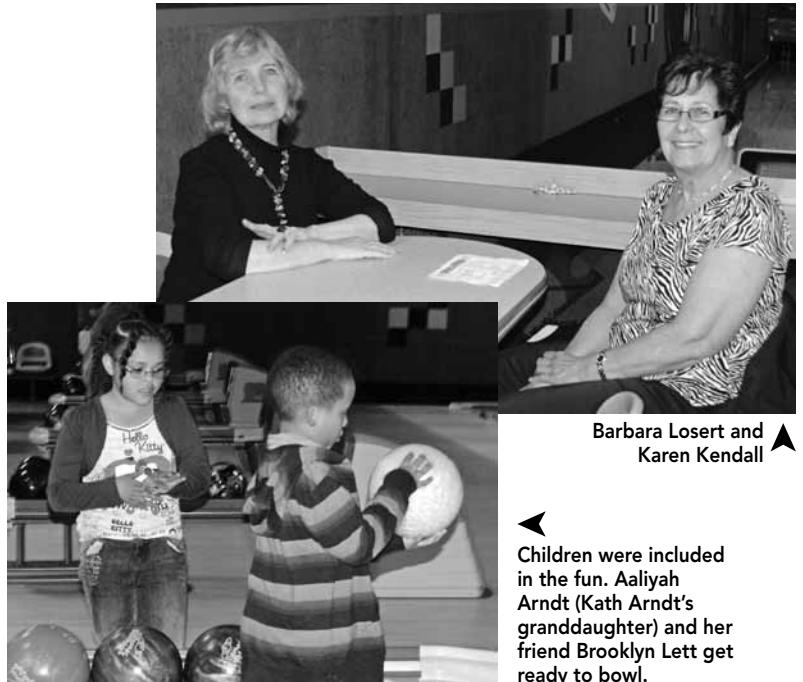
Rosa Jones and Charlotte Smith were the mystery pot winners (\$24 each) and Roberta George and Charlotte Smith won the 50/50 raffle (\$25 each).

The Association would like to thank Country Lanes of Farmington located on Nine Mile Road in Farmington Hills for its support. Again this year they provided the pizza and pop for the bowlers.



Jim Kujawa

Sandra Crossley, a first-time attendee at an Association event, helps one of the young bowlers.



Barbara Losert and Karen Kendall

Children were included in the fun. Aaliyah Arndt (Kath Arndt's granddaughter) and her friend Brooklyn Lett get ready to bowl.



Cynthia Jones and Charlotte Hill were on the "Grandmothers on the Go" team.

Charitable Giving Update

In 2011 the Retiree Association raised \$1,600 for charity. The following organizations received \$200 each:

Salvation Army
Gleaners Food Bank
Forgotten Harvest
Capuchin Soup Kitchen

St. Vincent de Paul
Alzheimer's Association
Detroit Rescue Mission
Project Compassion

Thanks to all Association members who made these donations possible through contributions to our 50/50 raffles, charity auctions and participation in Bowl-a-Rama.

Spotlight on volunteers...

For many retirees, finding purpose in retirement includes sharing our skills and lending a hand in our communities. Retiree Association members are no exception so in this issue we are publishing "snapshots" of the volunteer activities of two recent retirees.

We know there are many more volunteers out there. If you're a volunteer, we'd like to hear from you. Just complete and send in the form below.



Kathie volunteers at the Thurgood Marshall School in Detroit.

Name

Kathie Helms

Home

Detroit, Mich.

Blues data

Retired March 2009 from Membership & Billing after 39 years with the Blues.

Volunteer activity

Kathie is actively involved in making Detroit a better place. She is a member of the Volunteer Reading Corps for the Detroit Public Schools and is vice president of the nonprofit Pilgrim Village Association working to revitalize an area of Detroit that is east of Livernois and west of Woodrow Wilson.

Responsibilities

As a Reading Corps volunteer at the grade school she attended as a girl, Kathie spends 30 minutes a week helping students (a boy in pre-k and a boy in first grade) learn to read and write. Her activities with the Pilgrim Village Association include assisting residents by boarding up vacant homes, cutting the grass in vacant lots and raising money to help them make minor home repairs. The Association has also adopted a park that residents use for family gatherings and even church services, and it holds a free Community Relations Day every August.

Why do you think it's important for retirees to volunteer?

"It's important to volunteer because we have so much knowledge that can be passed on to another generation," said Kathie.

Calling all volunteers — tell us about your volunteer activities

Name _____

City and state where you live _____

Year you retired and the last division where you worked _____

One major or favorite volunteer activity (name and purpose of the organization) _____

Your major duties with this organization _____

A brief statement on why you think it's important to be a volunteer _____

Name

Sharon Perry

Home

Westland, Mich.

Blues data

Retired January 2009 from the IS Division after more than 36 years with the company.

Volunteer activity

Sharon volunteers at the Muscular Dystrophy Association Summer Camp in Lexington, Mich., north of Port Huron. This will be her 17th year volunteering at the camp.



Sharon (standing, second from right) with her campers at the MDA summer camp in Lexington, Mich., where she volunteers each year.

Responsibilities

Sharon is a "house parent" to six kids and their attendants. She says she is like "everybody's mom" for the week. The rest of the year Sharon does clerical work at the MDA office in Canton and volunteers at fund-raising events to help send those kids to camp.

Why my volunteer work is important

"I can't speak for anyone else, but seeing the look on the kids' faces at camp is enough for me," said Sharon.

RenCen tour volunteers go above and beyond

The Blues' Community Responsibility Department gives a hearty thanks to our members who assisted with tours of BCBSM's new Renaissance Center offices. They responded to our call for volunteers through the Retiree Association e-mail network earlier this year.

A tip of the hat goes to Mary Ellen Tyska, Martha Houser, and George Kuljurgis. Mary Ellen and Martha worked on March 24, March 31 and April 14. George helped out on the April tour.

"In addition to their assistance on March 24 and April 14, Mary Ellen and Martha stepped up to lead the March 31 tour when I had a conflict and could not be there to oversee the efforts of our volunteers," said Melanie McCall Brown of the Community Responsibility Department. "On the 31st nearly 350 employees, their family members and friends took the tour.

"I'd like to especially acknowledge Mary Ellen and Martha because they helped out in a big way," she said.

The April 14 tour was the last one planned since only 750 employees were left to move after that date, according to Melanie. The final move from Metro was scheduled for the 13th through 25th of April; about 220 Medicare Advantage employees located in the Omni building in Southfield were scheduled to move to the Detroit Tower over the June 1 weekend.

In a message to employees earlier this year BCBSM President and CEO Daniel J. Loepp said that the move to downtown Detroit is an "investment in our company's and core city's future — and in the future of the Detroit region."



Tom Coles runs for a cause

Retiree Tom Coles, M.D., was featured recently in the *Grosse Pointe News*. His achievement? At age 80, Tom was the only runner in the 2011 Detroit Free Press/Talmer Bank Marathon his age or older to complete the race.

And according to the Dec. 1, 2011 article, he completed the run ahead of 50 younger male runners.

Always health-conscious, Tom began participating in the Free Press Marathon in 1978. He told the *Grosse Pointe News* that at that point his longest training run was six miles.

"I did not intend to finish that marathon. I said if I could get to my street in Grosse Pointe that would be it."

Having run 15 miles in the race that year, Tom was encouraged to step up his training and completed his first marathon in 1979 at age 48. He ran his fastest race when he was 50.

Along the way, Tom became involved in the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), a support, education and advocacy group for families of those suffering from mental illness. His involvement was prompted by a family member who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Tom was president of a local affiliate of NAMI for many years, and has also served on the board of the National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia & Depression (NARSAD), a charity that raises money for research on mental illnesses.

"There's no doubt that keeping my health is helped by having BCN Advantage!"

—Tom Coles.

Tom sported a "Michigan for NARSAD" tee-shirt in the 2011 race. He told the News he has completed 13 marathons for NARSAD and also participated in five 100-mile bike rides for the organization (now called the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation). He doesn't collect pledges but runs the marathons to raise awareness and says donations to research are always welcome.

"I want to make people aware of these organizations so they can attend a support meeting and get the help a support meeting can offer families going through crises," he said in the article.

"Education is important. With less stigma, people will go for earlier treatment, and earlier treatment for any illness helps the outcome."

Tom retired from the Blues in 1998 where he was Associate Medical Director — Liaison Medical Policy. "There's no doubt that keeping my health is helped by having BCN Advantage!" he told us.



Tom Coles at the 8-mile mark in the 2011 Detroit Free Press/Talmer Bank Marathon.

Who's Who in the BCBSM Retiree Association

Officers	
President	Ray Newak
Vice President	John McCrary
Treasurer	Joyce Obenhoff
Secretary	Marie Bjerke
Immediate Past President	Spencer Brown
Committees	
Operations	John McCrary, chairperson; Marie Bjerke, BCBSM liaison and records retention; Saundra Freeman, committee member
Social	Annette Foster, chairperson; Kathy Dolan and Connie Dowe, committee members; Nick Grabowski, golf outing; Dee Stilson, Florida luncheon
Planning	John Flint and Phyllis Hampton, co-chairpersons
Finance	Richard Dow, chairperson
Membership Communications	Kath Arndt, Web master and photographer; Janice Crossland, newsletter editor
Membership Liaison	Beleta Williams, chairperson; Kay Jones, coordinator
Fundraising	Beleta Williams, chairperson
Contact Information	
Association Web site	bcbsmretireeassoc.com
Association e-mail	information@bcbsmretireeassoc.com
BCBSM Retirement Administration	Toll-free: 1-800-922-0699 Local: 313-225-9609 Fax: 1-866-238-3295 E-mail: retirementadministration@bcbsm.com
Change of address, phone number	All changes must be made in writing to Retirement Administration via Fax, e-mail or U.S. Mail at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Retirement Administration, Mail Code 0126, 600 East Lafayette Blvd., Detroit, MI 48226.
BCBSM medical claims inquiries	E-mail: employeeinquiry@BCBSM.com Phone: Medicare Plus Blue customer service, 1-866-684-8216; CAREN IVR, 1-800-858-7915
BCN claims	BCN Ombudsman, 1-888-265-4703; BCN Advantage customer service, 1-866-966-2583
Retiree checks/State Street Bank	1-888-419-8769

Congratulations and Welcome to Our New Retirees

Linda Boni	Janis Ferra	James Kujawa	Wilie (Gail) Perry	Loretta Streeter
Janet Brooks	Michelle Gaggini	Kathryn Laing	Stanley Polkowski	Vickie Taskila
Scott Burgess	Pamela Grauert	Cathleen Longan	Valori Robinson	Joseph Taylor
Virginia Carr	James Harris	Joan Lowe	Debra Ross-Ford	Jane Uzman
Toni Clark	Patricia Hey	Bruce Macpherson	Helen Russell	Susan Valenti
Linda Coley	Gladys Howard	Sreenivasa Murthy	Evelyn Sherley	
Gwendolyn Cook	Carolena Jankins	Linda Norton	Phyllis Smith	
Nathaniel Daniel	Reinhard Klaus	Bernadette Orzech	Norman Soli	
Janet Fenech	Janice Kovacs	JoAnne Pegues	Kim Sorget	

Join us for 2012 Association events

June 26

CLINTON RIVER CRUISE, MT. CLEMENS

Enjoy lunch and a relaxing cruise on the Clinton River.

July 20

DETROIT TIGERS, DETROIT

Join our annual outing to cheer on the Tigers when they take on the Chicago White Sox at Comerica Park. The evening game is followed by fireworks.

August 10

BILL BURKE MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING, HOLLY

The 22nd annual golf outing is set for the Heather Highlands Golf Course.

September 13

HISTORIC PRISON TOUR, JACKSON

This outing includes transportation, lunch and a tour of Michigan's first state prison.

October 18

ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON, STERLING HEIGHTS

Join us for the annual business meeting, lunch and a 30th anniversary celebration at the Best Western Sterling Inn.

November 14

DIA, DETROIT

Enjoy lunch and view the Faberge exhibit at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

December 6

HOLIDAY PARTY, LIVONIA

The holiday party will be an afternoon event this year. Join your friends at the Italian American Club in Livonia. Details to come.

Be sure to check our Web site at bcbsmretireeassoc.com for the most up-to-the-minute information on Association events. Details are posted as soon as they become available.

...May they rest in peace

Edward R. Barszcz

February 4, 2012

The Retiree Association Board notes with sadness the loss of Ed Barszcz, a member of the board for nearly five years. Ed served on the Social Committee and he also lent a hand to our fundraising activities.

"Ed was definitely a team player and shared ways to help make our events run smoothly. He was a wonderful asset to our Association," said Annette Foster, Social Committee chair.

"Despite his many health issues, including being on a portable oxygen device, Ed seldom missed a board meeting or Association event. Ed was an inspiration to me because he did not let his disabilities slow him down, he always had a positive attitude and he had a strong desire to serve. His friends in the Association will miss him," said Ray Newak, Association Board President.

The BCBSM Retirees Newsletter is published three times a year for members of the BCBSM Retiree Association. We'd like to hear from you. If you have a comment on the newsletter or an idea for an article, please contact us at information@bcbsmretireeassoc.com.

Also be sure to check out our Web site at bcbsmretireeassoc.com for information about upcoming events and photos of past events. We're on Facebook, too. You will find the link on our Web site.

E-mail Directory updates: The directory is updated periodically and sent via e-mail to everyone on the list. If you would like to add your e-mail address, make a correction or remove your name from the list, send your request to information@bcbsmretireeassoc.com.



Blue Cross
Blue Shield
of Michigan

A nonprofit corporation and independent licensee
of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

R003787