



BCBSM Retirees Newsletter

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

Volume 20, Issue 1 • January 2011

Business meeting, auction highlight 28th Annual Meeting

The Warren Valley Golf Club in Dearborn Heights was the site of the Association's 28th Annual Business Meeting and Luncheon.

The business portion of the meeting was first on the agenda. Association President Spencer Brown called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests.

Operations Committee chair John McCrary then introduced board officers and committee chairpersons, who each gave a brief overview of the responsibilities and activities of their respective committee. Each chairperson welcomed members to join a committee to help support the Association.

Since there were no nominations from floor for the election of officers, the current slate of officers was nominated and elected to serve a second term. The officers for 2011 are:

- Spencer Brown, president
- Ray Newak, vice president
- Marie Bjerke, secretary
- Joyce Obenhoff, treasurer
- Karen Stecher, immediate past president

Lunch and a charity auction followed the business meeting. Member Communications chair Dick Goetz and Planning Committee member Phyllis Hampton conducted the lively auction.



Going, going ... gone! Phyllis Hampton with just a few of more than 40 items sold at the charity auction.

Annual Meeting... (continued from page 1)

More than 40 items donated by board members – from vases, cookie jars, and teapots to jewelry, dolls and a couple of computer printers – were put up for bid, netting \$249 for charity.

The meeting closed with the 50/50 raffle and centerpiece giveaway. The lucky winners of the 50/50 raffle and their prizes were Carolyn McKinney, \$125; Margaret Ferguson, \$75, and Connie Hamner, \$39.



Bill Hazelrigg and Marie Bjerke



Joyce Obenhoff packages candle holders purchased by Rosemary Nixon in the charity auction.



Patricia Browning inspects auction items.



Mary Jean Speck



Darlene Trendle



Auctioneer Dick Goetz



Carl and Linda Jamison



From left (standing), Elizabeth Murtagh and Don and Lois Carter. Annette Foster is seated at left.

"I want it said of me, by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow." — Abraham Lincoln

Meet retirees Mike and Noel Cartier

We're not sure if this is a record for a married couple at the Blues, but together Mike and Noel Cartier spent 72 years at BCBSM before retiring in 2005.

"It's been a unique experience working at BCBSM as a married couple," said Mike. "You pretty much always knew what the other was talking about regarding work. It's been enjoyable having so many mutual friends and that continues on in the Retiree Association."

Mike and Noel were married in 1981 while at the Blues. Mike joined the company in 1969. Noel was hired in by Terry Rotare right out of high school in 1967.

"Except for a part-time job at Kresge's in high school, my entire working career has been at BCBSM," said Noel. "I began my career as a clerical assistant/secretary in Public Relations and was there for around 10 years."

Next Noel worked as a secretary in various Claims departments. "That's where I met Mike. We were both in Facility Services," she said. Then it was on to Human Resources where she worked her way up to Human Resources Representative. Her duties included prospective employee testing, conducting New Hire Orientations and hiring and processing new employees.

"It was very satisfying to see how excited people were to be hired by BCBSM. They would continuously thank me for hiring them, but I would always tell them – 'I didn't do this – you did it yourself!'"

Mike graduated from the University of Detroit in 1967. He worked at the U.S. Department of Commerce in the old Federal Building in downtown Detroit for two years before joining the Professional Claims department at Blue Cross in 1969. He then managed various other Claims departments, including Drug Claims, Facility Claims, and Dental Claims, as well as the State of Michigan group in Lansing.

In 1990 he became director of Regular Claims Operations in Southfield. "I had responsibility for processing 40 million plus claims a year," he said. "There were always recoveries to do, inventories to manage, national performance



Mike and Noel Cartier

standards to meet and people issues to address and resolve. I enjoyed all the activities, especially the people-related ones," said Mike.

Mike and Noel both grew up in the Detroit area, Mike in the Grand River-West Chicago area of the city and Noel in Ecorse and Lincoln Park.

"And, yes, as a 'Downriverite,' I do eat muskrat and in high school the favorite pastime was cruising the same route as the infamous Woodward Dream Cruise," said Noel.

Now retired, Mike and Noel are as busy as ever, especially with their family close by. They live in Plymouth Township not far from Westland where their son Mike (who works at Blue Cross) and daughter Karen live, along with three grandchildren. They golf, bowl and spend time at a second home in Oscoda. Mike has been a Eucharistic Minister at St. John Neumann, their parish in Canton, for the past 21 years.

"We've been on one major trip to Hawaii and would like to travel to Alaska and Rome sometime in the next three to five years," said Mike. "Between maintaining two homesteads, getting together with our kids and grandkids and our other ongoing activities, we are definitely busy."

Congratulations and Welcome to Our New Retirees

Elaine Barber	Patrice Eller	Sandra Hasbany	Robert Konieczki	Lloyd Porter
Frances Berninger	Susan Fabian	Elizabeth Hassan	Laura Langdon	Marcia Ryan
Wanda Black	Claudette Ferrell	Lenora Hoffman	Janet Lickman	Mary Shilton
Onofrio Bongiorno	Nicholas Fitchena	Deborah Holmes	Madaline Lloyd	Jacqueline Simon
Frederick Bounds	Regina Floyd-Pitts	Martha Houser	Linda Ludtke	Thomas Swift
Kathleen Brant	Dale Fountain	Vivian Howard	Gloria Marks	Deborah Way
Ida Britt	Saundra Freeman	Edythe Hulbert	M. Susan McCollum	Thomas Winkler
Gary Capanda	Natalie Gilbert	Joan Jonckheere	Christine Murphy	Margaret Wyatt
Marian Coppola	Monalise Green	George Kasotakis	Tevis Nelms	Janet Ziemak
Kathleen Dolan	Susan Grier	Lawrence Ketchum	Linda Nelson	
Anne Dunn	Alicia Hasan-Banks	Karen Kimmel	Cheryl Partin	

Holiday party a fun and festive event

The BCBSM Retiree Association gathered at the Fairlane Club in Dearborn on Dec. 8 for its annual holiday party. The Fairlane Club was beautifully decorated for the occasion, providing the perfect setting for the event. More than 220 members and their guests attended, filling the room to capacity. The sit-down luncheon, with a choice of white fish or chicken, received good reviews.

Following lunch, Lynn Koch and Kristen Tait, a percussion duo, provided the entertainment. Lynn and Kristen call themselves "Musica Batteria," Italian for percussion music. Their performance on the xylophone included a "name that tune" segment in which they played a variety of old-time TV theme songs for the audience to identify.

A live auction, Chinese auction and 50/50 raffle, all for charity, closed out the program (see box opposite page).



Dee Lewis



Mary MacFarlane



"Musica Batteria" percussion duo Kristin Tait and Lynn Koch provided entertainment.



Paula Hunt



Tom and Judy Saski



Karen Szumny and Geri Wojczynski sample the hors d'oeuvres.



Diane Dibella



From left, Debra Ramsey, Steve Parker, Betty Parker, Janet Crain and Elaine Schoeder. One person from each table went home with a holiday centerpiece.



First-time attendees at the holiday party. Some were also first-time attendees at the Annual Meeting.

Lots of winners in charity auction and raffle

A heartfelt thank you to all of the party attendees who donated so generously to the charity auction and 50/50 raffle, as well as the volunteers who made it happen. And special thanks to Francine Pegues who spearheaded the Chines and live auctions.

All of the proceeds – a total of \$1,117 – go to charity. Watch an upcoming issue of the newsletter for a report on monies raised for charity in 2010 and the organizations receiving donations.

Live auction

Pam Rechul won the Cinco de Mayo dinner cruise on the Detroit River donated by Infinity and Ovations Yacht Charters.

Paul Austin won a wine-tasting party for 15 donated by PRP Wine International.

Chinese auction

Janice Crossland and Janet Lickman each won a \$100 savings bond donated by the Health One Credit Union.



Silvia Puckett checks out Chinese auction items.

Rod Meyer won a jet black stone earring and bracelet set and Darlene Ziolkowski won a jet black stone necklace. Both were donated by Retiree Association member Kathy Elston.

Christine Murphy was the lucky winner of a spa package donated by Bellis Therapeutic Spa in Farmington.

Audrey Barszcz won a Beijo wallet/shoulder purse donated by Retiree Association member Janice Cantelon.

Margerey Coleman and Kathie Helms each won a one-night stay at the Greektown Casino Hotel donated by the hotel.

50/50 raffle — The 50/50 raffle winners were Stuart Schluckebier (\$157), Linda Guthrie (\$106) and Marie Bjerke (\$62).



Kay Jones (left) and Patricia Fischer



Christine Murphy holds the winning ticket for the spa package.



First-time attendees at the holiday party. Some were also first-time attendees at the Annual Meeting.



Globetrotters profile: The McCrarys visit the city of lights



John McCrary in front of the Arc de Triomphe

On their very first trip abroad together, in May 2010, John and Karen McCrary headed to France, taking in the sights – and lights – of Paris, along with a visit to the Normandy coast, which had both historical and personal meaning for them.

The McCrary's spent most of their eight-day visit in Paris, giving them plenty of time to see many of the city's most famous attractions: Notre Dame, the Louvre, Sacred Heart church in Montmartre, the Eiffel Tower, the Arc De Triomphe and the Champs Elysees.

"We were very impressed with how pleasant the people were. We got by pretty well because many of the French speak English, although I wish I had spent more time practicing my French before going," said John.

John also praised the transportation system in Paris ("the subways are marvelous," he says), as well as the food. "We didn't get into a lot of fancy food, but everything we had was always fresh. I was surprised at how frequently French fries were served with the meals." And, of course, he said, "the baked goods were excellent."

One thing they didn't anticipate were the crowds. "When we planned our trip, we had no idea the dates included Ascension Thursday, which is a holiday for the Europeans, and all of the sights were very crowded," said John.

As a result, they didn't ride to the top of the Eiffel Tower because of long lines, but they did get a panoramic view of Paris from the observation deck of the Montparnasse Tower, the tallest skyscraper in France, and they enjoyed views of the city atop Montmartre where the Basilica of the Sacred Heart is located. That climb was on foot. "Climbing the steps to Sacred Heart was one of the longest walks of my life!" said John.

They also found a boat tour of the Seine River interesting. "We saw the original Renault factory, which is located on an island in the river," said John. That factory was closed in the early 90s.

Outside of Paris, the McCrarys took two side trips via tour bus – one to the Palace of Versailles and the Monet gardens, and another to the Normandy coast.

"Visiting the Normandy coast was a very moving experience," said John. "Karen's uncle, her mother's only brother, was killed just after the D-Day invasion, so we received a private tour of the cemetery and viewed her uncle's grave."

The cemetery is immaculate, John said. "It reminded us of Arlington."

On the all-day tour, John and Karen also visited four of the five beaches where the landings took place and saw the museum and monuments commemorating D-Day.

"Some of the area is being restored, but the hill the Rangers unit stormed remains, and the craters and bunkers are still there," he said.

John, who retired from the Blues in January 2008, says their next trip will be closer to home though they are looking forward to traveling abroad again some time in the future. Possible destinations? England, Spain, Germany, Greece and Italy.



Karen McCrary at the Eiffel Tower

Get involved in your Association

Think you would enjoy helping to plan, coordinate or assist at Retiree Association events? Would you like to enhance our charitable work by supporting the Association's fundraising activities? Think you'd like to get involved with member communications?

If your answer is yes, the board welcomes and encourages your support – whether you would like to help occasionally or make a more substantial time commitment. There are “behind the scenes” tasks you can help with, or you may want to join the board as a member of one of its working committees, says Spencer Brown, board president.

“Our membership has grown rapidly over the past few years and so has attendance at our events,” he said. “We welcome the participation of members who would like to help us to continue to bring exciting opportunities to the membership.

“We are always looking for new ideas and we know our members have valuable skills to offer.”

If you'd like more information about volunteering, please call Spencer Brown at the number listed below.



Who's Who in the BCBSM Retiree Association

Officers	
President	Spencer Brown
Vice President	Ray Newak
Treasurer	Joyce Obenhoff
Secretary	Marie Bjerke
Immediate Past President	Karen Stecher
Committees	
Operations	John McCrary, chairperson; Marie Bjerke, BCBSM liaison and records retention
Social	Annette Foster and Ed Barszcz, co-chairpersons; Kathy Dolan, committee member; Nick Grabowski, golf outing; Dee Stilson, Florida luncheon; Don Clune, Bay Area activities
Planning	John Flint and Ray Newak, co-chairpersons; Phyllis Hampton, committee member
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
Consultant Emeritus	Dick Goetz
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

Mark your calendars for 2011 events

February 27 – BOWL-A-RAMA, FARMINGTON HILLS

A charity fundraiser at the Country Lanes of Farmington. Pizza, pop, and lots of prizes. Join the fun!

March 8 – SNOWBIRD LUNCHEON, WESLEY CHAPEL, FL

The 25th anniversary Snowbird Luncheon is at a new location this year, the Remington Steak House conveniently located right off I-75. For more info, call Dee Stilson at 727-815-3526.

April 6 – MEADOWBROOK TOUR, LUNCH AND PLAY, ROCHESTER

Tour of Meadowbrook Hall, lunch and a performance of “Ding Dong” at the Meadowbrook Theater.

May 19 – SPRING LUNCHEON, GROSSE POINTE

The Grosse Pointe War Memorial on Lake St. Clair is the site of this year’s spring luncheon.

June – FORD ROUGE PLANT TOUR, DEARBORN

Date and time to be announced.

July – DETROIT TIGERS, DETROIT

Join our annual outing to cheer on the Tigers. Date and time to be announced.

August 19 – BILL BURKE MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING, HOLLY

The 21st annual golf outing is set for the Heather Highlands Golf Course.

September Outing

A day trip is being planned. Watch for more details.

October 20 – ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON, CANTON

Join us for the annual business meeting and lunch at Summit on the Park in Canton.

December 7 – HOLIDAY PARTY, MADISON HEIGHTS

The holiday party will be an evening event this year. Join your friends at the Club Venetian in Madison Heights.

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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 the 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 update: The directory is currently being updated and will be sent via e-mail to everyone on the list in the near future. 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.



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