

BCBSM Retirees Newsletter

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

Volume 18, Issue 2 • June 2009



Lunch was served and a good time had by all...

Good food and great entertainment with old and new acquaintances made for a fun-filled afternoon at the Italian-American Club in Livonia. Our annual spring luncheon had the largest turnout ever at 160 happy, smiling retirees and guests. In that count were 21 new retirees! Welcome aboard, one and all.

The festivities began with a social hour. President Karen Stecher welcomed everyone, and Ralph Shefferly led us in prayer, which was followed by a wonderful lunch. The entertainment provided by the Southpaw Isle Steel Band was outstanding. They were so entertaining with a great sound.

Dick Goetz was the in-charge person for the ever-popular raffles. There were awesome season-friendly centerpieces as door prizes that the lucky winners really liked.

Our 50-50 raffle took in \$528 and that, split in half, gave \$264 in prize money to:

**Stuart Schluckebier – \$130 Pam Reichel – \$80
Kath Arndt – \$54**

A very sincere congratulations to all of our winners. Keep a spot open on your 2010 calendar for next year's spring luncheon — we're looking forward to your company.



Washington D.C., Gettysburg trip: 'The tour was great!'

BCBSM retirees who traveled to Washington, D.C. in May had a wonderful time and encourage those who haven't been to our capital recently to make the trip.

"The tour was great!" said Dick Goetz, who was accompanied by his wife Patty. "There is so much there to remind us of our heritage, and a lot of it is new."

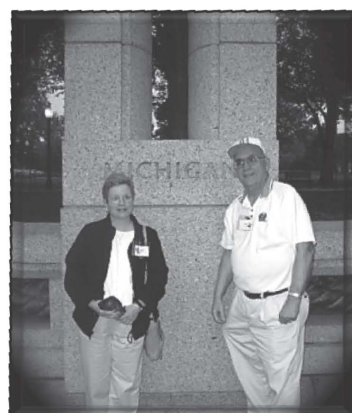
Other participants on the May 1-4 trip were Mary and Leonard Hicks, Rose Zarkowski and Angeline Galwas. Transportation and a tour guide were provided by Bianco Tours.

One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to the one-year-old Newseum, dedicated to helping visitors understand the role the news plays in our lives. "The Newseum was a fascinating place to visit. It highlights various historical and current news and demonstrated the power of the free press as it correlates with freedom throughout the world," said Goetz.

The trip also included visits to the Lincoln, Vietnam, Korean and World War II memorials, as well as the Old Post Office Pavilion, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, the White House, Arlington National Cemetery, the city of Gettysburg and Gettysburg National Military Park.

"Visiting the Gettysburg battlefields was very enlightening. We all kind of take history for granted until you actually see where 51,000 soldiers died," said Goetz.

All in all, a busy and educational four days!



...May they rest in peace

Alfred J. Tousignant
April 9, 2009

Frances (Fran) Cuff-Drake
April 26, 2009

Meet retiree Lela Thomas



Lela Thomas -- who joined BCBSM in 1970 and retired in 1997 -- says that the most interesting of all the positions she held while a BCBSM employee was a stint as Wellness Coordinator in Human Resources. Now, as a busy retiree, Lela's continued interest in wellness has kept her healthy -- and very active.

"I loved working for Blue Cross, but I love retirement even more -- there doesn't seem to be enough time in the day for all the things I love to do," she said.

Her many loves include traveling, dancing (from ball-room dancing to belly dancing), reading, gardening, bowling, golfing and modeling. (She was a runner-up in the Mrs. Black Detroit Beauty Pageant in 1987.)

Since retiring, Lela has run two marathons and walked in the Breast Cancer 3-Day, 60-mile event, raising more than \$5,000. She also participates in the March of Dimes walk, Sister Strut, Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot, Birmingham's Jingle Bell Run, the Susan G. Komen breast cancer walk and the Leukemia Walk. She bowls,

golfes regularly with fellow BCBSM retirees and the Oakland Ladies Golf League, and exercises daily to stay in condition.

Lela also keeps busy as a volunteer. She mentors physically, sexually and mentally abused girls at Vista Maria, a state welfare home, and works with the Oakland Hospice Team to give relief to caregivers whose family members are facing their final days.

Helping others spiritually is important to her, too. "Through my church, which has adopted Unit 6E at Sinai Grace Hospital, we meet with nurses and doctors once a quarter and pray for their success as they go into surgery and perform their daily duties. We leave news articles and refreshments with the nurses' station, and every Thursday at 10 a.m., we say a prayer for them."

Lela grew up in Davenport, Iowa, and moved to Detroit in 1969. She held a variety of positions at BCBSM -- beginning as a clerk in the Planning Department, a customer service representative, secretary, and most of the remainder of her career in Human Resources. She has four sons and two grandchildren and lives with her husband, Esley, in Lathrup Village.

Snowbird luncheon a success

Dee Stilson reports from Florida that the March luncheon was a great success. "We had a much better turnout than last year. And everyone seemed very interested in trying to get others they know of to attend next year," said Stilson, who coordinated the event. It was held at Kally K's Restaurant in Dunedin, Florida.

Including Stilson, 16 in all attended. Bill Smith and his wife Linda drove 99 miles from south Florida to attend, and Ron Kurkowski and his wife, Pat, drove about the same from north Florida. "We really appreciated the effort they took to be here," said Stilson.

Other attendees were Nicole Decker and her husband, Gil, from Key Largo; Linda Christensen and guest Mary Ann Kargmarek; Barbara Modrzejewski and her husband, Cass; Betty Brown; George DeLorey; and Joyce Pankner. Liz and Lowell Wolfe, who were on vacation in the state, also attended again this year.

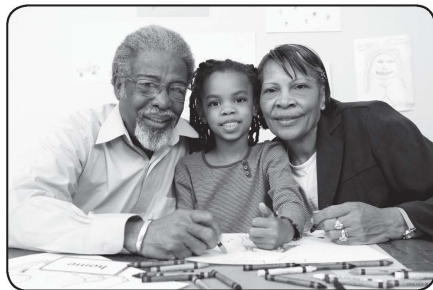
"It appeared that everyone was very comfortable and enjoyed being here. Hopefully, we can continue to increase the Florida Luncheon attendance," said Stilson.

If anyone is interested in attending next year, mark your calendar now. The next luncheon is March 9, 2010.



Volunteer for Big Brothers Big Sisters

BCBSM offers opportunity to make a difference



What is a volunteer? A volunteer is someone who does things to make other people happy, is concerned when others are not, and says the things that have to be said for the good of all.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan invites **you** to be a volunteer by becoming involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit. BCBSM and Big Brothers Big Sisters are expanding their relationship to have a positive impact on a greater number of youth in the metropolitan Detroit area. Through this effort, the Blues would like to involve 200 current and former employees as mentors or volunteers with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

You know how to play board games, talk about sports and go to recess — so what are you waiting for? Consider this invitation to get involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters as a lunch buddy, mentor, sports buddy or activity volunteer and become a positive influence. Youngsters are far less likely to use illegal drugs or skip school and are more confident in their schoolwork when an individual like you decides to get involved. Being a Big Brother or Big Sister is one of the most rewarding things you will ever do.

Some of the mentoring opportunities don't begin until fall 2009, allowing you time to enjoy the summer season. However, it is important to let BCBSM know your decision early so they can start the review process. And if volunteering doesn't suit you at this time, consider showing your support with a charitable donation.

To learn more about becoming a Big Brother Big Sister mentor and the many other volunteer opportunities that are available, please contact Kevin Harrison, Blues Community Liaison, at 313-225-8414 or **volunteer@bcbsm.com**.

To learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit, go to **bbbsdetroit.org**.

Welcome to our new retirees and members

Congratulations! The tomorrow you have been waiting for is finally today. While your contributions will not be forgotten and the respect you have earned will not fade, it is time to embrace the future your years of dedicated service have secured.

Cristina Abreu	John Fletcher	Debra Kippen	Patricia Randall
Judith Ayotte	Nadine Flowers-Newson	Barbara Kurtz	Cynthia Randall
Ronald Beaudoin	Melanie Fraczek	Constance Martin	Kathryn Rees
Yvonne Burke	Stephanie Freeman	John McCrary	Diana Robertson
Robert Campbell	Carol Gonia	Lisa Mulligan	Anthony Schultz
Angela Dawson	Elizabeth Hassen	Anita Murray	Rosalind Simpson
Barbara Dietz	Julie Helton	Sandra Murray	Daisy Snowden
Linda Dove	Barbara Herber	Helen Noble	Siray Taylor
Yvonne Duban	Carolyn Hill	John Nolan III	Susan Wilson
Rochelle Duncan	Kathleen Jacka	Carolyn Northcutt	Robert Wise
Kristine Elkins	James Jenkins	Susan Pearson	Jennifer Wynn
Roy Ellison	Belinda Johnson-Boatwright	Sharon Perry	Rachel Young
Dorothy Femster-Hicks	Jennifer Jordan	Janette Pittman	Gail Zimmerman
Elaine Fitzpatrick	David Kee	Tanja Player	Lawrence Zygnier

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." — Mark Twain

2009 COMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars

July 21, 2009

PICNIC IN THE PARK

City of Grosse Pointe Woods Lakeshore Park, St. Clair Shores

From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., set aside all your work and worries and join the gang for a fun-filled time at the park. Box lunches will be provided.



August 28, 2009

DETROIT TIGERS GAME

Comerica Park, Detroit

Let's all root, root, root for our Detroit Tigers as they take on Tampa Bay. With this year's roster of talent, they should be returning to their winning ways of prior years! After the game, enjoy the spectacular fireworks at this annual and very popular event.

August 14, 2009

BILL BURKE MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING

Heather Highlands Golf Course, Holly

This year will be the 19th Annual Golf Outing sponsored by your Retiree Association. Come and enjoy the great outdoors and the camaraderie of all the participants. A shotgun start is planned again for 9:30 a.m. Did you know that 25 percent of the participants last year were women?



October 22, 2009

ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON

Lakeland Manor, St. Clair Shores

A brief meeting to discuss Retiree Association business, followed by lunch and entertainment — a great time awaits! Join in and give us your thoughts and ideas on our retiree endeavors while enjoying the social activities.

December 10, 2009

THE HOLIDAY PARTY

San Marino Club, Troy

This year's celebration will be an evening affair. (We alternate with luncheons every other year.) Usually the most-attended retiree event on our schedule, our holiday party is the time of year to celebrate — and our members know how to make it happen!



NOTE: Almost all retiree events involve monetary savings for attendees, either through special facility arrangements or Association subsidies. You won't find better cost savings on your own.

Who's Who In Your Association

Executive Board Officers		
President	Karen Stetcher	248-539-3895
Vice President	Spencer Brown	248-426-8722
Treasurer	Joyce Obenhoff	586-754-3984
Secretary	Marie Bjerke	248-347-4915
Immediate Past President	Ralph Shefferly	248-681-3460
Committee Chairpersons		
Social	Annette Foster	313-429-9091
	Edward Barszcz	313-278-3915
Operations	Mary Ellen Tyska	586-575-9279
Finance	OPEN	
Membership Communications	Dick Goetz	248-879-8486
Planning	John Flint	248-478-6018
	Raymond Newak	248-646-3063
Volunteer Activities	OPEN	
Membership Liaison	Beleta Williams	313-538-4959
Committee Members		
Social Activities	OPEN	
Records Retention	Terry Rotare	248-585-1078
Operations Coordinator	John McCrary	248-875-3693
BCBSM Coordinator	Marie Bjerke	248-347-4915
Photographer	Harry Tokatlian	248-417-6976
Newsletter Administrators	Betty Zwolak	313-875-7280
	Janice Crossland	248-553-8693
Florida Luncheon Coordinator	Dee Stilson	727-815-3526
Bay Area Activities	Donald Clune	989-790-5188
Web-Site Coordinator	Shirley Epps	248-875-8725
Golf Outing Coordinator	Nick Grabowski	248-762-3273
Philanthropic Fund Raising Coord.	Beleta Williams	313-538-4959
Outstate Planning Coordinator	OPEN	
Volunteer Opportunities Coord.	OPEN	
Membership Liaison Coordinator	Kay Jones	313-896-6723
Consultant Emeritus	Syd Turner	810-367-6937
- Other Contact Information -		
Retiree Association Web Site:		bcbsmretireeassoc.com
Retiree Association E-Mail:		information@bcbsmretireeassoc.com
BCBSM Retirement Adm./Detroit Office:		313-225-9609
BCBSM Retirement Administration: FAX #:		248-539-3891
Retiree Checks / State Street Bank / Boston:		888-419-8769
BCBSM Ombudsman Office: 877-258-0167		BCN Ombudsman: 888-265-4703
Change of Address or Phone Number:		313-225-6337
Retiree Benefits:		
Detroit Metro: 248-269-9600 Out-State: 800-473-7575 SVS: 800-225-3095 Dental Plan: 800-225-5255		
Ford Motor Partner Recognition: 877-975-2600		

Wear with pride: Retiree Association T-shirts and tote bags now available

The BCBSM Retiree Association is pleased to announce its first fund-raising endeavor, the sale of Retiree Association T-shirts and tote bags. Wear your T-shirt and carry your tote bag to association events like the annual golf outing, picnic, Tigers game — or whenever you want to show you're a proud Blues retiree.

Thanks to members who have already purchased a T-shirt or tote bag. All proceeds go to various charities sponsored by the association.

**Please make all checks or money orders payable to the BCBSM Retiree Association and mail to:
Beleta Williams, 12689 Chatham, Detroit, MI 48223.**

**Orders can be mailed to you or picked up at the next event.
For more information, call Beleta Williams,
Fundraising Coordinator, at 313-538-4959.**



BCBSM Retiree Association T-Shirt & Tote Bag Order Form

ADULT S/M/L/XL.....	\$15
ADULT 2X/3X/4X/5X.....	\$16
TOTE BAG	\$8
SHIRT & BAG	\$20

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Shirt Sizes: S ____ M ____ L ____ XL ____ 2X ____ 3X ____ 4X ____ 5X ____

of Shirts _____ # of Tote Bags _____

Total Enclosed _____

Questions that have haunted me...

Ok, here we are. Spring is almost over, and we're getting ready for those lazy, hazy days of summer. Norma Taylor, executive assistant at Blue Care Network, and soon to become a retiree, offers some things to ponder as you lie back and watch the clouds go by:

Can you cry under water?



Why do you have to 'put your two cents in'... but it's only a 'penny for your thoughts'? Where's that extra penny going to?



Why does a round pizza come in a square box?

What disease did cured ham actually have?

How is it that we put a man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?



Why is it that people say they 'slept like a baby' when babies wake up like every two hours?

Why are you IN a movie, but you're ON TV?



If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a stupid song about him?

Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?



Check out our Web site

For information about upcoming events, photos of past events, volunteer opportunities, contact information and more, be sure to check out the BCBSM Retiree Association Web site at **bcbsmretireeassoc.com**.

Special Notice



BCBSM Retiree Association Membership

There seem to be a few problems that have been encountered in that some retirees are receiving the newsletter and fliers, while others are not. We would like to request that if you were receiving information in the past and no longer are, **OR** if you would like to be counted as a member of the Retiree Association and begin receiving your newsletter and fliers, please help us help you.

You will find an application form at the bottom of this page. Please fill this out completely, **making sure you sign and date it**, then send it to the address listed.

Also, please know that you may contact the Retirement Administration at BCBSM by phone or email for any information. We, the Association, cannot add you to the mailing list files – only BCBSM can do that.

Lastly, please keep in mind that, as a BCBSM retiree, you have access to the Retiree Association's Web site, **bcbsmretireeassoc.com**.

When you get to the end of the newsletter, you will find a page entitled *Who's Who in the Association*. At the end of that listing, are all of the numbers you will need should you need to contact anyone at BCBSM regarding retirement questions.

Membership Application

I am interested in joining the Association. Please enroll me.

Name: *Please print* _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone - *Optional*: _____

Email address - *Optional*: _____

Signature - Required: _____ Date: _____

Please send to: Retiree Administration Department, Mail Code 0126
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
600 E. Lafayette Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48226



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