



BCBSM Retirees Newsletter

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

Volume 18, Issue 3 • October 2009

2009 Bill Burke Memorial Golf Outing continues a great tradition

The weather cooperated for the Bill Burke Memorial Golf Outing on August 14, making it a great day for Blues retirees and their guests. The event took place at the Heather Highlands Golf Club in Holly. It was the 19th annual golf outing sponsored by the BCBSM Retiree Association.

Eighty golfers, forming 20 teams of four, participated. All teams had a 9:30 a.m. "shotgun" start and it was "best ball play." Team no. 9, "Bob's Boomers," won the top outing prize for adjusted score. The members of this team were Bob Schlack, Eric Mullen, Dan Mach and Scott Anderson.

There were lots of other prizes as well so that everyone who attended was a winner. Various skill prizes were awarded, and all attendees came away with at least one gift from the door prize drawings.

Many of this year's attendees participated for the first time, and it's hoped many more new participants join in the fun next year.

"Our goal is to have at least 100 golfers next year," said Annette Foster, co-chair of the Association's Social Committee. "All you new retirees out there, come and join us at next year's golf outing for a day of friends, fun and food. Start thinking about it now!"

The day ended with drinks and a buffet dinner of turkey and barbeque ribs.

Several volunteers helped make the outing a great success. Thanks go to Kay Jones, Annette Foster, Ed Barszcz, Mary Ellen Tyszka, Beleta Williams, Betty Zwolak and Joyce Obenhoff for seeing that everything ran smoothly.

Mark your calendars. The next golf outing is set for August 21, 2010. (photos on page 2)



Teeing up fun for Golf Outing... (continued from page 1)



Golf 2009

Summer Picnic provides fun and relaxation

No one ran barefoot in the park, but that didn't stop those who attended the Retiree Association Picnic in the Park from having a great time. The Grosse Pointe Woods Lake Front Park in St. Clair Shores provided a relaxing setting for the July 21 event.

Mixed in with all of the chatting and laughing, John Flint provided wonderful musical sounds with his Orgelbau Uberlingin hand crank organ – complete with monkey.

The highlight was the fashion show provided by those 10 trusting folks who took part in Beleta Williams' fun version of musical chairs. But instead of grabbing a chair, when the music stopped participants grabbed an article of clothing (women's, of course) from her "bag o' fashion" and put them on, and on, and, in some cases, on again. Never thought the Association's gentlemen could look so good in women's finery!



We root, root, root for the home team

A rainy evening August 28 didn't dampen the spirits of Retiree Association members who were on hand to see the Tigers beat the Tampa Bay Rays in an exciting 6-2 victory. The highlight of the game was Brandon Inge's home run in the first inning to fulfill a promise to a disabled child.

"There's a kid named Noah that I've visited a couple times in the hospital, and he's at home right now, and I spent a couple hours with him today," Inge said in a Detroit Free Press interview. "He asked me the dreaded question — could I hit a home run for him in the game, and I told him I'd do the best I could."

Inge homered to left off Matt Garza in the second inning to give the Tigers a 1-0 lead.

"When that ball went over the fence -- that's just an awesome feeling," he said. "I see a lot of the kids at Mott Children's Hospital, and they always ask for a homer, and it's worked out twice now."

The Comerica Park outing has become an annual event for the Association, so watch for info about next year's game. We'll let you know the date as soon as it's confirmed!



Are you a volunteer? We'd like to know

Calling all volunteers. Do you run or walk for a good cause? Give time to a community organization? Mentor a child who needs the support of a loving adult? If so, the volunteer committee of your Retiree Association Board would like to know about your activities. Or, you may want to nominate a fellow retiree who goes above and beyond for his or her community. We'd like to spotlight all of the great contributions Blues retirees make in their communities in the BCBSM Retirees Newsletter.

In addition, the volunteer committee would like to know if an organization you're affiliated with could use the help of additional volunteers.

If you would like to tell us about your volunteer activities, nominate someone to spotlight in the newsletter or if you would like more information contact board member Ralph Shefferly via e-mail at rsheff1@hotmail.com or by phone at 248-681-3460.

New Members

Congratulations and welcome to new retirees and members (as of August 2009)

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.

Karen Abdilla	Philip Delia Jr.	Donna Henderson	Nicholas Manzella	Gwendolyn Rahman
Laverne Adams	Lisa DeMoss	Judith Hertlein	Gwendolyn Marshall	Marie Rudolph
Sandra Allen	Judith Donnell	Valerie Himick	Paula Martin	Madeline Scarletta
Wilmetta Anderson	Constance Doughty	Rena Hinton	Michelle McCray	Constance Schmidt
Timothy Andrzejewski	Richard Driggs	Howard Hoban Jr.	Carolyn Mckinney	Bernardine Sholts
Mary Balaythy	Susan Duchene	Barbara Hoskins	Frances Menzie	Laura Skwieria
Dolores Baldwin	Janice Dudley	Joan Huck	Rosella Moody	Brian Smith
Christine Balikowski	George Dupuis	Jay Hustead	Jennie Moore	Mary Jean Speck
Jerry Barney	Karen Eberhardt	Bonnie Ingram	Nicholas Morakeas	Pat Spillman
Thomas Bayko	Carney Edmondson-Cole	Katie Jackson	Chester Moskal	Charlotte Stevens-Ankiel
Beverly Bingham	Carol Edwards	Shirley Jackson	Daniel Mroz	Suzanne Sullivan
Gwendolyn Bingham	Jean Ellis	Paul Janiczek	George Murdick	Betty Tate
Herbert Blackshear	Stepen Fedak	John Jennings	Sheila Murphy	Angelle Taylor
Maceo Boozer Jr.	Frederick Fedorowicz	Brenda Johnson	Cynthia Murray	Kathleen Tiedt
Mary Bradley	Joanne Finazzi	Annette Jones	Barbara Murzin	Mary Trombley
Stephen Braxton	Patricia Franklin	Cora Jones	Emma Myles	Richard Trombly
Sharon Broadus	Twiler French	Juanita Jones	Frankie Neblett	Vergie Underwood
Carol Brown	Thomas Giacobassi	John Katharopoulos	Rosemary Nixon	Sharon Vanderwoude
Gloriadine Burke	Deborah Gill	Bernadine Kett	Eddie Norris	Jatinder Vohra
Wanda Canada	Edith Glaspie	Eleanor Kidd	Patricia Norris	Patricia Watson
Cynthia Carollo	Phyllis Gliganich	Vanessa Kimpson	Theresa Opalinski	Joanne Welch
Alethea Carpenter	Lena Gotz	Cynthia Knight	Kathleen Osinski	Michele Whitehead
Rachelle Carrothers	John Grandy	Rose Koich	Earnestine Owens	Belinda Williams
Lori Cartwright	Evia Grant	Keith Kolodsick	Maxine Owens	Sharon Williams
Jerard Colonna	Karen Graves	Thomas Kropik	Gloria Pappalardo	Shirley Williams
Barbara Conner	Linda Guthrie	B. George Kuljurgis	Betty Parker	Marilyn Wozniacki
Donna Copeland	Harold Hails	Claudia Landis	Jacqueline Perkins	Judith Zakrzewski
Elizabeth Cox	Marsha Hairston	Sandra Lasiuta	Shirley Pettibone	
Sandra Cunningham	Linda Hampton	Linda Little	Donald Phillips	
Mamie Cypress	Betty Harris	Billie Lyons-Super	Maria Poore	
Patricia Davidson	Evaree Hays-Allen	Brenda Lyons	Nancy Pugh	
Susan Davidson	Kathie Helms	Ann Macdonald	Joann Raeder	

Meet retiree Harry Tokatlian...

Harry Tokatlian says that his claim to fame as a young man was working as a "rivet passer" on the construction of the S. S. Edmund Fitzgerald, tragically lost on Lake Superior in 1975.

"During my younger years I enjoyed baseball, hunting, fishing and motorcycle riding. At age 24, I surmised that I had worked at over 20 different jobs — one was at Great Lakes Engineering Works where I was a rivet passer. I passed white-hot rivets to the riveter while constructing freighters."

Harry, the youngest of four children, was born in New York City just one week after his Armenian parents arrived in the U.S. When he was four, his father died and an uncle helped his family settle in Detroit.

Harry graduated from Southeastern High School and attended Walsh Institute of Accounting and Wayne State University. He married his wife Agnes in 1961 and together they raised three children.

"I joined Blue Cross in 1964 as a computer programmer and worked at the Hospital Computer Services (HCS). After HCS was sold, I worked in the Medicare department as a systems analyst. I enjoyed working at Blue Cross."

Since retiring in 1988, Harry has enjoyed traveling, playing backgammon and serving on the board of our Retiree Association, among other pursuits.

"Retirement has been good to me," said Harry. He and wife Agnes have spent the last seven winters in Las Vegas. "While Agnes is playing bridge, I enjoy photography and hanging out at the casinos. At home, I enjoy playing backgammon and golf."

Harry's even traveled to Costa Rica and Turkey for backgammon tournaments.

And he's enjoyed attending retiree events over the years and serving on the BCBSM Retiree Association Board for the last seven years.

"Many years ago my wife commented how much more she liked our BCBSM retiree events as compared to her retiree functions. Since then we have been only going to the BCBSM events. It is a pleasure meeting my former co-workers and making new friends," he said.



Who's who in your Association

Executive Board Officers

President	Karen Stecher	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	and Edward Barszcz	313-278-3915
Operations	Mary Ellen Tyszka	586-575-9279		
Finance	Richard Dow	734-762-2035		
Membership Communications	Dick Goetz	248-879-8486		
Planning	John Flint	248-476-0163	and Raymond Newak	248-646-3063
Volunteer Activities	Ralph Shefferly	248-681-3460		
Membership Liaison	Beleta Williams	313-538-4959		

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: 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

Senior Advisory Council keeps lines of communication open



Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's Senior Advisory Council (SAC) helps maintain two-way communication between Michigan's community of older adults and the company. The council was a requirement of Public Act 350 and has been in existence for 15 years.

Spencer Brown, a 1997 Blue Cross retiree and vice president of the BCBSM Retiree Association, is our representative on the council and currently serves as its chairperson.

Given Spencer's first-hand knowledge of SAC activities, we asked him to provide Retiree Association members insight into what the council is all about.

Q. What is the purpose of the Senior Advisory Council and how often does it meet?

A. The council is a means for representatives of organizations involved with seniors to provide feedback to BCBSM on issues concerning older adults. SAC meets bimonthly and typically has guest speakers on topics relevant to senior matters.

The council also highlights the positive contributions made by older adults through its support of the annual Claude Pepper awards. The council puts out the call for nominations for older individuals who are making an impact in their community, reviews the nominations and selects the awardees. This year BCBSM joined with Wayne County to hold the awards ceremony at Wayne County's Senior Citizen's Day at Hines Park.

Q. Who participates in the meetings?

A. Members of the council represent a variety of organizations. They are: The Michigan Office of Services to the Aging; each of the three Area Agencies for the Aging, which serve southeast Michigan; the Wayne County Commission; United Way; Latin Americans for Social and Economic Justice (LASED); YMCA Adult Well Being Services; Wayne County Department of Senior

Citizens; Michigan Peer Review Organization; Wayne State University Institute of Gerontology; UAW Retired Workers Department; Elder Law of Michigan; Great Lakes Community Mental Health; representatives from the Native American and Arabic communities, and the BCBSM Retiree Association.

Teola Hunter, a member of the BCBSM Board of Directors, attends each meeting and reports back to the board on the proceedings.

Q. What kinds of issues does the council discuss?

A. We have a variety of guests who speak on a range of subjects. Representatives from Blue Cross have been bringing us up-to-date on corporate efforts like individual market reform. This is an ongoing issue. We learned at our most recent meeting in September that the Blues continue to press for legislation to reform the individual market. We may also hear informational talks by representatives of the Benefits department on retiree health benefits.

At a meeting earlier this year we heard from the Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired about programs for senior citizens.

Q. What would you say is the biggest concern of the SAC members overall?

A. Probably the number and quality of programs available for older adults. There are many gaps that need to be filled, particularly in the outstate areas where there are simply fewer services available.

Q. What have you found most interesting about being a member of the council?

A. What I have found most interesting is the wide range of people and organizations working on behalf of senior citizens in Michigan.



Blues retirees give back to the community

According to a Scottish proverb, "Charity begins at home but should not end there."

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Retiree Association agrees. Just ask Beleta Williams, a member of the Association's Executive Board and coordinator of fund-raising.

She joined the board after retiring from BCBSM in 2007 following a 20-year career at the company. "When I received my first newsletter after retiring, I noticed this was one of the open positions, so I volunteered.

"The charities the association supports help those in need – whether due to illness, loss of a job or whatever the situation may be. It is a blessing to give and help others, instead of always thinking about yourself," said Beleta.

Beleta explained that the association currently supports five charities: the Salvation Army, Detroit Goodfellows, the Alzheimer's Association, St. Vincent de Paul and

the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. The majority of charity donations come from 50/50 raffles held at retiree events throughout the year. At the August golf outing alone, \$181 was collected for charity.



In addition to the 50/50 raffles, Beleta is spearheading new fund-raising endeavors. One is the sale of BCBSM Retiree Association t-shirts and tote bags. (See form below if you would like to order your t-shirt and/or tote bag!)

Beleta is also coordinating a fund-raising event at the Detroit Repertory Theatre. This event promises to be great fun while raising money for charity, so watch your mail for more information.

Beleta is always interested in hearing from members. If you have a fund-raising suggestion you'd like to share with the board, please contact Beleta at 313-538-4959 or by e-mail at bwill@att.net.

BCBSM Retiree Association T-Shirt & Tote Bag Order Form



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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Shirt sizes: S___ M___ L___ XL___ 2X___ 3X___ 4X___ 5X___

of shirts _____ # of tote bags _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

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.

NOTE: For mail orders, please include an additional \$3 for shipping and handling

For more information, please contact Beleta Williams at 313-538-4959 or by e-mail at bwill@att.net.

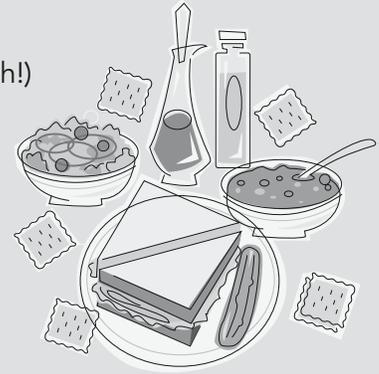
2009 COMING EVENTS

(Planning Committee is working on exciting happenings for 2010 - keep watch!)

Thursday, October 22, 2009 ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON

Lakeland Manor - St. Clair Shores, MI

A brief meeting of Retiree Association business, followed by lunch and entertainment – a great time awaits!



Thursday, December 10, 2009

THE HOLIDAY PARTY

San Marino Club, Troy, MI



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 these cost savings on your own.

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.



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