

BCBSM Retirees Newsletter

*Produced for and by members of the
BCBSM Retiree Association*

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Snowbirds enjoy annual Florida luncheon

While those of us up in Michigan were dealing with rain and chilly March weather, a pleasant sunny day greeted attendees of this year's annual snowbird luncheon. It was held March 12 at a new location, the Sioux City Steakhouse in New Port Richey, Florida.

Event coordinator Dee Stilson did her usual great job selecting a nice venue while keeping costs senior-friendly, and she had a fun game to test everyone's memory. Lowell Wolfe received a goodie bag of Ghirardelli chocolates for winning a game in which

players had to match the names of artists with the songs they made famous many years ago.

Along with returning Retiree Association members, there were six new faces at this year's event: Kath Arndt, Rita Burke, Sheila Dooley, Thomas and Mary Goff, and Lisa Mulligan.

As always, attendees gathered outdoors to release balloons as they wished for world peace and posed for a group photo.



Front row, left to right: Cindy Warf, Rita Burke, Linda Christensen, Marge Modrzejewski, Lisa Mulligan, Mary Goff, Nicole Decker, and Dr. Conchita Riparip.
Back row, left to right: Richard Zamfino, Sheila Dooley, Marvin Dooley, Dee Stilson, Cass Modrzejewski, Thomas Goff, and Liz and Lowell Wolfe.

Monica Mancini performs with the DSO

"Monica Mancini at the Movies," a Detroit Symphony Orchestra Pop Series concert, brought back memories for Retiree Association members who attended the March 24 performance.

The concert featured many well-recognized hits by Henry Mancini, Monica's father, and clips from memorable movies like the *Pink Panther*, *Days of Wine and Roses* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Between songs

Monica shared stories and remembrances of her father, one of the foremost composers of the 20th century.

Monica started her career in 1960 as a member of the Henry Mancini Chorus. She spent many years as a studio singer, worked with artists like Michael Jackson and now performs as a solo artist. Monica and her band, backed up by Detroit Symphony Orchestra musicians, gave a lively performance enjoyed by all.



Lynne and Robert Hanson



Eunice Bickel-Smith and John Smith



Lorraine and Chiet Moskal



Jeannine and Bill Elliott

More great events to choose from in 2013

July 12

DETROIT TIGERS, DETROIT

Join our annual outing to cheer on the Tigers when they take on the Texas Rangers at 7:05 p.m. on Friday, July 12.

August 16

BILL BURKE MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING, HOLLY

The 23rd annual golf outing is set for the Heather Highlands Golf Course.

September 17

GRAND RIVER CRUISE & CAPITOL TOUR, LANSING

This bus trip to Lansing includes a tour of the Capitol building and a cruise and lunch aboard the Michigan Princess riverboat.

September 17

OUTSTATE DINNER, LANSING

Dinner at the Kellogg Center in Lansing is also planned for the 17th. All are invited to attend.

October 17

ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON, RIVERVIEW

Join us for the annual business meeting and luncheon at Arnaldo's. Watch for more details.

November 7

HISTORICAL MUSEUM, DETROIT

Visit the recently renovated Detroit Historical Museum. This outing includes a lecture and lunch at the museum. The museum has many new exhibits, including the Kid Rock Music Lab and "Doorway to Freedom" about the Underground Railroad, as well as old favorites like the Streets of Old Detroit.

December 5

HOLIDAY PARTY, LIVONIA

The holiday party will be an evening event. Join your friends at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Livonia.

Be sure to check our Web site at miretireeassoc.com for the most up-to-date information on Association events. Information about events is posted as soon as details become available.

"Curtains" livens up a Sunday afternoon

David Hyde Pierce (of "Frasier" fame) won a Tony Award for his role in "Curtains" when it debuted on Broadway in 2007.

Though there were no famous stars in the Baldwin Theater production of "Curtains," Retiree Association members enjoyed great acting, dancing and singing by the Stagecrafters, a Royal Oak community theater group. The Feb. 9 production produced lots of laughs, too.

The musical comedy whodunit is a play within a play featuring a large cast of characters rehearsing a musical headed for Broadway called "Robbin' Hood." Two of the cast members are murdered in Act I, and more suffer the same fate in Act II. Who is the murderer? Will the play make it to Broadway? We find out after many plot twists and turns.

Association members also enjoyed seeing the beautifully restored Baldwin Theater, which opened in 1922 in downtown Royal Oak. Originally a venue for vaudeville shows, it later became a movie house. The Stagecrafters saved the building from demolition in 1985 by purchasing the theater from the city.



A view of the balcony shows some of the details of the theater's restoration



George and Chris Kuljurgis (left) with Dolores and Ray Newak



Left to right, Geri Wojczynski, Karen Szummy, Sandra Carr and Ruth Ferguson

A message from the Board

In an effort to reduce the cost of printing and distributing Retiree Association communications, we are encouraging members to opt to receive these communications by e-mail beginning next year. Those who wish to continue to receive event flyers and the newsletter by U.S. mail will be charged a subscription fee.

The enclosed notice has more details about the changes and a form to fill out to let us know which option you are selecting. Please read it over carefully and complete and return the form on the back of the notice. We want to ensure everyone continues to hear from us in the future.

Ray Newak
President
Retiree Association Board

Bowling event raises money for charity

Our third annual Bowl-a-Rama event on April 13 provided Association members the opportunity to contribute to the group's charitable causes while having a great time with fellow retirees and guests.

The event combined an afternoon of bowling with lots of prizes as well as a pizza lunch provided by the Country Lanes of Farmington Hills.

Karen Wilson was the high scorer in the first and third games and Lela Thomas won the second game. Gloria and Kathy Johnson won door prizes, and Al Wilson won the first and second 50/50 raffles. James Kujawa and Rosa Jones were the mystery pot winners.

In all, the event raised \$342 for charity.



Elizabeth Tarver assisted with the event.



Kay Jones with teammates Jim Kujawa (standing left) and Jack Dougherty

Evaree Hays-Allen gets a strike. Karen Stecher (in foreground) and Aletha Risker cheer their teammate.

Regulatory reform legislation update

In a March 18 press release, BCBSM commended Gov. Rick Snyder for signing a bipartisan reform measure that will modernize the regulation of Michigan's health insurance marketplace and allow BCBSM to become a nonprofit mutual insurer.

"Today begins a process that will lead Blue Cross into a new era of service to our customers, our stakeholders and our state," said Daniel J. Loepp, BCBSM president and CEO. "Blue Cross will remain a nonprofit focused on serving our customers and committed to leading Michigan to a healthier future."

BCBSM's nonprofit status, member health care benefits, its physician and hospital networks, and the partnerships it has in place with medical providers to improve health care quality will not change due to its transition to a mutual company, according to the press release.

"Changes required to become a mutual insurance company will be small in scope compared to the changes we have been and will be implementing to conform to the federal health reform law," Loepp said. "Blue Cross will be ready to lead this change, thanks in no small measure to the vision of Gov. Snyder for modernizing our regulatory system here in Michigan."

Note: Go to the bcbsm.com home page and click on "Newsroom" to find a three-minute video of the signing of the regulatory reform bill and commentary about the legislation.

Globetrotters profile: Patricia Anthony cruises the Caribbean

Patricia Anthony received a special birthday present from her husband Van last November — a Caribbean cruise aboard the “Oasis of the Seas.” Patricia is a 2009 retiree who worked for the Blues for 36 years. At her retirement she was a systems analyst for ITS Systems.

Tell us about your Caribbean cruise. Why did you choose this particular trip?

We chose a cruise because of our past wonderful experience with the Royal Caribbean Cruise line and a chance to travel on the “Oasis of the Seas,” one of their two “mega” ships. On our seven-day cruise we stopped in Falmouth, Jamaica; Cozumel, Mexico, and Labadee, Haiti. Each port had it’s own uniqueness, but we were so involved in all the activities the ship had to offer, we didn’t do much sightseeing on the islands.

When describing this ship, I just tell everyone we were on a “floating city.” It has a replica of New York City’s Central Park with various shops and upscale restaurants, a boardwalk like the Atlantic City Boardwalk, ice shows performed in an indoor ice arena, and aquamarine shows held in a large outdoor amphitheatre similar to Detroit’s Chene Park. That’s in addition to fine dining, many different swimming pools, adults-only sun bathing and lounge area and a full-service fitness and spa facility.

What was your most interesting experience on this trip?

In addition to the above, I was simply amazed at how well organized this ship was to have so many people



Patricia Anthony and husband Van

on board. It accommodates 5,400 guests. Boarding the ship and disembarking was just like clockwork. A big highlight for me was having my photograph taken with the guest services staff on my birthday, as well as a picture taken with the “headliner” entertainer who was the guest performer.

What other trips have you taken since retirement?

I’ve traveled to New York City; Chicago; Durham, North Carolina; St. Maarten; the Dominican Republic; Barbados; San Juan, Puerto Rico, and St. Kitts. I have traveled all of my adult life and now that I’m retired find so much more time to travel without having to have my vacation approved!

Where do you plan to go next?

This spring we flew into Phoenix and visited my brother in Maricopa, Arizona. In celebration of my brother-in-laws upcoming milestone birthday, we are taking a trip with members of the family to Jamaica where we’ll stay at a resort in Ocho Rios.

Any travel tips for someone thinking of taking a cruise?

If you have been thinking about a cruise, don’t let horror stories like the one’s in the recent news stop you from a cruise experience. I have been on several cruises in my lifetime and never had a problem.



“Oasis of the Sea” cruise ship

Meet retiree Kathy Elston

From climbing one of the tallest mountains in the northern Rockies to the many demanding jobs she held at the Blues, you could say that Kathy Elston likes a challenge.

The 2008 retiree was born in Texas and grew up in the Waterford/Pontiac area. After attending Pontiac schools from kindergarten through the 11th grade, she moved to Colorado with her dad, her stepmom and her stepbrothers and sisters.

After just a few months, her family moved back to Michigan but Kathy stayed, got an apartment and worked two jobs while finishing her senior year at Loveland High School in Loveland, Colo.

"That's a fairly unusual situation for a 17-year-old but the experience included climbing Long's Peak, which at 14,255 feet is the tallest mountain in the northern Rockies in Colorado, and making life-long friends," said Kathy.

After returning from Colorado in August of 1971, Kathy took a job at Blue Cross in the Pontiac District Office as a general clerk 2. During her long career at Blue Cross she worked in a variety of positions including account rep, customer service rep, and sales rep, then supervisor, manager and director before becoming vice president of Michigan Marketing and Sales in 1992.

"I guess we now know what a wonderful decision that was! Thirty-seven years of challenging work, meeting a multitude of interesting people and again, making life-long friends," she said.

Kathy is as active as ever in retirement. She continues to sit on the HAVEN Board, an Oakland County agency focusing on domestic and sexual violence, and serve on HAVEN committees, which she finds richly rewarding. She recently joined the Retiree Association Board.

"While I never really thought about what retirement would be like, I have thoroughly enjoyed the sea change. I was able to watch my granddaughter Amelia Kathryn full-time her first year and continue to watch her one day a week. Out of the mouths of babes takes on a whole new meaning!" said Kathy.

"I am enjoying that along with spending time with my husband Jeff and son and daughter-in-law Scott and Gayle and other family and friends. I also have a lot more time to spend on making and selling my jewelry.

"And yes," she says, "I am one of those who wonders how I ever managed to get it all done while working crazy hours!"



Kathy Elston

Congratulations and Welcome to Our New Retirees

Susan Balan	Leslie James	Mary Parker	Brenda Warr-Bates
Dianna Bellware	Cynthia Jarvis-Zuri	Barbara Patten	Virginia Whipp
Lynda Bock	Elaine Klaus	Karen Poufcas	Stephanie Wicker
Ella Byrd	Kathleen Listen	Warren Reetz	Mary Wierenga
Bernice Darling	Michelle Marlow	Krystal Robinson	Barbara Williams
Linda De Forest	Susan Mcdonell	Jerome Shoemo	Rita Williams
John Dmytrow Jr	Gwenda Meadows	Lois Smith	Jean Wilson
Yvonne George	Edgar Mogle	Karen Spring	Barbara Zieman
Donna Giroux	Gail Molnar	Lucinda Veale	
Pamela Hampton	John Murphy	Catherine Venet	
Cheryl Holloway	Judith Pappas	Yvonne Walker	

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; Sandra Freeman and Linda Hall, committee members
Social	Annette Foster, chairperson; Kathy Dolan and Connie Dowe, committee members; Karen Stecher, golf outing; Dee Stilson, Florida luncheon
Planning	John Flint, chairperson; Kathy Elston and Shirley Epps, committee members
Finance	Richard Dow, chairperson
Membership Communications	Kath Arndt, Web master and photographer; Janice Crossland, newsletter editor; Imogene King-Dugan, committee member
Membership Liaison	Beleta Williams, chairperson; Kay Jones, coordinator
Fundraising	Beleta Williams, chairperson
Representative to BCBSM Senior Advisory Council	Phyllis Hampton
Contact Information	
Association Web site	miretireeassoc.com
Association e-mail	information@miretireeassoc.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	BCBSM retiree health plan: 1-888-288-1718 Medicare Plus Blue customer service: 1-866-684-8216
BCN claims inquiries	BCN Ombudsman: 1-888-265-4703 BCN Advantage customer service: 1-866-966-2583
Prescription drug coverage inquiries	1-888-288-1718
Retiree checks/State Street Bank	1-888-419-8769

News & Notes

Charity update

Thanks to all Association members who contributed to our fund-raisers in 2012. We conducted six 50/50 raffles and two Chinese auctions, sold Retiree Association polo shirts and held the Bowl-a-Rama charity event. Altogether, we raised \$1,780.

As a result of your generosity, we have donated \$225 to the following organizations: Salvation Army, Forgotten Harvest, Gleaners, Capuchin Soup Kitchen, St. Vincent DePaul, Detroit Rescue Mission, Project Compassion and the Alzheimer's Association. Following are two notes of appreciation for our gift.

"On behalf of the more than 190,000 individuals in Michigan we serve, I want to thank you for your contribution of \$225 in support of the Alzheimer's Association. Your commitment gives voice to those who can no longer speak for themselves — and hope to their families, who often feel so helpless when facing this devastating disease."

"As we continue our mission of serving the poor, please know that your donation will help the less fortunate, hungry, homeless and the jobless as they strive to navigate the path of poverty."
— St. Vincent DePaul

Blues parking offer

Retirees who would like to park on the Blues downtown campus may purchase an annual parking badge as part of their employee retiree benefits. The cost is \$25 per year and gives access to the Detroit Congress parking deck weekdays after 5 p.m. and on weekends. Contact Retirement Administration for details on how you can obtain your parking badge.

Volunteer opportunity

The Detroit Area Agency on Aging needs volunteers for a variety of its programs, including the Detroit Meals on Wheels – Holiday Meals on Wheels Program and the Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP), which provides free health insurance counseling for people with Medicare or Medicaid and their families or caregivers.

To find out how you can become a volunteer for MMAP, call the toll-free help line at 1-800-803-7174. Information on both MMAP and Meals on Wheels can also be found at the Detroit Area Agency on Aging Web site, www.daaa1a.org.

Thanks to Melanie McCall-Brown of the Blues Community Responsibility department for sharing this volunteer opportunity with us.

Stories wanted

Do you have a travel story to tell or favorite volunteer activity you'd like share? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Just send a note to information@miretireeassoc.com or write to us at Blue Cross, mail code 1020. We'll get in touch with you for more information.

Correction

Our apologies to Connie Mackinnon. In the Winter 2013 issue we incorrectly identified her as Joan in the new member column.

...May they rest in peace

John Geller — February 25, 2013

Catherine Smith — April 2, 2013

James Anderson — April 19, 2013

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@miretireeassoc.com.

Also be sure to check out our Web site at miretireeassoc.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@miretireeassoc.com.