

BCBSM Retirees Newsletter

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

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Behind the scenes at the Masonic Temple



Norma Taylor (left) and Betty Zwolak pose by one of the armored figures guarding the entrance to the Archives Room.

Most of us have visited the beautiful Masonic Temple in Detroit for a concert or other entertainment or maybe even a wedding.

But are you familiar with the history behind the building? Did you know that the Masons have been meeting in Detroit since 1764, that with more than 1,000 rooms it's the largest Masonic Temple in the world, and that its smaller theater, originally called the Scottish Rite Cathedral, was recently renamed the Jack White Theater, after the Detroit-born musician?

Those are just a few of the things we learned on our guided tour of the Masonic Temple on Nov. 13.

On the tour we visited two of several lodge meeting rooms where we heard a bit of history about Freemasonry, a fraternal organization established by stonemasons in the Middle Ages. Each meeting room is decorated in a different style (Greek Ionic, Gothic, Tudor, etc.) but has the identical floor plan in keeping with the various traditions and practices still adhered to by the Masons.

We also visited the Tudor-style chapel, called the Asylum of the Knights, that is a replica of a chapel in England. It is situated in the exact center of the building and today is rented out for weddings.

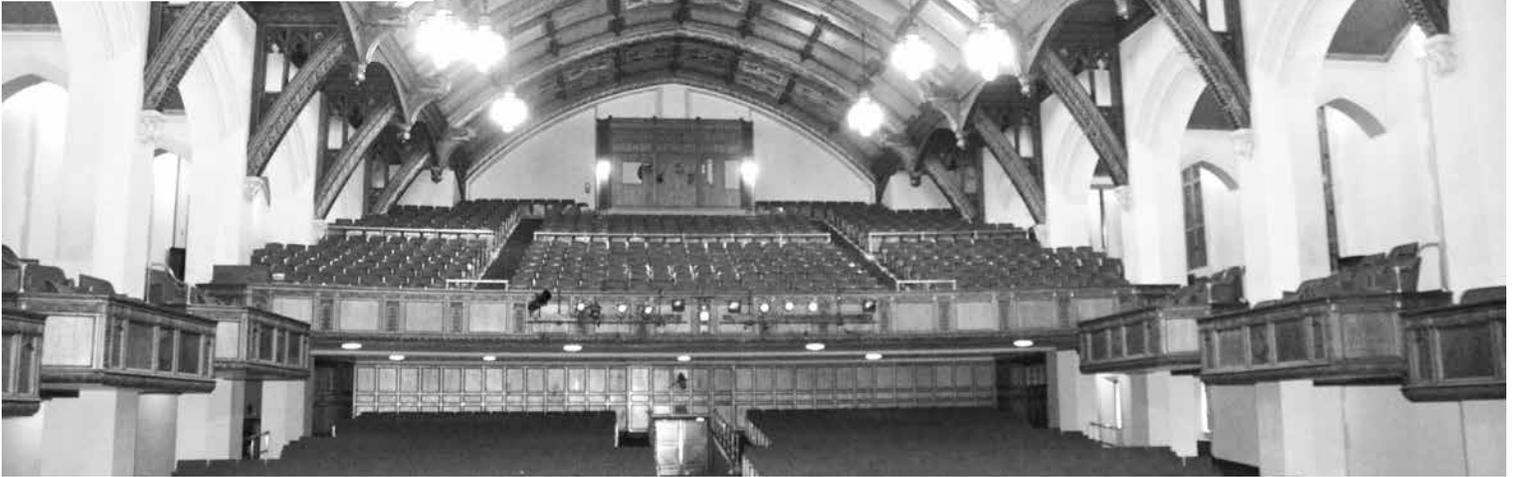
Other parts of the building that were highlighted included the drill hall, the theaters and the Crystal and Fountain ballrooms. After the tour, we enjoyed a catered lunch in the Temple Room.

Masonic Temple *continued on page 2*

Inside this issue...

The new year brings a great lineup of Retiree Association events, including a cruise, a play, and our spring and fall luncheons. See page 6. Also check out the announcement of BCBSM's Community Service Awards on page 8 and how you can nominate an outstanding senior for the Claude Pepper Award or an organization for the Senior Advocate Award.

Masonic Temple *continued*



Theater named after musician Jack White who helped the Temple financially.



Left to right, Patricia Banasinski, Judy Lynch and Phyllis Gliganich.



Cynthia Jarvis-Zin (left) and Cathy Maxwell



John Snider, one of our guides, begins the tour in the lobby.



The ceiling in the lobby was crafted by Italian artisans.



Decorative elements representing the history and principles of the Masons could be seen throughout the building.



View of the chapel.

December luncheon spreads holiday cheer

The Gazebo Banquet Center in Warren was the site of our 32nd holiday celebration on Dec. 4. Everyone enjoyed socializing and catching up with old friends, and we were especially happy to welcome many of our members attending an event for the first time. There were compliments all around for a wonderful buffet luncheon, and DJ Rick Love made the event even more festive with a great selection of music.

The 50/50 raffle and Chinese auction winners were announced after lunch. The 50/50 winners were Jean Wilson, \$125; G.G. Black, \$105; Marilyn Radlicki, \$75; and Sarah Durrrough, \$40.

Our appreciation goes to the following individuals who donated items for the Chinese auction: Retirees Beleta Williams, Susan Lettner, Sandra Crossley, Kathy Elston, Kay Jones, and Kathy Dolan. Thanks also to Bridget Hurd of Community Responsibility at BCBSM, Ann Walker from Genpact (formerly Jawood), Brian Mosallam of AXA Advisors, Dearborn, and Bill Skrzypek of Human Resources at BCBSM. Thanks also to everyone who participated by buying tickets for the 50/50 and the auction.



Sandra Thomas (left) and Maxine Glenn



Jean and Michael Wilson



DJ Rick Love



Marlene Nichols ponders the choices in the Chinese auction.



Judie Purdy, Adaku Mensah, Ken Trapp, Sharon Trapp, Joann Marshall, and Sandra Bright



First-time event attendees, seated left to right, Brenda Selle, Adele Carraher, Cynthia Randall and Christine Kohut. Standing left to right, Yolanda Greer, Carol Hill, Cindy DiFabio, Cheryl Kavanagh, Andrea Zin, Patricia Helfrick, Helen Gasparovich, Cindy Lewis, Grace Keng, Donna Queen, Denise Balko, Emma Rembrert, Cheryl McDonald, Maxine Glenn, Pizarro Lovelace, Jackie Boleware, Diane Meakin, and Mary Ellen Ditto

Highlights of the 32nd Annual Business Meeting and Luncheon

The 2014 Annual Business Meeting and Luncheon took place at Lakeland Manor in St. Clair Shores on Oct. 23.

Outgoing president John McCrary conducted the meeting. He thanked each of the officers and committee members of the Board for their commitment and hard work. He also recognized BCBSM's generous support through its annual stipend to the Association, which helps offset members' cost for events.



John McCrary conducts the meeting.

Also noted in the president's report:

- In our continuing efforts to cut costs and keep events affordable, in 2014 members were given the option of receiving Association communications by e-mail for free or by U.S. mail for a \$10 fee.
- The annual golf outing, which was canceled in 2013 due to lack of interest, was held in 2014 at a new venue. The outing received much positive feedback and will be held again in 2015.
- Our membership grew in 2014 to more than 3,100, largely a result of reaching out to vested nonretirees and inviting them to join the organization.

After approval of the 2013 meeting minutes and the treasurer's report, members voted in the 2015 slate of officers: Kathy Elston, president; Annette Foster, vice-president; Joyce Obenhoff, treasurer; and Adrienne Starling, secretary.



Officers elected for 2015, from left to right, Kathy Elston, president; Adrienne Starling, secretary; Annette Foster, vice-president, and Joyce Obenhoff, treasurer.

Our guest speaker was Bridget Hurd, director of Community Responsibility at the Blues. She shared Blue Cross' commitment to its social mission as well as older adults through the Senior Advisory Committee (see page 3).

A family-style luncheon was served followed by the 50/50 raffle and giveaway of the table centerpieces. The winners of the 50/50 raffle were Francine Pegues, \$100; Edith Oliphant, \$75, and Dolores Lucca, \$28.



Gloria Butler and Christine Thomas



George Istratoff (left) and Leonard and Mary Hicks.

Senior Advisory Committee: Connecting seniors with the Blues



Bridget Hurd

BCBSM's Senior Advisory Council, which provided input to the company on older adult issues for many years, officially changed its name to the Senior Advisory Committee in 2014.

Bridget Hurd, director of Community Responsibility at BCBSM, explained the name change at the annual meeting.

She told us that the Council was mandated in the 1980s under Public Act 350 but since Blue Cross has become

a nonprofit mutual insurance company it is no longer a requirement. Because the company would like to continue its relationship with older adult-focused agencies, it established the newly-named Senior Advisory Committee as a management-level advisory committee to the BCBSM Board.

"The purpose of the committee is to facilitate dialogue between seniors and Blue Cross," said Bridget. "We come together to network, share ideas and discuss what roles Blue Cross can play."

Some of the routine items for discussion are Medicare Advantage and Blues program updates, elder care issues that arise as seniors age, long-term care and insurance, and patient-centered medical homes.

The committee has 17 members. Some of the groups from throughout the state represented are the Detroit-area Agencies on Aging; Wayne State University School of Medicine; Michigan Office of Services to the Aging; International Union, UAW Retired Workers Department; Wayne County Department of Senior Citizens/Veterans Affairs, and American Indian Health and Family Services.

The BCBSM Retiree Association is also one of the 17 members. Association member Phyllis Hampton represents us on the committee.



Phyllis Hampton

"The information shared at the Senior Advisory Committee is relevant to all older adults in Michigan, including the retirees of BCBSM. I am honored to serve on this committee and represent the Retiree Association. Following each meeting I summarize the information and send it to the Retiree Association president," said Phyllis.

Annual Meeting photos *continued*



From left, Mike and Annette Jones and Mike and Noel Cartier.



First-time attendees at an Association event, from left to right, Evelyn Beck, Frances Sinclair, Gwen Booker, Lee Singleton, Susan Lettner, Robert Maguire, Patty Banasinski and Florence Coin.



Kay Jones (left) and Susan Lettner sell 50/50 raffle tickets.

Globetrotters profile: A visit to the British Isles

Last summer, long-time friends and Blues employees Linda Thompson (39 years with the company), Sharon Perry (36 years), Jan Fenech (35 years) and Joanne Krantz (38 years) got together for a trip to the British Isles.

"From the time I was a little girl I always dreamed of going to Ireland," said Linda. "One evening while Sharon Perry and I were waiting to meet Jan and Joanne for dinner, I shared with her my desire to go to Ireland. A month later Sharon made the contact with a travel agency and the rest is history!"

Linda wasn't disappointed. "Ireland was by far my favorite country. I would go back there in a heartbeat," she said.

In addition to visiting Ireland, the group's travels took them to England and Scotland. Some of the highlights of their trip were Buckingham Palace in London, the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, Edinburgh Castle in Edinburgh, the Roman Baths in Bath, Cardiff Castle in Wales and the Titanic Memorial in Belfast.

"I loved all of the countries we went to," said Sharon, "but Scotland was my favorite because of all the castles and the architecture of the buildings."

"I too liked Scotland the best," said Jan. "The country is very beautiful. We caught a glimpse of the northern coast after taking the ferry across from Belfast and it was absolutely stunning."

Joanne also felt Scotland was the prettiest country on the trip. She added that meeting other people on the tour was interesting and fun and was one of the highlights of the trip for her.

"I enjoyed the trip and would definitely travel with these ladies again," said Jan.



From left to right, Joanne Krantz, Jan Fenech, Sharon Perry and Linda Thompson in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin

Mark your calendars for these 2015 events

February 19 – FEDERAL RESERVE, DETROIT

A tour of the Federal Reserve highlighting its cash-processing system followed by lunch.

March 10 – SNOWBIRD LUNCHEON, FLORIDA

Lunch is at Hurricane Grill and Wings in Clermont. Questions? Contact Cindy (Vanderlinden) Warf at (352) 751-3861.

March 22 – DUNSTAN THEATRE, BLOOMFIELD HILLS

Enjoy the Dunstan players in a comedy called "Sex, Love and the IRS" followed by dinner at the Moose Preserve.

April 11 – BOWL-A-RAMA, FARMINGTON HILLS

Our fifth annual Bowl-a-Rama charity fundraiser is at Country Lanes of Farmington.

May 21 – SPRING LUNCHEON, HARRISON TOWNSHIP

Our spring gathering is set for Gino's Surf overlooking Lake St. Clair.

June 23 – CLINTON RIVER CRUISE, MT. CLEMENS

Enjoy lunch and a relaxing afternoon on the river.

July – DETROIT TIGERS GAME, DETROIT

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

August 14 – BILL BURKE MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING, CLARKSTON

We return to Fountains Golf and Banquet.

September 22 – LUNCH AND THEATER, NORTHVILLE

Back by popular demand, lunch and a theater presentation at Genitti's Hole-in-the-Wall.

October 22 – ANNUAL MEETING, LIVONIA

Join us for the annual business meeting and luncheon at Laurel Manor.

November – An event is being planned. Details to come.

December 3 – HOLIDAY PARTY, MADISON HEIGHTS

The holiday party will be an evening event at Club Venetian.

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

Fun Tour at Parade Company

Our September 23 event, a tour of the Parade Company in Detroit, helped Association members get into the spirit of the upcoming holiday with a preview of America's Thanksgiving Parade.

Not all of the floats were on display, of course, but some like the Celebrity Float featuring Diana Ross, Ernie Harwell and Coleman Young and the huge Blue Cross float drew a lot of attention. The famous papier mache heads were also on display, and artists who work year-round creating the colorful floats could be seen hard at work.

Following the tour members met at Sinbad's Restaurant in Detroit for lunch.

Association member Francine Pegues is a member of the Parade Company Board and would like members to know that the Parade Company is always looking for volunteers. There are opportunities to work behind-the-scenes or even march in the parade. For more information, visit the Parade Company's website at www.theparade.org.



One of the colorful floats on display.



Parade Company artist at work.



Kathy Adamus (left) and Carol Jachim



From left to right, Bill Hazelrigg, Brenda Selle, Barbara Ziemann, Pat Rath and Jill Perry at Sinbad's Restaurant.

BCBSM Retiree Association – Contact information

Contact Information	
BCBSM Retiree Association	Website: miretireeassoc.com Email: information@miretireeassoc.com U.S. Mail: BCBSM Mail Code 0126
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.

Charity update

At the end of each year we tally up the donations raised through your participation in the 50/50 raffles, Chinese auctions and annual Bowl-a-Rama charity event. Thanks to your generosity, this year we are able to donate \$300 to each of the following organizations: Salvation Army, Forgotten Harvest, Gleaners, Capuchin Soup Kitchen, St. Vincent DePaul, Detroit Rescue Mission, Project Compassion and the Alzheimer's Association. Thank you again!

We looked into PayPal

A number of members have suggested to the Board that we could simplify the payment process for events by setting up a PayPal account. We've explored this possibility but decided that PayPal isn't a good choice for us. A minimum monthly transaction amount, which we do not always meet, is required. Plus there is a set monthly fee and a per payment transaction fee that would impact our budget.

Claude Pepper Award nominations

The Blues invite Retiree Association members to submit nominations for its annual Community Service Awards:

- The Claude Pepper Award is given to two outstanding senior citizen advocates who demonstrate a strong concern for the special needs of older adults. Nominees must be a retiree volunteer over age 55 or a person of any age who is employed in the senior advocacy field.
- The Senior Advocate Award is given to an exceptional organization that provides older adults with health or social services they need to give them a meaningful life.

Each awardee receives a \$1,000 donation for the nonprofit organization of his or her choice. The nomination deadline is May 1, with awards presented in June.

For more information and a nomination form, visit bcbsm.com/awards. If you have any questions please contact Bridget Hurd, director, Community Responsibility at (313) 225-0539.

Retirees make a difference

The Blues thank retirees for giving back to those in need in our communities statewide by helping the company raise \$568,478 for the United Way, handily exceeding its goal of \$535,000. Retirees contributed \$5,462. For questions about the United Way campaign, e-mail unitedway@bcbsm.com

Missing in action

Yes, we'll miss you if you change your address (your e-mail and/or home address, depending on how you receive Association communications) and you don't let us know. Please be sure to e-mail or write to us of any change so that we can continue to share Retiree Association news and activities.

Stories wanted

Do you have a travel story or a favorite volunteer activity you'd like to share with us? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Send a note to information@miretireeassociation.com or write to us at Blue Cross, mail code 0126.

...May they rest in peace

Dolores Stilson

July 10, 2014

Donna Marie Valentic

December 19, 2014

Dominic Mancini

December 30, 2014

The Board notes with sadness the death of Dee Stilson. Dee was our coordinator in Florida for our annual snowbird luncheon for the last several years. Dee lived in Port Richey and loved to entertain. Her luncheons were filled with joy as she offered games, prizes and great meal choices at a reasonable cost. We will miss her.

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 website 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 members who wish to share their e-mail address with fellow retirees. To add your e-mail address, make a correction or remove your name from the list, send your request to information@miretireeassoc.com.