



BCBSM Retirees Newsletter

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

Volume 19, Issue 2 • May 2010

Association members enjoy a gem of a show



Front center, Sharon and Ron Houghton; clockwise beginning at left, Ray Newak, Dolores Gelemey-Newak, Phyllis Hampton, Mike and Noel Cartier, and Judy and Tom Saski.

Our 2010 series of social events kicked off March 4 with a trip down memory lane at the Gem Theater in Detroit.

Retiree Association members enjoyed lunch at the Century Restaurant and then tapped their toes to '50s and '60s tunes featured in the musical review "The Marvelous Wonderettes."

The action took place in 1958 and 1968 in the Springfield high school gym. The stars of the show were dressed for the times in poufy crinolines in the first act and miniskirts and go-go boots in the second. They sang familiar pop tunes like Mr. Sandman, Sincerely, Dream Lover, and It's My Party, to name just a few of the 30 songs featured.



Gem Theater, Detroit



Front center, Cheryl Albert (left) and Joyce Giles (Brooks); clockwise beginning at left, Bonnie Wozniacki, Bary Sesny, Audrey and Virginia Moronczyk, Diane Page and Joyce Tyson.

For Association members, the highlight of the show came when Leonard Hicks was selected from the audience to go onstage. (That's what happens when you sit in the front row!) Leonard, husband of BCBSM retiree Mary Hicks, represented Mr. Lee, a teacher in the story. He was onstage for the singing of the "Man of My Dreams Medley."

Lunch, memories, great music and audience participation all made for a relaxing and fun afternoon at the theater.

For more photos — including a snapshot of Leonard onstage with the cast — go to bcbsmretireeassoc.com.

The 24th annual Florida retiree luncheon also took place in March. Story on page 3.

Be sure to check out bcbsmretireeassoc.com for photos of the annual Spring Luncheon, which occurred as we were going to press with the May issue. Watch for photos of the luncheon and all of our summer events in the fall issue of the BCBSM Retirees Newsletter.

For Mike Kesler, hockey is all in the family

Retiree Association member Mike Kesler attended the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. And he had good reason to go. His son, Ryan Kesler, who plays for the Vancouver Canucks, had the honor to represent the United States as a member of the U.S. hockey team.

Mike says that since the Olympics took place in Vancouver, near Ryan's home, he decided to make the trip, whether or not Ryan made the team.

"We had never been to an Olympics and this was a great opportunity because we could stay at Ryan's house. If he didn't make the team, we would be able to spend two weeks with Ryan, his wife Andrea and granddaughter Makayla. So it was a win either way," said Mike.

Ryan, of course, made the team, and the rest is history.

Reflecting on the final outcome of the hockey competition, Mike said that while winning the Olympic Silver Medal was certainly the highlight of Ryan's career it took a few days for the win to really sink in.

"There wasn't an immediate feeling of joy because the team lost 3-2 in an overtime heartbreaker. You have to realize that in hockey you win the bronze and gold medals but receive the silver medal as the loser of the gold medal game. But it was a great accomplishment because the U.S. team was the youngest there and wasn't projected to even make it to the semi-finals."

First love, hockey

Mike attributes Ryan's success to skating ability, hard work on and off the ice, and a commitment to be the best that he can be.

"The Canucks have noted his skating ability as exceptional and also that it isn't often that you get a 6'2" player who can skate the way Ryan does," said Mike.

Growing up in a family devoted to hockey gave Ryan a head start. He started skating at age 4 and played his first game at age 5.

"Ryan attended my hockey school which I started when my oldest son, Todd, was a Mite (8 years old and younger team level). My school focused on skating, stick skills and playmaking at the younger ages and we moved into more advanced instruction and flow drills with the older groups," said Mike.

Mike's lifelong love of hockey began early. He played for several youth teams and then four years for Benedictine High School in Detroit. Next he played for Colorado College, attending on a hockey scholarship. After graduating, he decided to get into coaching.



Linda, Ryan and Mike Kesler at the winter Olympics

"I've continued coaching off and on for 35 years. Most of my coaching has been at the AAA level, which is considered the elite amateur level in the U.S.," he said.

Currently he coaches in the Michigan Development Hockey League, made up of four local high school all-star teams and a high school all-star team from the west side of the state.

"Over the course of my career, I have had the privilege of coaching more than 200 players who went on to play Division 1 college hockey, five first-round draft picks and 15 to 20 players who have played in the National Hockey League," said Mike.

He started scouting five years ago for KO Sports, Inc., and for the past three years has scouted for the U.S. National Team out of Ann Arbor.

Mike Kesler... (continued on next page)

Ryan Kesler career highlights

- Drafted by the NHL in the first round, 23rd overall, in June 2003 at the end of his freshman year at Ohio State University. Signed with the Vancouver Canucks in August.
- In 2004 in Helsinki was a member of the first-ever U.S. Under 20 World Junior team to win the Gold Medal.
- During the 2004-05 NHL lockout season played in the AHL for Manitoba Moose in Winnipeg. Elected MVP by coaches and management and voted Fan Favorite.
- In 2009 selected MVP by Vancouver fans and was a finalist for the Selke Trophy (Best Defensive Player in the NHL), ultimately won by Pavel Datsyuk of the Detroit Red Wings.
- As of March 23, 2010, has accumulated 86 goals and 121 assists at NHL level.
- On March 19, 2010, signed a 6-year contract extension with the Canucks worth \$30 million.

Snowbirds gather for lunch at Kally-K's

Dee Stilson was hoping more of her fellow retirees would attend this year's snowbird luncheon so she was happy when 22 joined her, the best attendance yet. The event took place March 9 at Kally-K's restaurant in Dunedin, Florida.

Dee has coordinated the luncheon for three years now and said she was pleased that there were a number of new faces this year, and also that some Association members had traveled as much as 90 miles to attend.

With the consensus of the group, Dee is scouting out a new location for next year's luncheon. "Dunedin is a little out of the way. We are looking at restaurants in Wesley Chapel, which is close to I-75. This should make it easier for everyone to get to."

Dee is already looking forward to next year's luncheon and doing something special to celebrate this event's 25th anniversary.

Stay tuned for more information, and if you live in Florida or will be visiting next March, plan to attend.

To see more photos, go to bcbsmretireeassoc.com.



From left, Lowell and Liz Wolfe and Cass and Barb Modrzejewski



From left, Ron Kurkowski, Cindy Warf (Vanderlinden), and Dee Stilson

Michigan is tops with Blues retirees

Where are they now? A review of the BCBSM Retiree Association membership list shows that most retirees have stayed close to home, right here in Michigan. And as you would expect, many who moved out of state headed for warmer regions.

As of March 2010, there were more than 2,400 members in the Association. They live in 36 states in the U.S., as well as Canada, Puerto Rico, the

Philippines, Scotland and Bermuda. Here are the top 10 locations and the number of retirees who live there:

Michigan, 2,101	Georgia, 19
Florida, 101	California, 17
Arizona, 23	North Carolina, 13
Ontario, Canada, 22	Nevada, 12
Tennessee, 20	South Carolina, 10

Mike Kesler... (continued)

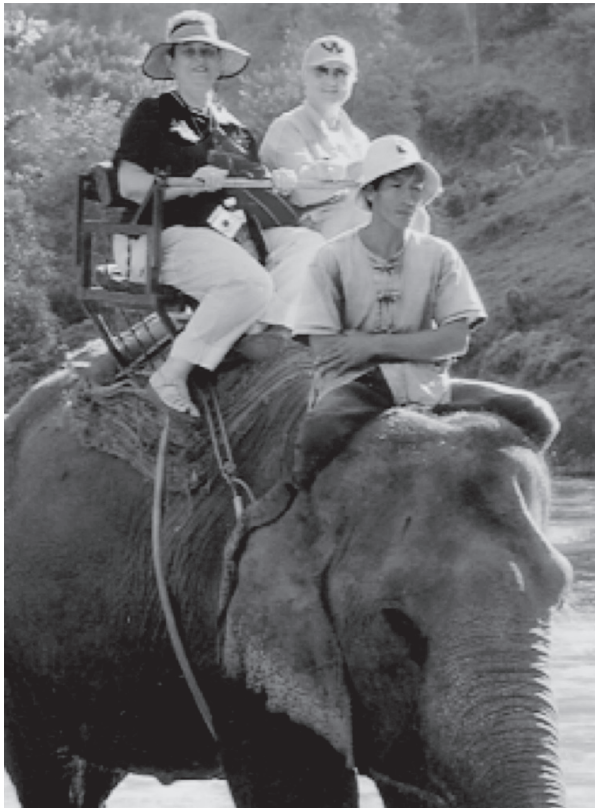
True Blue

Mike retired in 2008 after 38 years with the company. He began his career as an auditor in Professional Utilization Review. He went on to become supervisor of PUR and then manager of Utilization Review Development and Methodology. He later was a senior project manager in the Project Management Office and helped to develop the initial PMO.

"Overall BCBSM is a great place to work and I truly enjoyed my 38 years of service," said Mike.

Mike lives in Livonia with Linda, his wife of 35 years. They have three children, Todd, Jennifer and Ryan. Makayla, their first and only grandchild, turns two in May. Son Todd continues the family hockey tradition. He plays senior hockey and coaches girls hockey.

Globetrotters profile: Karen Stecher visits all 7 continents



Karen (left) with Toni Tront and Mahout on a Thai Elephant

In our first "Globetrotters profile," we are highlighting Karen Stecher, whose goal when she retired was to "travel as much as I could." And as you'll read, she's certainly achieved that goal. Karen, who is the Immediate Past President of the BCBSM Retiree Association, sent this account of her travels to date.

Have you traveled regularly since retiring? How often do you travel?

A couple of my goals in retirement were to play as much golf as I could and to travel as much as I could. I try to travel overseas at least once a year and have been fortunate to do that.

Name some of the places you've visited since retiring.

I've visited all seven continents. I've cruised through the Panama Canal, around South America from Valparaiso, Chile, to the southernmost city in Argentina and up the Atlantic coast to Rio de Janeiro. I've also visited New Zealand and Australia; China and Japan; Thailand, Cambodia's Angkor Wat, Myanmar and Laos; Egyptian temples and Jordan's Petra; amazing Turkey; elegant St. Petersburg; many of the western European countries; Croatia and Slovenia; and more.

What do you most like to do when traveling — visit art museums, learn about different cultures, take pictures, climb mountains, eat, sit on the beach...?

All of the above, except — I don't sit on the beach. I like to use my time to see the country. I'm always on the go. I try the local food and usually find something I like — even if I'm not sure what it is. In Peru I tried guinea pig. The farmers raise these for meals in the same way our farmers raise chickens. I take too many pictures. I like to meet local people. When traveling with Grand Circle or Overseas Adventure Travel, a meal in a local family's home is always included. I've visited the world's largest art museum (Prado in Madrid), the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, and was part of a 2 1/2 hour private

tour of the Louvre in Paris when the museum was officially closed.

What has been your favorite destination and why?

It's hard to pick a favorite — I like them all. But, for its uniqueness and remoteness, I'd have to say Antarctica is in a class by itself. To protect and preserve this continent, a group of nations oversees what happens there. The number of travelers is limited and landing areas are tightly controlled. We left Ushuaia, Argentina, on a small icebreaker ship. We cruised the South Atlantic and stopped at South Georgia Island — the land of explorer Ernest Shackleton. He died in 1922 and is buried on the island. We cruised among many islands home to a variety of penguins and birds.

As we got closer to Antarctica, the icebergs became bigger and more frequent. It was eerily silent. We landed twice on the continent. Once on a rocky beach that was home to numerous penguins. We could walk amongst them but not touch them. We also landed at an Argentinean permanent science station. Several hundred people lived there including families with children. They had a school, church, labs, dorms and a Post Office. It was January and temps were in the 30's. (continued on next page)

What is the most interesting experience you've had on a trip?

I've had a number of great experiences. I rode a camel at the Pyramids and an elephant in Thailand, rode a river raft in Thailand and climbed the ruins in Machu Picchu.

I've also golfed whenever possible — in Bermuda, the Dominican Republic, Slovenia and Thailand. In Thailand we played on a most unusual course since we had to play through a horse track. Two golf holes were in the center of the track. We hit over the track and putted in the track center. Teed off over the track again and continued on our round. Playing the back nine, we again had to play into the center of the track to finish a hole and then tee off and over the track again — only this second time, we had to time our strokes since horses were exercising on the track! I'd have to say this was the most unusual golf game I've played.

Where are you going next?

In May, I'm going on a 10-day trip to Prague and Vienna — splitting our time between the two cities. I'm lucky enough to be traveling with Dr. Shelley Perlove, an Art History professor at U of M-Dearborn. She has been taking travel groups for the last 19 years. We walk everywhere or take local transportation and really get to know the cities.

I also have places I want to see — the Taj Mahal, Hawaii, London and any of the British Isles, Galapagos Islands, southern Africa, Black Sea area ... I'm sure my list will grow.

Any travel tips for fellow retirees?

- I always travel with a group and a leader — if there is a problem these professionals can handle it. In Sydney, Australia, I spent a day at the emergency room with the help of our guide.
- I deal directly with the cruise lines or travel companies and don't use a travel agent.
- I like traveling with Grand Circle out of Boston and especially their subsidiary, Overseas Adventure Travel. OAT limits the group size to 20 so you can see and do more things — even on the spur of the moment.
- I use the ATMs around the world for local cash and charge on my credit cards whenever I can.
- Try to speak at least a few words of the local language. You'll have a better response from the locals.
- Don't forget to take extra batteries and a charger for that digital camera.
- I don't take a cell phone and rarely call home — only in emergencies. And always be flexible and willing to try new experiences. I can truly say I've enjoyed every one of my trips and have always met great travelers and enjoyed unexpected happenings.



Members make charitable giving possible

Thanks to the generosity of BCBSM Retiree Association members, our organization donated a total of \$900 to several charities in 2009.

"It is wonderful being retired and being a member of the BCBSM Retiree Association," said Joyce Obenhoff, Association treasurer. "But while we are enjoying some wonderful events, we can't forget those in need of food, shelter and clothing."



Joyce Obenhoff

With the economic downturn we've been experiencing and more people than ever in need, the Association board decided that for 2009 \$150 would go to each of the following organizations: Society of St. Vincent DePaul, Capuchin Kitchen, Goodfellows, Salvation Army, Forgotten Harvest, and Gleaners.

Joyce explained that the money available for these contributions comes from the 50/50 raffles held at Association activities along with the sale of t-shirts and tote bags.

"The question that has been asked many times is what do we do with this money?" said Joyce. "All of the proceeds from the fundraisers go to charity."

Joyce gives a heartfelt "thank you" to everyone who contributed. She also says thanks to Beleta Williams and Ed Barszcz for donating their time and efforts in supporting these fund-raising activities.

You may contact Joyce, or any other board member, if you have questions.

Wear with pride

You can help our fund-raising efforts by ordering a BCBSM Retiree Association t-shirt and/or tote bag. T-shirts are \$15 or \$16 (depending on size) and tote bags are \$8. Order both and the cost is just \$20.



For more information on how to order your t-shirt or tote bag, contact Beleta Williams by e-mail at bwil@att.net or by phone at 313-538-4959.

Congratulations and welcome to our new retirees

(Retirements effective as of April 10, 2010)

From this day forward your business is to ensure that your personal interests and goals are met — that every book you've been meaning to read no longer collects dust on a shelf; that every project you've left unfinished receives those last few touches; that every sunset becomes the grand finale to a fulfilling afternoon rather than a reminder that the cares of the next day are around the corner.

Wanda Al-Janaby
Pamela Alexander
William Allen
Patricia Anthony
Juanita Ascencion
Patricia Bevil
Lynne Bilski
Nancy Boler
Lynn Bozyk
June Brent
Patricia Browning
Janet Bush
Jeanne Carlson
Doral Cherniak
Michael Childs
Percye Colenburg
Cynthia Cook
William Elwell
Lela Everitte
Suzette Felling
Deborah Finley

Artelle Gandy
Brad Gavle
Phyllis Geddie
Geraldine Giuliani
Anita Goodman
Karen Grainger
Marlene Grocki
Karen Grojean
Erma Hammons
Phyllis Hampton
Pamela Harris
Juanita Hawkins
Frances Henderson
Mercedes Hinson
Susan Hodges
Diane Hodges
John Honsel
Charlie Howell
Mary Ingraham
Frank Jackson
Beverly Johnson

Thomas Kania
George Kelley
Susan Kratz
Brenda Kuznicki
Jean Lamphier
Frederick Law
Lorraine Lenihan
Sheryl Lowe
Christine Luczak
Calvin Maestro
Karen Mahone
Deborah Maiorano
Dominic Mancini
Thomas Marquard
Linda Martin
Marie Martinez
Patricia Mcdade-Ralya
Marianne Mcleod
Diane Meakin
Christina Mellos-
Pantely

Linda Nalls
Glen Perry
Harold Peterson
Fran Plets
Valiere Quick
Carol Rachmaninow
Marilyn Radlicki
Patricia Raths
Emma Rembert
Virginia Rennell
Overmyer
Alice Reynolds
Margaret Ross
Betty Rozier
Sharon Sacka
Alex San Mateo
Sandra Sharp
Joyce Smith
Joann Swagerty
Claudia Swink
Patricia Sydor

Warren Sylvertooth
Norma Taylor
Glendly Thompson
Patricia Todor
Christine Toporek
Patricia Toporowski
Janice Trethewey
Irene Valeri
Lottie Vargas
Joan Vercammen
David Watroba
Barbara Williams
Janice Wilson
Charlotte Woods
Mary Woznik
Thomas Zaidan
Richard Zbanek
Aspasia Zois

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	Mary Ellen Tyszka, chairperson; John McCrary, coordinator; Marie Bjerke, BCBSM liaison and records retention
Social	Annette Foster and Edward Barszcz, co-chairpersons; Nick Grabowski, golf outing; Dee Stilson, Florida luncheon; Don Clune, Bay Area activities
Finance	Richard Dow, chairperson
Membership Communications	Dick Goetz, chairperson; Kath Arndt, Web master and photographer; Janice Crossland and Betty Zwolak, newsletter administrators
Planning	John Flint and Ray Newak, co-chairpersons; Phyllis Hampton, committee member
Membership Liaison	Beleta Williams, chairperson; Kay Jones, coordinator
Volunteer Activities	Melanie Fraczek, chairperson
Special Assignments	
BCBSM Senior Advisory Council	Spencer Brown, representative
Miscellaneous activities	Ralph Shefferly, coordinator
Consultants Emeritus	Terry Rotare, Syd Turner
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: 1-866-0238-3295 E-mail: retirementadministration@bcbsm.com
Change of address, phone number	All changes must be made in writing via e-mail at retirementadministration@bcbsm.com or by 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: 1-800-858-7915
BCN Ombudsmen	1-888-265-4703
Retiree checks/State Street Bank	1-888-419-8769

E-mail directory helps you keep in touch

Included along with this issue of the *BCBSM Retirees Newsletter* is the BCBSM Retiree Association E-mail Directory. The directory contains the names and e-mail addresses submitted voluntarily by Association members.

If you would like to add your name to the list, make a correction, or remove your name, contact us at information@bcbsmretireeassoc.com. Changes may

be verified by the Association before a listing is added or changed. Additions or changes will be published in a future issue of the newsletter and the entire listing redistributed periodically.

Important note: This listing is intended for social contact among Association members only and is not to be shared outside this group.

2010 COMING EVENTS – Mark Your Calendars

June 22 — LUNCH & CRUISE, Port Huron. All aboard! A fun day from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. that includes lunch at the Edison Inn and a cruise aboard Huron Lady II

July 23, 2010 — DETROIT TIGERS GAME, Detroit. Let's all root, root, root for our Detroit Tigers as they take on the Toronto Blue Jays. The evening game (7:05 start) includes fireworks.

August 20 — BILL BURKE MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING, Holly. Our 20th annual golf outing is set for the Heather Highlands Golf Course. Come and enjoy the great outdoors and the camaraderie of all the participants.

October 21 — ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON, Dearborn Heights. A brief meeting to discuss Retiree Association business, followed by lunch and entertainment. A great time awaits at the Warren Valley Golf Club.

December 8 — THE HOLIDAY PARTY, Dearborn. This year's celebration will be an afternoon event at the Fairlane Club

...May they rest in peace

Charles R. Weston
February 1, 2010

Patrick P. Pereira
February 27, 2010



Today Is Ours

These inspiring words were presented by Ruby Dee at the National Memorial Day Concert in 2005. She also shared them in her book, *My One Good Nerve*, published in 1998. Thanks to Dick Goetz for submitting these words.

Today is ours; let's live it.
And love is strong; let's give it.
A song can help; let's sing it.
And peace is dear; let's bring it.
The past is gone; don't rue it.
Our work is here; let's do it.
The world is wrong; let's right it.
The battle is hard; let's fight it.
The road is rough; let's clear it.
The future vast; don't fear it.
Is faith asleep; let's wake it.
Today is ours; let's take it!

— Anonymous

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.

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