



March 2010 Volume #17 + Issue #3
Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel - Berrien County Chapter

**2010 GREETINGS FROM
 THE MARSP-BCC
 PRESIDENT**

I hope things are going well for you in 2010. The weather is cold, 19 degrees today, as I write this but it is winter in Michigan. It was -10 degrees this morning in Iowa where I grew up so 19 degrees sounds like a heat wave! I have to say spring and summer are my favorite seasons and I am looking forward to their arrival.

Our MARSP-BCC has a lot of upcoming activities planned for our members for now through June. When you receive this newsletter we may have already held our 1 pm dessert and coffee activity at Sarett on Feb. 9. The program is on their trip to Madagascar, which should be very interesting.

We have several PRIM's [Pre-Retirement Information Meetings] coming up. We want to share the dates with those still working in public schools. They will be held on March 23 at Coloma Jr. High at 4 and 6 pm, Berrien RESA on April 14 at 4 and 6 pm and a MPSERS PRIM by Ray Fleming will be given at Berrien RESA on April 26 at 4 pm. We do need greeters and a snack at these meetings if anyone is willing to help, please call or email me.

For the second year we will have the MARSP DVD - Presentation and Annual Meeting as one of our regular meetings. MARSP decided to do it this way to save money. It also gives every member the opportunity to attend. This

year it will be held on the third Tuesday of April, which is April 20 at Stevensville United Methodist Church. Please note the time change, it will start at 11 am. We have 17 voting delegates and 17 alternates whose names have already been registered with MARSP. Lunch will be at noon and the meeting will continue after lunch.

I think most of us will be interested in the insurance presentation that will be given on Thursday, April 29 by Bronco Bojicic from Blue Cross/Blue Shield. At 1 pm the presentation will be more directed at retirees with Medicare and the presentation at 4 pm, will be more focused on those under age 65 but questions will be answered at both. We are very fortunate to have Bronco available to come to Berrien County.

Our scholarship luncheon will be held on June 8 at the St. Joseph Lincoln Senior Center again. If you know of anyone who is a Berrien County high school graduate, attending a Michigan College and who is a junior or senior majoring in education, let Diane Buczwinski or her committee know. We are offering two, \$750 scholarships this year.

We received a very nice thank you note from the Safe Shelter thanking us for our food donations that we collected at our November meeting. It was appreciated very much.

Charles Long, membership chairman of BCC, stated at our January 11 board meeting that we currently have 857 members. We would like to

encourage any member who would like to become more involved in any way to let us know. We *really* do need your help and would very much *appreciate* it.

Pat

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**Up Date Concerning
 Bonnie Carpenter**

As you are aware, our Executive Director, Bonnie Carpenter, was scheduled for surgery in December and was to be out of the office for approximately five weeks to recuperate.

There have been some complications with her condition. She was hospitalized again on Christmas day and has recently learned that she will have to be off work for at least another six to eight weeks. Bonnie needs her rest and does not need to worry about her duties at the office.

Therefore, the office staff and executive team (Marie Wilkerson, President; Les Nixon, Vice President, and Don Miller, Past President) will keep the organization flowing. We hope that all members

will understand and wish Bonnie an excellent recovery.

We are including Bonnie's home address for those who would like to send a note of encouragement and get well wishes.

Bonnie J Carpenter
209 Deep Lake Dr.
Williamston, MI 48895

Calls for Luncheons Reservations Reservation Policies

You will be called during the ten days preceding each meeting. The reservation you make may be changed (additions / cancellations) up to 10:00 AM on *Wednesday* preceding each luncheon meeting. *If you do not receive a call about two weeks before the luncheon, or to make any changes call Oline Edge at 269-927-4157. If you do not call to cancel your reservation(s) by the deadline you will be billed for the cost of the luncheon(s).*

[Note - Change of date and time.]

11 AM to 2 PM

Tuesday, April 20, 2009

Stevensville United Methodist Church, 5506 Ridge Rd, Stevensville MI

Menu: Marinated Chicken Breast, Vegetarian Pasta, Potato and Broccoli Casserole, Cole Slaw, Fresh Vegetable Platter and Dill Dip, Rolls and Butter, Apple, Peach Crisp, Pineapple Angel Food and Fresh Fruit for Diabetics, Coffee, Tea and Lemonade.

Buffet \$12.00

MARSP DVD Presentation and Annual Meeting: April 20, 2009

Update on *BC/BS Medicare Advantage* Insurance, legislation and the annual meeting.

In the past, chapter delegates and members traveled to a regional site for the Area Conference and Annual Business Meeting. Again, this year, to save costs and permit many more MARSP members to get the information directly, which is presented at the Annual Conference and the actions taken at the Business Meeting will be done at local chapter meetings.

The Power[®]Point (slide) presentation that would have been done at the region site will be provided to each MARSP chapter on a DVD. As in the past, the presentation will include a message from the MARSP President, a report from the MARSP Executive Director, a report from the MARSP Legislative Committee, as well as an update on Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Medicare Advantage Private Fee for Service (BCBSM MA PFFS).

Regional Director Monroe Johnson and Assistant Regional Director Rose Henderson will attend the meeting to conduct the voting by delegates and provide more information.

Scholarship News

At our June luncheon, two \$750 Beverly Pringle Scholarships will be awarded. Applications are now available. To be eligible, a student must:

- be a senior (fall term) in a Michigan university or college and accepted by a Department of Education in a teaching sequence,
- have a "B" average,
- have graduated from a Berrien County high school.

Do you know someone who is eligible: a granddaughter, grandson, niece, nephew, or neighbor? Applications are available on our web site, www.marsp-bcc.org or by e-mail at buczwin@sbcglobal.net. Application deadline is April 3rd.

BCC RETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINAR – 2010

The Berrien County Chapter of the Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel will present a two-day Retirement Planning Seminar to be held at the Berrien RESA (formerly known as BCISD) in Berrien Springs. This will take place the last week in April, this spring.

On Monday, April 26, Ray Fleming of the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System will speak at 4 PM on the *MPERS Retirement Plan*. He will cover all pertinent information designed to assist current Public School Employees in their planning for retirement.

On Thursday, April 29, Branko Bojicic of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan will speak at 1 PM, and then again at 4 PM on the *BCBSM/Medicare Health Insurance Program*. He will cover pertinent information on the current health care program offered to retired public school employees in Michigan. The 1 PM insurance session is intended primarily for current retirees, with the 4 PM

session directed toward those planning their retirement.

Both speakers are considered experts in their respective fields. Both are natives of Michigan and have held their current positions in these two important organizations for over twenty years.

A *Question and Answer* session will follow each presentation. Handouts will be available at each session.

The Berrien RESA is at the north end of Berrien Springs, between the HS football field and the BC Youth Fair Grounds on old 31.

Richard Brame,
BCC Retirement Planning

Lake Michigan College Needs Retired Teachers

Lake Michigan College is looking for retired teachers who might be interested in paid proctoring and test accommodation duties with Lake Michigan College at the Bertrand Crossing campus (Niles-Buchanan area), the Benton Harbor campus and the South Haven campus. There is an application process and interview as well as paid training.

For more information call Deborah Pratt, Manager, Assessment and Learning Assistance, Lake Michigan College at 269-927-6173.

MARSP and MARSP – BCC Membership

Renewing your MARSP and MARSP-BCC membership on the MARSP web site is safe and easy and — for those who have access to the Internet — convenient.

On February 1, those who have not renewed their memberships will be mailed a membership dues form with a due date of April 30. On May 1, an urgent second reminder will be mailed

to those who still have not renewed their membership

Your \$30.00 MARSP dues payment for the year July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011, will entitle you to specialized information regarding your retirement and retirement benefits, effective advocacy and lobbying, and the assurance of professional assistance with retiree concerns.

Your \$9.00 MARSP-BCC dues payment for the year July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011, will entitle you to attend luncheon and business meetings that include programs and provide pertinent information, the MARSP-BCC newsletter, the membership directory, and local support and fellowship.

The chapter membership count is determined on June 30 and the new fiscal year begins July 1.

Please renew your membership — and do it today!

Charles Long
MARSP-BCC
Membership Chair

RICHARD AND MARGARET SMITH FUND

The fund was established in 1996 to provide financial assistance for MARSP members expressing need. Some members have difficulty paying their prescription co-pay, medical expenses, or utility bills.

If a member wishes to receive assistance for himself/herself, or knows of another member who needs help, he/she can either contact the chapter president or the MARSP office, but the chapter must actually make the request. All inquiries will be kept confidential and will be forwarded to the chairman of the Smith Fund

Committee, who will contact the person that made the inquiry.

Many people who are in need have difficulty asking for help for themselves, yet are very willing to help others. This is because most of us have been taught to be self-sufficient. Sometimes in a person's life a time comes when help is needed or we know of someone who needs help. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

Since 1996 over 62 MARSP members have been helped with grants of \$100-\$500. It used to be only available twice a year but the time restriction has been removed since financial difficulties occur throughout the year, and a person in need cannot always wait.

Please contact me or the MARSP office if you know of any member in need of financial help.

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Contact BCBSM For more information

For more information about your medical coverage, call Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan:

1-800-422-9146. TTY users should call 1-800-807-4670.

**Customer service hours:
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday**

For general information about Medicare, call Medicare:

**1-800-MEDICARE
(633-4227). TTY users should call
1-877-486-2048)**

Medicare customer service hours are 24 hours a day, seven days a week

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Contacting Catalyst Rx

Catalyst Rx has been selected as your Prescription Benefit Manager beginning January 1, 2010. Catalyst Rx Customer Service Representatives can assist by providing you with information on your plan's prescription benefits.

Some of those items may include medication coverage information, co-payment information, and deductible information and assistance with locating a pharmacy in your area that can fill prescriptions for you and your covered family members. If you have specific questions regarding your medication coverage and benefits, call Catalyst Rx at 1-866-288-5209.

Crossing new bridges together

MARSP members continued to cross new bridges together during 2009 in defense of our pension system and health benefits!

With Michigan's pressing struggles, and the current economic recession of our nation, the year 2009 will definitely be remembered! MARSP will continue to monitor YOUR health care benefits.

Paying dues online saves valuable time for the MARSP office staff. Since you have access to a computer may want to consider paying dues on the secure MARSP web site with a credit card.

We thank you in advance for your support. Your MARSP dues are the best investment you can make in protecting YOUR FUTURE. Your membership does not cost, rather it pays. Secure YOUR future by not letting your MARSP membership lapse; join or renew today.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Attached in the link toward the end of this message is your personal membership form for your 2010-11 MARSP dues, which you can use to pay your dues online with your credit card.

You will not be receiving a paper copy renewal form by snail mail in the February mailing.

However, if you wish to print the form and mail it with your personal check you may do so.

The following EASY guide will assist you with paying MARSP dues online.

· MARSP web site: www.marsp.org

· Click on "Membership" located on left side of screen.

· Pop-up screen then appears.

New members: Select 'Become a Member' and enter your Member ID [Contained in the e-mail you received] (xxxxxx) in the box at the top of the screen then click on 'Next.'

Enter your '**Credit Card Type,**' '**Credit Card Number**' and '**Expiration date**'

Click on 'Process Renewal Online'

For Outlook Express, first you must select "Tools" from the top menu bar, and then "Options" from the drop down. Then under the "Read" tab, make sure that the check box next to "Read all Messages in plain text" is empty.

MAC users - We are aware that you may not receive this link. Please go to the MARSP web site to download and print the membership RENEWAL form, then send it with your check to MARSP. Thank you for your patience.



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It is the current policy of the MARSP and the BCC Board of Directors that it will **NOT** endorse any product or service offered for sale to its members. These presentations are permitted for information only, and no endorsement, approval nor recommendation of the product[s] nor service[s] by the association, chapters or any of its officers or directors is expressed nor intended. The individual members of the association are advised to make their own thorough investigation before deciding whether or not to purchase or contract for any such product[s] or service[s].

