

Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel—Berrien County Chapter
Website: www.marsp-bcc.org E-mail: info@marsp-bcc.org

Message from the MARSP-BCC President

Greetings!

Our last MARSP-BCC meeting, April 20, at Stevensville United Methodist Church with 156 members and guests attending, the MARSP Annual Meeting and DVD presentation showed the strong interest our members have in keeping current with our insurance, legislation and what MARSP is doing for us. We were fortunate to have Monroe Johnson, Area 22 chairman and Rose Henderson, Area 22 assistant chairperson, both so well informed, present this information. Thanks to them for their excellent presentation, all of you who attended and Carolyn Yoder and her team for all their hard work in serving the nice luncheon.

I just received information this morning, May 14, that the legislation passed SB 1227, the school retirement plan, at 4:15 a.m. during an all night session. This included an incentive for teachers who qualify to retire now at the expense of current school employees and future employees who will have to increase their contribution for health care and retirement. Read your next issue of Vanguard for more details. Another good reason to be a MARSP-BCC member! We need to keep up with what is happening. This may not affect us now, but one never knows in the future with our current economic state. There is talk about the possibility of holding an election this November to vote on opening the state constitution, which guarantees our pensions. This would not be in our best interests. Let's stay informed about this.

Now for some GOOD news! We will have an election and installation of officers on June 8. I am delighted that Norma Goldner, past President, has agreed to be Co-President with me for the coming year, a one year term for both of us and Rochelle Strunk has agreed serve as First Vice-President. In June, Rochelle will be planning the menus and places we will be holding

Scholarship Meeting and Luncheon

Day, Date, and Time: Tuesday, June 8, 2010. at 12:00 p.m.

Location: Saint Joseph-Lincoln Senior Center
3271 Lincoln Avenue
Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085-3520

Menu: Chicken & Ham, Vegetable Lasagna, Au Gratin Potatoes, Green Bean Casserole, Dinner Rolls, Butter, Veggie Tray and Dip, Dessert, and Coffee. To support the scholarship fund, chapter members are providing the desserts. Expect a variety of delicious, homemade desserts.

Program: Presentation on the Lest We Forget tribute to American veterans. (See article on page 4.) Election for First Vice President. Installation of newly elected officers. Presentation of Beverly Pringle Scholarships.

Reservations: To have sufficient food and to avoid paying for food that is not used, reservations are required. If you are not called during the ten days preceding the meeting, please call Oline Edge at 269-927-4157. You can also make your reservation by clicking on the "E-mail Your Reservation" box on the calendar page of the chapter website. (See the website article on page two.)

Buffet Cost: \$12.00

Eyeglasses: The collected of eyeglasses for donation to the Lions Club continues through fall.

the meetings next year. We still need a membership chair since Charles Long has agreed to be Treasurer, replacing Chuck Ahnert who served in this position since 1991.

Chuck Ahnert was honored with a MARSP Distinguished Service Award at the April 20 meeting. Some of his contributions besides being treasurer, are publishing 94 issues of the newsletter, doing the yearbook directory for our members, keeping track of membership lists sent by MARSP, attending Area 22 meetings as well as publishing the Area 22 directory. We appreciate all your talents, Chuck, and your many years of outstanding, dedicated service.

Our next meeting is the yearly Scholarship Luncheon on June 8 at the Saint Joseph-Lincoln Senior Center at noon. Diane Buczwinski and



April 20, 2010—Area 22 Assistant Director Rose Henderson presents the MARSP Award for Distinguished Service to Charles Ahnert during MARSP Annual Meeting.
Photo by Pat Wightman-Fisk

her committee are working hard on interviewing the scholarship candidates and selecting two \$750 winners as well as planning and serving the meal. All profits go to the Scholarship Fund. Please make reservations. Also, bring any old

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frames or lenses you would like to donate to the MARSP Statewide Community Project.

If you would like to help MARSP-BCC, we need a membership chair, callers, greeters, cashiers and PRIM presenters. Please contact any board or committee member or me. We appreciate your help!

Pat

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Dear BCC Readers of the Newsletter,

For some years now I have been the editor of the BCC Newsletter. The Newsletter was first published during the presidency of Emma Lou Wilson. We both thought that a newsletter would be a very good way to keep the membership informed about all of endeavors and the meaning of our organization.

The March 2010 issue was my 92nd newsletter for BCC. There was a tremendous change from the first issue to the format of the one published in March of this year.

I do want to thank the readers for the comments that I have received over the years and hope that the information was of service to you.

I know the next editor will be able to present the organization with a newsletter of top quality.

Thanks for allowing me be your editor over the past years.

—Charles H. Ahnert

MARSP-BCC Pre-Retirement Planning Information Meetings

For the first time in six years, a speaker from Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System made an appearance at the BCC Pre-Retirement Planning Information Meeting (PRIM) at Berrien RESA, 711 Saint Joseph Avenue, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-1583.

This year's program included Ray Fleming (East Lansing) of MPSERS speaking at two sessions on Monday, April 26, and Branko Bojici (Southfield) of BCBSM & Medicare appeared at

two sessions on Thursday, April 29. Attendance was good at all four sessions.

Vonda Van Til, of the Social Security Administration from Grand Rapids has been asked if she would be available to participate in next year's PRIM in Berrien County. She answered in the affirmative.

All three of these excellent speakers claim that they have been giving as many (or more) presentations in 2010 as they did in 2004. In April 2004, these three experts participated in our last big (four speakers) meeting at the BCISD (now the Berrien RESA).

With the permission of the Executive Board of the BCC, next year's PRIMs will have three excellent speakers on three separate days, each speaking on his or her area of expertise.

Public school employees preparing for retirement here in Southwest Michigan—as well as current retirees—are invited to attend these sessions. Flyers and press releases in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties will announce the meetings.

—Richard Brame, Coordinator

PRIM Presenters Needed

Training for Pre-Retirement Information Meeting (PRIM) presenters is scheduled in Lansing at the MARSP Training Center at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, September 13, 2010.

If you are a person who has the interest, the time, and the ability to present the retirement financial information to future retirees, MARSP will provide the training and support you need to enable you to provide this important service. Talk to Richard Brame, any of the MARSP-BCC officers, or contact MARSP directly.

Responses to MARSP Annual Meeting Evaluations

This article is a response to some of the responses on the 115 evaluations turned in during the April 20, 2010, MARSP Annual Meeting.

Many comments were positive. Some were mixed, for example, "Substandard food ..."; "Excellent meal!" Here are responses to several



Area 22 Director Monroe Johnson with Pat Wightman-Fisk at the April 20, 2010, MARSP Annual Meeting. The Berrien County Chapter received MARSP's top award.

—Photo by Bob Kucera, 2010-11 Area 22 Director

of the especially helpful critical responses:

Illegible text size: More than one person commented that the text on the screen and in the handouts was too small to read. MARSP the and facilitators have been made aware of this problem. We will remind MARSP of the problem when next year's DVD and handouts are prepared.

Missing name tags: One person commented on the fact that preprinted name tags were not available for some people. For the April 20 meeting, the wrong reservation list was used to print the name tags. We will take greater care to avoid this error in the future.

Area 22 Director and Assistant Director selection and election: First some background information: Area 22 includes Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, Saint Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Each chapter may have three voting members on the Area 22 Council. The purpose of the Area 22 Council is to facilitate communication between MARSP and the Area 22 chapters.

The Area 22 Director and Assistant Director are nominated by the chapter representatives who attend the Area 22 meetings. The Director and Assistant Director are elected by chapter delegates at the MARSP Annual meeting.

More than one candidate for each office could be nominated; however, candidates are sometimes hard to find. Consequently, this year only one candidate was nominated for each position.

Need written directions—instead of oral—for using the websites: To get to the MARSP-BCC website, search for marsp-bcc.org, and click on"

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Berrien County Association of School Personnel" or change the webpage address to—

<http://www.marsp.org/>

Once on the MARSP-BCC homepage, you can click on headings (white text and red background) to go to such pages as the calendar or view the most recent chapter newsletter.

Program, menu, and location information for the membership luncheon meetings will be added to the website calendar page as it becomes available.

You can make your reservation via e-mail for the next membership luncheon meeting by going to the calendar page and clicking on the **E-mail Your Reservation** box about halfway down the page.

From the MARSP-BCC homepage, you can get to the MARSP website by clicking on the MARSP logo at the bottom of the page.

Some information is available to anyone. (Try the headings in the gray column on the left side of the MARSP homepage.) Some information is restricted to MARSP members. If you are a MARSP member, you can log in and access that information by using your e-mail address and your password. Unless you have already changed it, your password is the first letter of your first name followed (without a space) your last name. Once you log in, you can change that password to something else.

To receive e-mailed MARSP-BCC announcements, put "ANNOUNCEMENT" in the subject line, and send an e-mail to—
info@marsp-bcc.org

Membership

If you—or someone you know needs a membership form—call Charles Long at (269) 982-0318. Dues may also be paid electronically on the MARSP Website: www.marsp.org/

MARSP-BCC dues are \$9.00 a year and chapter life membership dues are \$100.00. MARSP dues are \$30.00 a year; and MARSP life dues are \$600.00. MARSP life dues may be paid by five consecutive payments of \$130 or one lump payment of \$600. Members over 85 years of age have reduced dues. (Birth date must be on file at the MARSP Office.) Reduced dues are \$15.00 for MARSP and \$3.00

for BCC. Dues are payable by June 30 for continuing members. Others may pay whenever they retire.

The number of chapter members on the last day of June determines the number of voting delegates chapters have at the MARSP Annual Meeting. Chapters have one delegate for every fifty members. When difficult issues are voted on at the MARSP Annual meeting, the number of delegates can be critical. This is why we urge you to join MARSP and MARSP-BCC before the end of June.

Spouses of retired school personnel are also entitled—and encouraged—to join MARSP and MARSP-BCC.

Volunteers Needed

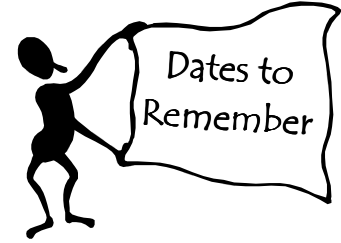
The new Silver Beach Carousel in St. Joseph has been up and running since January 2 and is a beautiful destination for many people of all ages. Lots of good memories are revived and lots of new memories are being made.

Many volunteers are needed to help it run smoothly. Currently it is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and between Memorial Day to Labor Day it will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week. Imagine the number of volunteers needed!

So for all of you who would like a fun, beautiful, happy place to volunteer, let me know. You can help by being a greeter, assisting inside the carousel with supervision, answering questions in the museum, helping in the gift shop, selling popcorn, helping with special events such as dances, proms, and fund raisers. You could even be trained to be an operator of the carousel. I have been the operator, which, needless to say, is a thrill.

A variety of three-hour volunteer shifts are available. If you are interested you can contact me, leave your name at the desk at the Silver Beach Center or go to the web site at www.silverbeachcarousel.com, click on Friends of the Carousel and read about it.

—Pat Wightman Fisk
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Tuesday, June 8, 2010—Scholarship Luncheon (see page one)

Thursday, June 17, 2010—MARSP Leadership Training Seminars, Greenville, Michigan

Monday, August 9, 2010—MARSP-BCC board meeting, 10:30 a.m., Area Agency on Aging Region 4, 2900 Lakeview Avenue, Saint Joseph

Monday, September 13—PRIM Training. Lansing.

Tuesday, September 14, 2010—MARSP-BCC membership luncheon meeting

Friday, October 8, 2010—MARSP Area 22 Council meeting at the Big T Restaurant, Lawton

Monday, October 11, 2010—MARSP-BCC board meeting, 10:30 a.m., Area Agency on Aging Region 42900 Lakeview Avenue, Saint Joseph

Tuesday, November 9, 2010—MARSP-BCC membership luncheon meeting

Monday, January 10, 2011—MARSP-BCC board meeting, 10:30 a.m., Area Agency on Aging Region 4, 2900 Lakeview Avenue, Saint Joseph

Tuesday, February 8, 2011—Activity

Monday, March 14, 2011—MARSP-BCC board meeting, 10:30 a.m., Area Agency on Aging Region 4, 2900 Lakeview Avenue, Saint Joseph

Tuesday, April 12, 2011—MARSP-BCC membership luncheon meeting and MARSP Annual Meeting

Monday, May 9, 2011—MARSP-BCC board meeting, 10:30 a.m., Area Agency on Aging Region 4, 2900 Lakeview Avenue, Saint Joseph

Tuesday, June 14, 2011—MARSP-BCC membership scholarship luncheon meeting

If you have recommendations for luncheon meeting programs, please contact Don Alsbro, Program Chair, at 269-925-7176 or dealsbro@sbcglobal.net.

Lest We Forget's An American Veterans Tribute

ST. JOSEPH, MI – This Father's Day weekend can be made even more memorable the a visit to "An American Veterans Tribute." The special event organized by local veterans' group, Lest We Forget, will run from June 17-20.

Setting the tone for days of tribute to veterans of numerous conflicts around the globe will be the 80%-size Vietnam Wall replica from American Veterans Traveling Tribute. An escorted honor tour through southwest Michigan on Wednesday, June 16, will precede the arrival and installation of the traveling Vietnam Wall. Commencing in New Buffalo, the tour will head northwest into Coloma, then take a southerly route through Dowagiac and into Niles before reaching St. Joseph. The Wall will be available for viewing 24 hours a day at St. Joseph High School's Dickinson Stadium, site of the Tribute.

Flying the colors and the laying of wreaths will be among Thursday morning's Opening Ceremonies. Personal stories told by veterans throughout the afternoon will offer the opportunity to tell and hear personal accounts of thoughts and feelings which have perhaps never been shared before. That evening, another thread in the fabric of war will be brought to light as the film War Dogs, America's Forgotten Heroes is shown at Celebration Cinema in Benton Harbor.

Other components of the American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) include displays about WWI, WWII (with an entire timeline of its events), Korea, Desert Storm, Iraq/Afghanistan and 9/11 featuring 3000 names and lighted twin towers. The Walk of Heroes will honor firefighters, law enforcement and casualties from the 2009 Fort Hood shooting. A Vietnam Remembered art display will give visualization to what some veterans lived through and others can only imagine.

Friday evening's ceremony will honor Berrien County's Killed in Action (KIA) in Vietnam along with our recent losses of Bob Heft, the designer of our nation's current 50-star flag and Art "Jibby" Jibilian, who was active in WWII's Halyard Mission in Yugoslavia.

Special recognition of 4000 Vietnam war dogs killed in action and their handlers will be seen in Saturday's program with Vietnam veteran dog handlers. Johnny Mayo will be on hand with a trained dog and Larry Chilcoat will touch on his efforts to bring the War Dog Monument to Washington, DC. Canine demonstrations will be among activities not to miss! On Saturday afternoon, a presentation on Agent Orange will explore the herbicide's use defoliating the dense jungle cover during the Vietnam War. The evening will hold comic relief as the Lest We Forgetfuls Precision Drill Team takes stage. It will be anyone's guess how orderly *that* conduct will be, but promises to provide amusement.

From last year's successful event, Lest We Forget is bringing back the popular 20th Century Military Museum as well as a sampling of war with Vietnam re-enactors of the 25th Infantry Division. Medal of Honor recipients Hershel Williams, Marine (Iwo Jima) and Duane Dewy, Marine (Korea), will be among the special guests. The 126 Michigan National Guard Army Band and The Liberty Sisters will both perform on Saturday. Medevac Huey 369 returns along with period armor and military vehicles. On Sunday, join in concord as the Ecumenical Church service will be conducted by veteran Chaplains Stan Beach, John Steer, Hershel Williams and Bud Baker.

You may walk away from An American Veterans Tribute feeling enlightened, perhaps inspired, maybe even astonished - but you will not walk away empty. You will have learned your "freedom is not free." Lest We Forget reminds us to be forever grateful to American soldiers past and present ... lest we forget. The event admission is free.

People wanting more information should contact Don Alsbro of Lest We Forget at 269-925-7176 or dealsbro@sbcglobal.net.

MARSP-BCC Newsletter is the news bulletin of the Berrien County Chapter of the Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel and is published at various times of the year. Average circulation: 800. It is the current policy of MARSP and the MARSP-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].