

# F Y I



## WORKSHOPS FOR POTENTIAL RETIREES

If you have a friend or colleague who is a currently employed TABCO member within five years of retirement, you may want to pass along the information that there will be workshops offered online:

### “Understanding Your Retirement”

This virtual workshop is sponsored by the TABCO and ESPBC Member Benefits Committee and is presented by Integrated Financial Solutions, Inc.

Topics to be covered:

- Preparing for income in retirement years.
- Pension and payout options in retirement.
- Social Security retirement benefits.
- Income from investments

**November 10, 4:30 or December 8, 4:30**

To register for these workshops, there are Eventbrite links for each date provided on the TABCO website calendar at [tabco.org](http://tabco.org)

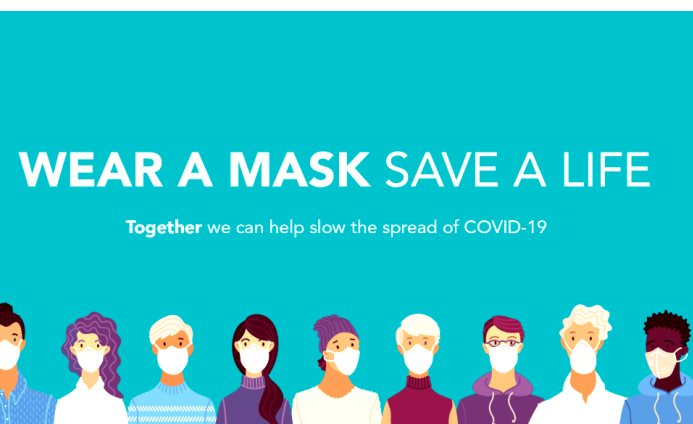
## WHY DO WE WANT YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?



- ♦To reach you QUICKLY with updates and information
- ♦To seek your input via our surveys

In our efforts to reach out to you, the email addresses that we have are provided to us by MSEA—if you are unsure whether or not they have a correct email address for you, you may send it to [bookends68@comcast.net](mailto:bookends68@comcast.net) and we will forward it to the appropriate MSEA personnel. Thanks for helping us keep you in the loop!

The **TABCO-RETIRED MESSENGER** is published three times each year and is mailed to all members. We hope you find something of interest or something useful to you in each edition. If you have items to contribute, please let us know. On the other hand, if you wish to be deleted from our mailing list, we will do so if asked.



**TABCO-Retired is a class of membership that is affiliated with MSEA-Retired and NEA-Retired**

### TABCO-R Steering Committee Members:

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Julia Hinton-VanHook, Edward Kitlowski, Cindy North  
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# TABCO-R MESSENGER

RETIRED~NOT EXPIRED  
FALL/WINTER 2020  
volume 6 number 1

TABCO-RETIRED MEMBERS ~INFORMED, INVOLVED, CONNECTED AND PROTECTED

## FALL MEETING TO FOCUS ON HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

### “THIS TOO SHALL PASS”

I am a fan of quotations, as anyone who has ever received an email from me could affirm. I considered several different ones as I began writing this, including the famous one from Winston Churchill, “*If you are going through hell, keep going.*” We do not know how our far-flung members are faring during this pandemic, but please be assured that as your retiree planning committee, we have been keeping you in mind as we have held meetings on Zoom and puzzled through what we can do to accomplish the slogan above of keeping you “informed, involved, connected and protected.”

### AND THE SURVEY SAID...

To that end, we put together a survey via “Survey Monkey,” sent to all those members for whom we have a valid email address. Prior to sending it, several of us attempted to contact those of you for whom we did not have email addresses. We were able to add a few more email addresses through these efforts, but in many cases, the telephone numbers were out of service, or calls went to voicemail and messages were not returned.

Unfortunately, only 23.6% of those who received the survey seized the opportunity to respond.

### THE BEST LAID PLANS...CAN CHANGE

Forging ahead, we began to plan for a “virtual” Fall Forum/Annual Members Meeting rather than our usual in-person themed presentations and luncheon. We had suggested several topics in the survey, intending to obtain a speaker on the most popular one. In the interim, something occurred to change our plans for the topic to be covered. Read on...

Since our inception in 2014, we have worked to demonstrate the value of connection between active and retired members. In the past month, the strong relationships we have built with TABCO leadership have borne out that importance.

We were contacted by Executive Director Glen Galante when TABCO learned that changes to retiree healthcare benefits were proposed by Baltimore County government. He and President Cindy Sexton brought us in on the early presentations and discussions in August. Since then, steering committee members have studied the charts and other materials, and submitted numerous questions, which have been

answered through TABCO’s contacts in the school system, county government and the new management company, Labor First, as well as with input from MSEA’s Dan Gottheimer.

Though the county’s plan would have flipped all retirees to a new version of Cigna coverage automatically, we took the position that this is no time to alarm retirees, especially as they wanted to put this in place by January 2021. This would have given retirees little time to study the plans and make decisions.

### “TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE.”

We are glad to report that this has been resolved in a way that we believe will be less confusing and more sensitive during a time that is already stressful. We have been informed that retirees will be maintained in their current version of Cigna (Medicare Surround) with an option to choose the new plan (Medicare Advantage). As in the past, the cost for healthcare coverage will increase. There may be reasons that retirees will want to switch to the Advantage version—including that it is expected to cost less than the Surround version, but that will be an individual choice. We advise each of you to compare the coverages before making a choice.

Given the importance of our healthcare benefits, we decided that the “Fall Forum” will consist of a virtual presentation of the proposals with the opportunity for attendees to ask questions. Our TABCO leaders have agreed to be with us for this meeting. Two representatives of the Labor First management company will join us as well.

In order to join the meeting, we ask that you register via this Eventbrite link:

**<https://fallforumnovember2020.eventbrite.com>**

Those who register will be sent an email by November 16 with the link to the Zoom meeting of November 18. **See page 3 for more details.**

~Angela Leitzer  
[bookends68@comcast.net](mailto:bookends68@comcast.net)



# A TABCO "institution" retires



*A quiet force, the historian, the go-to person for all TABCO knowledge, "the right arm" to TABCO presidents: there are many titles that have been attached, but she has definitely earned the title of "institution;" the "treasure" named Lisa Lev-ee has retired. Hired in 1977, Lisa worked for the association, which she refers to as "my TABCO," until March 31,*

*2020. She retired amid the panicky closings due to the pandemic, but she had already been interviewed at that point. Her retirement celebration of 43 years of association service is still on hold, but we didn't want to hold off on sharing some of what we learned about Lisa any longer.*

Asked what most people do not know about her, Lisa, who worked her way from receptionist to office manager at TABCO, and whose job included significant book-keeping, told us that she graduated from Towson State University in 1976 with a degree in early childhood education. No wonder she has been so skilled at taking care of teachers!

Lisa offered some comments on her various "bosses." Of Ray Suarez, former TABCO President, she said, "I always told Ray he would make the best TABCO receptionist because he knows EVERYBODY—and if he does not, he will introduce himself to them in the first minutes they walk into the building." About retired Executive Director Bob Anzelc, she said, "As most people know, my position worked very closely with the executive director and Bob and I just clicked. He used to call me 'Radar' because we thought alike a lot of the times."

Regarding her work with TABCO Treasurer John R. Wilkins, Lisa said, "I am ending my career working with one of the nicest men I have ever met, as treasurer. My position works hand in hand with the treasurer of the association and we have developed such a good relationship and a deep respect for each other."

**Among the other stories and memories that Lisa takes with her into retirement...**

**Q. What have been the worst and best parts of your job?**

**LL:** I truly love working here – it is all I know. I always had respect for teachers. It hurts my heart that the average person has no idea how hard teachers work, how much they care for their students, how much money they spend out of their own pockets, how they work on week-ends (and sometimes get their families to help grade papers, decorate bulletin boards, etc.) And now teaching has actually become a dangerous job...No wonder so many teachers leave the profession in the first few years. I have loved meeting so many caring individuals over the

years; this job has given me many of my closest and dearest friends.

I have to mention that there is a saying "failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine." You come in and have plans for your work day and they go away because something else needs to be done, even though it could have been done earlier, but you just take a breath and proceed. Because in 40+ years last minute things do happen!

**Q. What changes have you seen over your 43 years with TABCO?**

**LL:** It seems no one wants paper copies anymore. I am of the old school and I like holding a document in my hand. I have adjusted somewhat to that, but give me paper any-time.

We had eight secretaries when I came and now we have four. We have more UniServ Staff and more members than before, but less support staff and still nothing falls through the cracks! We are still fighting to protect the contract for our members. I know we have come a long way, but I wish the average educator would consider where they would be without TABCO as their professional organization!

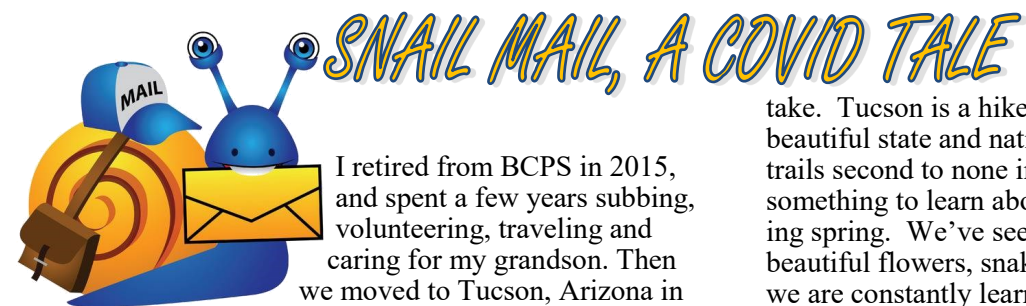
**Q. Do you have any funny stories about your time at TABCO?**

**LL:** When I was Mr. Gregory's [Jim Gregory, former Executive Director] secretary I had to type from tapes (from a Dictaphone—how old am I?). I always dreaded those tapes—when I would take them out of the machine and they were 20 minutes long it could take me forever to type with getting the phones, opening the mail, etc. But bless Mr. Gregory; he would sing to me sometimes on the tapes to break up the boredom of him just talking and talking.

One time after work, this was years ago, all the secretaries went over to one of the girls' houses and they gave me a perm. What was I thinking? I did not even want to come out of the house, so dear Shirley [Shirley King, former office manager] would come up to my office every hour and spray my hair to keep it down: never again!

**Best wishes and deep appreciation, Lisa! (And remember, "there's no place like home...")**

Though there isn't adequate space to share all of Lisa's stories here, we look forward to a future event at which she can share more in "living color." As with many of us, Lisa's retirement plans are in hiatus due to the current health crisis, but family, especially her adored granddaughter Morgan, play a huge role. She met her husband, Melvin, in the same month and year that she began working for TABCO and they now share retirement together. After working with eleven TABCO presidents and six executive directors, Lisa's take on it all is, "I feel extremely blessed and my heart is overwhelmed with all the kindnesses that have been shown to me by working at TABCO!" *(And on how Lisa is regarded by a former boss, see page 3 for a comment from former TABCO/current MSEA President Cheryl Bost)*



I retired from BCPS in 2015, and spent a few years subbing, volunteering, traveling and caring for my grandson. Then we moved to Tucson, Arizona in July of 2019 with big plans to see the West. In March, my husband took me to the Grand Canyon for my birthday. I had been there as a nine year old but remembered little of it and I wanted to see the canyon before it got too hot and crowded. You can't move to Arizona and not see the amazing Grand Canyon. We spent a wonderful few days at the South Rim, just before life dramatically changed. On the day we returned to Tucson, we stopped in a Starbucks in Flagstaff to find the tables covered and the chairs stacked – take out service only. A day later restrictions went into effect. No more pool parties with my cousins and late night card games. No more yoga or Zumba at the gym. No Alaskan cruise or week in Vancouver. No trip to Seattle. I felt fortunate to be retired, but I also felt so confined. I had last been home in December but 2500 miles of distance from children and grandchildren separated us and there would be no hopping on a plane to visit whenever I wanted. Our spring flights to Baltimore were cancelled. My Southwest points continue to accumulate. FaceTime has to suffice until the next visit east.

I noticed on social media how quickly friends were developing COVID-19 projects. Making masks, quilting, knitting—I was never good at those things. Others were purging a la Marie Kondo. I had just done that when moving from my home in Perry Hall where I had lived since 1990.

I always liked writing and getting letters. So, I decided to write to people, to ease the blues and confinement of the stay at home orders. After a while, replies started rolling in: some handwritten, some typed, and some via email and text. I set a goal of 100 letters. I began writing to the people who had written back to me. Why stop at 100? I kept going, writing not just to good friends and family, but cousins three and four times removed, acquaintances, former colleagues, Maryland neighbors and new ones. The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

One day, when I was more than halfway to my goal, I read an Op Ed in *The Baltimore Sun* by Courtney Jenkins, a postal worker ("Don't forget the postal workers during the coronavirus pandemic"). Jenkins seeks support of USPS, under threat of privatization. After corresponding briefly with Jenkins about my COVID project, she told me USPS encourages pen pal writing. So now I was cheering up people under confinement and supporting the post office as well. A win-win.

Being stuck, however, in my new town is not hard to

take. Tucson is a hikers' and cyclists' paradise with beautiful state and national parks and a network of bike trails second to none in the country. There is always something to learn about life in the desert, especially during spring. We've seen cactus produce unbelievably beautiful flowers, snakes come out of hibernation, and we are constantly learning how to coexist with all the wildlife new to us. A king snake will eat a rattler. A javelina can destroy a garden; hence a wall around most every yard, and you are supposed to leave the tarantulas alone as they will attack the scorpions. Bobcats and mountain lions still roam. We do not venture out at night for walks after dark.

We spent the spring on lots of walks and bike rides. When the temperature exceeded 100 in June, we headed north on camping trips to Williams and Sedona to see more of the state. We also went to Utah to Bryce Canyon, which is beautiful.

Here we are now, still in Tucson and still waiting; waiting to go to Baltimore. While I wait, there are (very) early morning walks and swimming but much time indoors so I keep writing. I've slowed down now a little but am still writing letters and postcards. Our restrictions were lifted in May, so we venture out a bit but it's not the same. I lament the loss of my much-anticipated summertime on the East Coast. I am still waiting until it seems prudent to travel.

I just finished letter number 185. Why not go for 200? Like the old AT&T long distance commercials on television used to say, "Reach out and touch someone." That's my contribution to living through these crazy times. Who doesn't like to hear: "You've Got Mail"?

The original version of this article can be found by searching Anne Groth Arizona Star or at [https://tucson.com/opinion/local/local-opinion-youve-got-snail-mail/article\\_ac0b9bfl-21c0-5611-9e70-7a8a47c86991.html](https://tucson.com/opinion/local/local-opinion-youve-got-snail-mail/article_ac0b9bfl-21c0-5611-9e70-7a8a47c86991.html)

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