

JOIN US FOR THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2024 Time: 12:00 to 2:30 p.m.

Location: Liberatore's Ristorante, 9515 Deereco Road, Timonium, MD 21093

Cost includes: lunch buffet, assorted desserts, soft drinks, tax and gratuity--\$40*

***Members of TABCO-Retired are receiving \$10 toward their luncheon cost as a gift in appreciation for their commitment to the organization and will pay only \$30.**

The cost for all others is \$40.

Use this link to register online and make your payment: <https://tabco.org/about-us/tabco-retired/> **OR register & then send a check made out to TABCO**, which must be received by November 8, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. **TABCO Headquarters, 1220 E. Joppa Rd, Bldg C, Suite 514, Towson, MD 21286**

Note: Some of our members are not electronically enabled. If this applies to you and you wish to attend, you may call Kim Melfa at TABCO, 410-828-6403.

The cutoff date to register is November 1, however, space is limited. Registration will be ended when capacity has been reached. First come, first served.

Luncheon Menu:

- 🍷Bruschetta 🍷Caesar Salad
- 🍷Chicken Piccata 🍷Penne Vodka (vegetarian, not vegan)
- 🍷Mixed Vegetables 🍷Bread & Butter
- 🍷Assorted mini pastries
- 🍷Coffee, Tea, Iced Tea, Soda (cash bar will be available)



Things to remember about your benefits (open enrollment is coming soon!)

1. Medical and prescription benefits for Medicare-eligible retirees are managed by RetireeFirst. Vision, Dental and Life Insurance options are managed through BCPS. The contact numbers for RetireeFirst are 443-290-3114 or 833-550-1676.
2. You MUST switch to Medicare as soon as you are eligible. BCPS and RetireeFirst interpret this as "Medicare becomes effective the first day of the month in which you reach age 65 or otherwise become eligible due to disability. For additional information regarding Medicare, please contact Social Security Administration." Neither BCPS nor RetireeFirst will do this for you. If it is not done by their deadlines, you risk having your coverage canceled (this is not in line with state guidelines, and we continue to work on this problem).
3. As the open enrollment period for 2025 benefits approaches, ask questions sooner than later! There are very tight restrictions on making changes to benefits selections—limited to specific "life change" events. The "Forms Repository" on the BCPS website has a form entitled "Qualifying Life Event Benefit Change Form."
4. It can be difficult to locate information on the BCPS website, but there is much to be found there—with some exploration. On the main page at bcps.org, use the Staff tab and scroll down to Office of Benefits and Retirement. Another resource is the Employee and Retiree Customer Service Center (443-809-1000).

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

TABCO-R Steering Committee Members:

Chairperson: Angela Leitzer

Elizabeth Ceanfaglione, Stephanie Foy

Julia Hinton-VanHook, Edward Kitlowski, Cindy North

Roxann Russo, Jane Sacks, Barbara Tyler,

Mary Ellen Vecchioni, Cheryl Vourvoulas

Messenger Editors: Stephanie Foy, Angela Leitzer

To reach the TABCO-Retired Steering Committee, email: bookends68@comcast.net

Teachers Association of Baltimore County

President Cindy Sexton, Vice President Kelly Olds

Treasurer Frank Soda, Secretary Seth Rich

and the TABCO Board of Directors

Executive Director Ben Forstenzer

TABCO office: 410-828-6403 fax: 410-337-7081

1220 C, Suite 514 E. Joppa Rd. Towson, MD 21286

Contact person for TABCO-R at the TABCO office:

Kim Melfa, kmelfa@mseane.org



TABCO-R MESSENGER

RETIRED~NOT EXPIRED
AUTUMN 2024
volume 9 number 3
10th ANNIVERSARY ~ ten years of advocacy for retirees

We are celebrating the 2014 establishment of TABCO-Retired and ten years of retiree advocacy! TABCO-Retired members are invited to come celebrate with your steering committee and some special guests at a festive luncheon.

(Note: this event is in lieu of our annual Fall Forum.)

November 13, 2024, from 12:00 to 2:30 p.m.

at Liberatore's Ristorante, 9515 Deereco Rd., Timonium, MD.

To attend, members must register ~ turn to page 4 for details!

VOTING IS IN, PROGRESS CONTINUES

By Angela Leitzer, bookends68@comcast.net

PROGRESS

Over the course of ten years, TABCO-R has made significant progress in advocating for the protection of retiree employee benefits—strongly representing members with healthcare benefits issues, bringing attention and resolution to the effects of a BCPS ransomware attack on pension deductions (including eventually winning refunds and compensation amounting to over \$750K), and serving as a connection between retired members and BCPS staff.

ONGOING BENEFITS ADVOCACY

We have been in continual contact with BCPS about 2025 healthcare benefits. It is not easy to get succinct, specific answers from BCPS about benefits...however, we can report that the most recent reply from BCPS is, ***"We are still waiting on the county government to get final approval on the Medicare updates. Please keep in mind that the surround plans are not being eliminated from the offerings."***

We hear from members over and over that you want the Medicare Surround option to be preserved, and we have emphasized its importance repeatedly to BCPS. The above reply seems reassuring...but stay tuned.

RETIREES GAIN THE VOTE

With the strong support of current TABCO President Cindy Sexton, the persistence of TABCO-R, and work by the Bylaws Committee, a multi-year effort resulted in the passage of a TABCO Bylaws change providing for a VOTING retiree member of the Board of Directors at the 2024 August Representative Assembly. It was then passed by 98.1% in the required all-member vote.

This created an instant vacancy for the retiree position and I am proud to report that I was elected at the September RA to serve as the first retired TABCO

Board of Directors member. (A regular election will be held in March of 2025.) But this is not about me, or any individual who may hold this position—it is about achieving recognition of the retiree class of membership and bringing our voice to the table. It is also about respecting the work we do as retirees which contributes to the good of the Association.

Not insignificant are the dues that we continue to pay, supporting the cost of doing Association business. However, more importantly, are the *active human resources* that many retirees continue to contribute. Among those are: showing up for union actions, supporting education-friendly candidates for government positions, serving on TABCO committees such as Sick Leave Bank and Retirement & Recognition, providing helping hands as needed for various activities, and donating time, money, and raffle baskets to fund KidCare.

Although many of our retired members are spread across the nation (and a few outside of the U.S.), all of us have the opportunity to contribute in some way.

KIDCARE*

As a meaningful way to celebrate both our anniversary and our progress, we suggest that our members make a contribution to KidCare. Any amount is helpful, as every penny goes directly to needy Baltimore County students. It is easy to do and tax-deductible. Checks made out to KidCare may be mailed to TABCO at 1220 C, East Joppa Rd., Suite 514, Towson, MD 21286.

A quicker way to donate is to use the link on the TABCO website:

<https://tabco.org/member-benefits/472-2/>

See page 3, "VOTING, PROGRESS"

Starring (on stage and behind the scenes):



Cheryl Vourvoulas is a tireless worker whose time and talents serve the community in a variety of ways—a retired elementary teacher, she still serves as a substitute, a member of the TABCO-R committee, works with the youth in her Masonic organization, and is both an actress and a theater leader. Read on for more about this active retiree.

stage, he whispered to someone else in our family that he thought that one lady on stage looked like me. Surprise!! And that truly was the beginning of the return to stage for me. I was asked by the BSO Chorus master to decide if I was going to perform or sing. While my music knowledge was greatly enriched by my BSO choral work, my heart was better fed by being on the stage. My daughter and I have since gone on to appear in many musicals together, including *Into the Woods*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Funny Girl*, and most recently *Evita*. This show holds a special place in my heart. She played the role of Evita and I was cast as none other than her mother. If you know the show at all, you might remember that it begins and ends with Eva Peron's death and the finale is the funeral. I cried every performance and needed to carry a

What was your position in BCPS before your retirement?

I was an Early Childhood major for both my undergrad and master's degrees. So all of my 33 years at BCPS were spent in a primary grade, predominately grades one and two, with the last three years in my favorite, Kindergarten.

You have served on the TABCO-Retired Steering Committee since its inception. What motivated you to take on this responsibility?

After having served under three TABCO Presidents as their appointed recording secretary, and serving at several state and national conventions representing TABCO, I was encouraged and invited to continue serving TABCO by joining the newly formed TABCO-R committee.

We have seen you on stage! Tell us a bit about your acting "career."

I had always been a performer of sorts throughout my life. I sang in my elementary school's chorus, both middle and high school choirs, and performed in the school musicals. I once had to play a pickpocket boy in the show *Oliver*. Then came a long hiatus of nothing but church choir singing throughout college and my early years of teaching and raising my daughter. But the tug to return to singing and performing was always there. I auditioned for the Baltimore Symphony's Chorus and found myself learning very difficult choral pieces in Italian, Latin, Russian, and even French. But then something very exciting happened in 1987. My eight year old daughter had already made her own debut as Annie in a high school production of *Annie*. That summer, she went on to perform in Cockpit in Court's production of *Evita*. She was invited to audition for the CCBC Essex fall academic production of *Here's Love, the Miracle on 34th Street*. I thought, "Hey, I can do this, too!" We both were cast in the show. I even kept it a secret from my own father. He, of course, wanted to see his little granddaughter on stage. He was told that I was backstage helping her. Then with my first appearance on the



secretary for that board for over 15 years. I have been responsible for supporting the cast of performers as a production liaison, usher, house manager or simply selling the audience their sodas, snacks or raffle tickets for our fundraising.

Is it possible for other retirees with an interest in theater to become involved in some way?

Retirees are welcome to volunteer to help DCT with concessions or ushering. This gives them a free ticket for the production. The Box Office at CCBC can provide them with the opportunity to sign up. Call 443.840.ARTS (2787), ask for Lisa.

Are there productions coming up that folks might enjoy?

Our first production of the season is *Always Patsy Cline*. It runs two weekends, October 25-27 and November 1-3. In the spring, we will be producing *Hairspray*. For further information about time and tickets, go to www.ccbctickets.com or call 443.840.ARTS to purchase your tickets by phone.

RETIRED-
NOT EXPIRED!
RETIREE
HIGHLIGHT

"VOTING, PROGRESS"

(from page 1)

**It would be special for you to indicate that your donation is in honor of the 10th Anniversary of TABCO-Retired.*

AND SPEAKING OF VOTING



Retired educators are among the most informed and astute of American voters.

When we use our votes to elect leaders who have committed to supporting and improving public education, and who have

shown their support for educators' rights to organize and unionize, we are continuing to use our educator voices to benefit students and our communities. As the elders of the education community—not only by age, but by our attainment of experience and wisdom, we have a responsibility to lead by example!

Avoid frauds, scams & ID theft



We were fortunate to have Debby Chenoweth, long-time Public Service Officer with the Baltimore County Police Department, with us at our 2023 Fall Forum to speak to us on protecting ourselves in a "Fraud Rich Environment." She shared these useful guidelines.

1. Do not say "Hello" when you answer an unknown number. (They might be just confirming your number.)
2. Never say "Yes" if you are asked "Can you hear me?" (That "yes" could be misused.)
3. Never give out personal information over the phone, on the internet or through social media.
4. Do not send money at the request of telephone or internet solicitors.
5. Don't leave outgoing mail in your home mail box (can be an invitation to identity theft).
6. Report suspicious activities to the police.
7. Check on credentials of caregivers or service providers. Protect personal information in your home.
8. Shred the items when disposing of personal documents.
9. Protect your social security number—it isn't necessary to reveal it to every entity that asks for it.
10. Never click on links from unsolicited emails.
11. Don't use obvious passwords, such as your mother's maiden name.
12. Inspect any device into which you are placing your debit/credit card (watch out for "skimmers"—devices attached to pay points, ATMs, etc., that collect personal information).

HISTORY

Retired membership at the national, state, and local levels of the association has a complicated history.

Though there had been recognition of a class of retired membership going back to 1950 in NEA Bylaws, and as far back as 1978 in MSEA (then MSTA) bylaws, this was largely meaningless. The words on the page did not translate into actual practice until much later.

The provision for retirees was delegated to a separate entity, the NRTA (National Retired Teachers Association), until 1975, when retirees were brought into NEA. "An amendment adopted in 1983 by the RA established NEA-Retired as a special program of NEA and redefined the Retired membership class, the rights of Retired members, and included NEA-Retired representation on NEA's Board of Directors." Similarly, the state association's version, MSTA-R (now MSEA-R), was formed in the mid-to-late 1990's and the Retired Advisory Council was placed into the bylaws in 2003, making it possible for retired members to be elected at the state level to serve as delegates to the MSEA and NEA Representative Assemblies.

TABCO-Retired's history began with several challenges, the first of which was a group that had called itself "Re-TABCO" for decades, though it was not affiliated and paid no membership dues to TABCO. This group and its state level entity were/are affiliated with the AARP, not TABCO. Though these groups (BCRSPA and MRSPA) have no connection with TABCO, they continue to cause confusion for retiring members.

Another challenge to the formation of TABCO-Retired consisted of a degree of reluctance on the part of some active leaders, who, having never dealt with retirees as a group, had to be convinced that such a thing could be an advantage to the association.

In October of 2012, TABCO President Abby Beytin was approached about activating the retired class of membership provided for in the bylaws and approval was given to hold an exploratory meeting. A group of retirees who had been active in TABCO was invited to meet to generate ideas that would inform the development of a retiree branch of TABCO. Though enthusiasm for the idea was expressed at this initial meeting, two years passed with no progress.

It became obvious that it would take a formal proposal to the TABCO Board of Directors to move forward. After several delays, the board finally gave approval on December 14, 2014, for the establishment of a TABCO-Retired Committee.

Ten years later, the core group of seven has evolved into **YOU**—each of you is an important building block forming the strong foundation of retiree membership.

