

BenefitNews

NEWS ABOUT THE MINISTRIES OF BROTHERS BENEFIT TRUST

SECOND QUARTER 2008

Credit Union

Get paid to use your debit card

Get paid to spend money? Now you can with your Church of the Brethren Credit Union debit card.

Checking accounts, which are now available through Church of the Brethren Credit Union, come with a debit card. Each time you choose the “credit,” or signature, option with the card, you will receive a 5 cent contribution to your account.

The cards will give members instant access to their funds and will allow members to make transfers, withdrawals, and deposits; and to check their account balances,

“We are excited to begin offering checking accounts with debit cards,” said Dennis Kingery, director of Credit Union Operations. “We want to be our members’ first choice for all of their financial needs. Offering checking accounts with debit cards moves us one step closer. We are especially excited about these new features as our members will now have immediate access to their funds.”

An initial \$25 deposit is required to open a CoBCU checking account. There is no required balance thereafter; but a minimum balance of \$25 must be maintained in a savings account. Checking

accounts, however, will pay interest if you maintain a balance of over \$500.

A debit card will be issued automatically upon opening a checking account. The member’s Personal Identification Number will be delivered by mail.

“By offering this new service, we hope to provide convenience to our members while promoting fiscal responsibility by encouraging them to spend money that they have instead of incurring credit card debt,” Kingery said. “We are continually trying to meet the Credit Union’s mission of promoting sound financial practices.”

Safety precautions have been incorporated for the protection of cardholders. If a debit card is lost or stolen, the member has 60 days to claim the fraudulent charges without penalty. If a PIN is lost or stolen and reported within two business days, the member is only liable for charges up to \$50.



Continued on page 5

BBT to strengthen insurance plans

Although the 2007 Annual Conference delegates voted to discontinue the Brethren Medical Plan for participants in the Ministers’ Group, the delegates affirmed that Brethren Benefit Trust should continue offering ancillary insurances to all church employees.

At its April meeting, the Brethren Benefit Trust

Board affirmed this direction by appointing an advisory team to work with Randy Yoder, Insurance Services director, to strengthen BBT’s Dental, Vision, Life, Long-Term Disability, Long-Term Care, and Medicare Supplement insurance offerings. Named to the committee were Board members John Braun, Karen Orpurt Crim, and Deb Romary.

The committee’s directive is to navigate through the challenges that are crippling the national insurance system to provide the best service at the lowest possible premiums. The committee will meet throughout the year and is expected to issue a report at the Board’s November meeting.

In other news from the Board meeting, the Board set its 2008-2009 Brethren Pension Plan annuity rates. From July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009, Account A funds will be annuitized at 7 percent; Account B funds at 6 percent. — ND



Randy Yoder, BBT’s Insurance Services director, discusses BBT’s work to strengthen all ancillary insurance plans.

Board News

Staff Contacts

President: Wilfred Nolen
Publisher: Nevin Dulabaum
Managing Editor: Patrice Nightingale
Layout/Design: Lauryn Klotzbach
Intern: Jamie Denlinger

Benefit News is published by Brethren Benefit Trust, an agency of the Church of the Brethren that provides insurance and pension benefits; employee financial services; credit union, asset management, and deferred gifts services; and information technology services on behalf of the denomination and the wider church.

Address corrections and editorial suggestions:
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Should I pay or should I play?

More than 130 million Americans are expecting to receive a portion of the \$168 billion stimulus bill passed by Congress and signed by President Bush in early February. The intention is to stimulate the economy by providing cash flow that wasn't there before; however,



according to a survey by the National Retail Federation, only 40 percent of Americans plan to spend their rebate checks, pouring less than \$43 billion into the economy. Just under \$30 billion will be put toward paying down debt, approximately \$25 billion is

expected to be invested or saved, and the remainder will be distributed among various other choices.

How will you spend your check? Here are some suggestions —

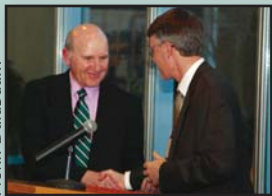
- **Pay off debts.** Instead of spending your rebate check on new items, pay off your previous purchases. At the end of 2007, the Federal Reserve estimated a total of \$943.5 billion in credit card debt in the U.S. The issue of Americans living above their means is causing a growing number of people to fall behind on payments, or to pay only the monthly minimum. Using this rebate check to make larger payments this month, or even paying off your balances, will reduce the cost of accruing interest. No credit debt? Consider putting more money toward your mortgage payment.

- **Place your rebate check into savings.** Prioritizing your spending can go a long way toward saving you money. Placing your money into a savings account will accumulate interest, as well as create an emergency cash fund for unexpected purchases. If your savings account has a low interest rate, due to a recent easing of interest rates, consider placing your money in a 6- or 12-month CD. Investing your money into some form of savings account might reduce impulse purchases, and thus save you money.
- **Put your check toward your retirement.** Saving for retirement early and often provides a greater long-term benefit than putting that money toward an extra vacation today. Whether starting a retirement plan with your rebate check or adding to current investments, you are allowing additional time for your money to accrue interest and grow. Consider investing in an IRA or use the rebate money to add to an existing one.
- **Follow the Manchester Church of the Brethren.** In anticipation of many of its members receiving rebate checks, the Manchester Church of the Brethren Board recently voted to “encourage the congregation to gift to REACH and the Food Pantry a tithe or more of their upcoming federal tax rebate,” according to the North Manchester, Ind., congregation’s newsletter. Follow the Manchester church’s actions and start this initiative at your own church to help our brothers and sisters in need. There are many ways to spend your rebate check — some creative, some essential. For more ideas, go to www.bankrate.com/brm/news/pf/20010608a.asp. — JD

BBT Staff Recognitions

BBT honors two long-term staff

The Brethren Benefit Trust Board and staff honored two long-term employees at its annual recognition dinner, held Sat., April 19, in Elgin, Ill.



Nevin Dulabaum

Wilfred E. Nolen (left, with Board Chairman Harry Rhodes) was honored for his 25 years as chief administrator and trustee of the Church of the Brethren Pension Board. Since 1988, Nolen has also served as president of Brethren Benefit Trust. In addition to his cumulative 42 years as a denominational church employee, he has served as a long-time church musician and Board member for two Church of the Brethren institutions.

Pat Papay (left, with Donna March, director of office operations), joined BBT in August 1995 as receptionist and general office services support staff. More recently, she served in a support role in the Church of the Brethren Credit Union office. Papay retired on March 29.



Nevin Dulabaum

Insurance Services

Thirty-one days and counting

You can't afford to procrastinate where your insurance is concerned. Brethren Benefit Trust offers several different insurance policies for pastors and all church and district staff members beginning in a new job, but it is necessary to act quickly to be eligible.

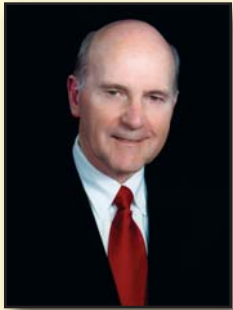
Pastors or staff members starting work at a new placement have 31 days following their start-up date to apply for Long-Term Disability, Life, Dental, and Vision insurances through Brethren Insurance Services. Thus, it may be beneficial to request application materials for enrollment prior to the actual start date of a new assignment.

To request an enrollment packet or more information, contact Tammy Chudy at **800-746-1505, ext. 372**, or at tchudy_bbt@brethren.org.

BBT events at Annual Conference 2008

Honoring a quarter century of service

A reception honoring retiring Brethren Benefit Trust President Wil Nolen for his 25 years of leadership with the Brethren Pension Plan



will be held Sunday, July 13, at 4:30 p.m., at the Marriott Hotel in Richmond, Va.

Under Wil's leadership, the Pension Plan has provided secure retirement investing for pastors; and congregational, district, and national church employees. In 1988, the Pension Plan was placed under the Brethren Benefit Trust umbrella. Two years later, Wil spearheaded the creation of the Brethren

Foundation, which now manages more than \$135 million in assets for more than 400 individuals, congregations, and organizations. Wil was instrumental in BBT becoming the administrator of the Church of the Brethren Credit Union in 2004, which has seen its assets grow by 20 percent under BBT's management. Wil has also worked to strengthen the Church Workers' Assistance Plan, which provides assistance to qualified current and former church workers.

BBT invites everyone at Annual Conference to honor Wil by attending the reception. For more information, contact Cindy Bravos at **800-746-1505, ext 368**, or cbravos_bbt@brethren.org.

Insight Sessions

Join us for one of the many insight sessions offered by BBT this Annual Conference —

- **Being Financially Fit at 50 and Beyond**
Monday, July 14, 12:30 p.m.
Presenters: Steve Mason, Jay Wittmeyer, and Randy Yoder
- **And Now What Should I Do? (Investments)**
Monday, July 14, 6:45 p.m.
Presenters: Gail Habecker, Deb Romary, and John Waggoner
- **Are You An Invited Guest? (Church Endowments)**
Monday, July 14, 6:45 p.m.
Presenter: Steve Mason
- **The High Cost of Not Managing Your Health (CoBCU)**
Monday, July 14, 6:45 p.m.
Presenters: Dr. Verne Greiner, Willey Hisey-Pierson, Mary Lou Garrison, and Randy Yoder
- **CoBCU: Have You "Checked" Us Out Lately?**
Tuesday, July 15, 12:30 p.m.
Presenter: Dennis Kingery
- **Church Endowments: A Primer**
Tuesday, July 15, 12:30 p.m.
Presenter: Steve Mason

- **LTC with TLC (Long-Term Care)**

Tuesday, July 15, 12:30 p.m.

Presenters: Renee Krider, Kathy Reid, and Randy Yoder

- **Living Within Your Means**

Tuesday, July 15, 6:45 p.m.

Presenter: Dennis Kingery

- **Retirement.What? (Financial Planning)**

Tuesday, July 15, 6:45 p.m.

Presenter: Deb Romary



Regina Roberts

Other Conference Activities

- **Fitness Challenge.** Stretch your legs and enjoy good fellowship during the Brethren Benefit Trust annual 5K race. The event for runners and walkers of all ages begins at 7 a.m. on Sunday, July 13. Participants will receive refreshments and a commemorative T-shirt. The registration fee is \$15 or \$50 for a family of four or more. For more information and a registration form, stop by the BBT booth or contact Donna March at **800-746-1505, ext. 371**, or at dmarch_bbt@brethren.org.



Nevin Dulabaum

- **300th Anniversary Brethren Faith Journey.** As part of the Annual Conference celebration of the Church of the Brethren's 300th anniversary, BBT's Nevin Dulabaum will present "Without Fear or Hesitation," a photographic journey to many key European sites that played a part in the formation of the Brethren movement. The photographs shown are from more than 3,000 photos taken by Dulabaum that examine artifacts, historical landmarks, and cities important to Brethren heritage, many that are not visited by Brethren heritage tours. The session will be held in the Richmond Coliseum on Sunday, July 13, at 1:30 p.m.
- **Brethren Benefit Trust Booth.** Don't forget to join us at the Brethren Benefit Trust booth for information on all the services provided by BBT. While visiting, all Annual Conference attendees are welcome to grab a free canvas tote bag and spend a moment checking their e-mail.
- **Memorial Tribute.** On Monday, July 14, at 11:25 a.m., a tribute will be held to memorialize national church leaders, and Pension Plan members and their spouses who have passed away during the previous year. Please join us in honoring these Brethren servants.



Nevin Dulabaum

Putting your mouth where your money is

The goal of an investor is to earn strong financial returns. But what about social returns, using investments in firms to advocate for human rights, environmental concerns, and fiscal responsibility?

On behalf of all its Pension Plan members and Brethren Foundation clients, BBT seeks both financial and social returns.

On the social returns side, BBT promotes Brethren values by screening out companies that generate substantial revenues in alcohol, defense, gambling, pornography, or tobacco. It also promotes investments in community development. However, most of BBT's social returns focus comes through its social activism.

For example, in May BBT presented a shareholder resolution to CVS Caremark shareholders, asking the firm to disclose the recipients of its political spending. The resolution received 38.5 percent support. At the annual meeting for ConocoPhillips, also in May, BBT presented a shareholder resolution on behalf of the rights of indigenous people impacted by the company's operations in geographic regions such as southwest United States, Ecuador, and Brazil; this resolution garnered 8.96 percent support.



Both initiatives received enough support to allow BBT to pursue the issues further.

Also in 2008, BBT is pursuing a number of issues with the following companies —

- **Cummins.** Co-signed a letter with the company pertaining to labor rights.
- **Toyota.** Co-signed a letter seeking dialog on the firm's global supply chain and human rights.
- **Apache.** Engaging in dialog on public policy over gas leaks from pipelines.
- **Tenaris.** Seeking a socially responsible sustainability report.
- **Cisco Systems.** Filing shareholder proposal to ask for a report on how the firm ensures privacy and freedom of expres-

sion by those who use the company's products in China and Saudi Arabia.

- **Costco.** Withdrew a 2007 shareholder resolution that asked the firm to adopt a chemical safety policy due to positive movement in discussions. Those talks will continue in 2008.
- **IBM.** Filed a shareholder proposal asking the firm to adopt a "say on pay" policy that would give shareholders a nonbinding vote on the company's executive compensation.
- **Citigroup.** Filed a shareholder resolution asking the company to cease financing new coal-burning power plants and to end support of activities that result in mountain top-removal mining.
- **Henkel.** Dialog has resulted in the company announcing it would convert from PVC to PET packaging for some U.S. hair products. Currently discussing phase out and implementation.
- **Samsung.** Continuing dialog on environmental practices along the firm's supply chain.

For more information, contact Steve Mason at 888-311-6530 or bfi@brethren.org.

BBT Staff News

Transitions

Since March, the following Brethren Benefit Trust personnel changes have been announced —

Darryl Deardorff will retire as chief financial officer/treasurer, effective Sept. 30. He joined BBT in 1997 as director of investments and was named chief financial officer in 1998. Since 2004, his oversight has included the Church of the Brethren Credit Union.

Nevin Dulabaum, director of Communications, on April 30 was also named director of Information Services. These combined duties are not new to Dulabaum; he previously served as director of both departments from November 2000 through September 2005.

Dennis Kingery, director of Credit Union operations, will resign from BBT effective Aug. 8. Soon thereafter he will begin working toward a master's in international development at the University of Denver Graduate School of International Studies.

Kathy Maxwell joined BBT as assistant to the director of office operations on April 1 to provide support to the general office services department. Kathy has worked for not-for-profit organizations for 10 years.

Bob Mosley was named director of financial operations, beginning May 1. He joined BBT in 1998 as staff accountant, was promoted to senior accountant in 2000, and in 2005 was named manager of accounting.

Laura Nedli resigned her position as director of Finance and Information Services as of July 31.

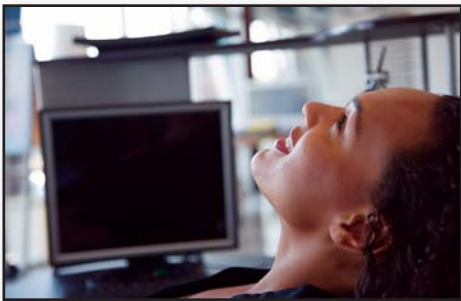
Patrice Nightingale joined BBT as manager of publications on May 5. In this role, she will serve as a senior writer and copy editor and will oversee BBT publications and Web site. Patrice has worked in various capacities in the publications field for nearly 35 years. She is a graduate of Manchester College and a member of Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill.

Your good health is a laughing matter

Know a good joke? Tell it. It might make you live longer.

The reason? Laughter has been proven to be a great stress reliever because it increases the number of endorphins released in the brain. A sense of euphoria replaces the feeling of stress, thus reducing muscle tension, sharpening mental acuity, and improving the overall strength of a person's immune system.

Laughter has proven to be so effective at lessening the effects of stress that many offices have turned to promoting moments of frivolity in the workplace.



According to the American Psychological Association, three-quarters of the American population attribute financial concerns and work-related issues as increasing stressors in their lives. Almost half of all Americans claim their stress levels have risen over the past five years and negatively affect their professional lives.

Stress is defined by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary as "one of bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an existent equilibrium." This tension in the body originated as a defense mechanism against predators. The increased heart rate and reaction times were meant to aid humans in defending themselves. Yet, stress is not limited to only defensive situations and cannot distinguish between a tiger and a deadline at work. It is tension, or stressors, in the modern work environment that leads to the negative effects on the human body.

The physical damage caused by long-term stress ranges from migraines and ulcers to

high blood pressure, heart disease, shingles, and even infertility. Psychological symptoms can include anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and substance abuse. During working hours, stress can manifest in such symptoms as memory lapses, intensiveness, inability to concentrate, and poor judgment, which cause worker productivity to decline.

Laughter seems to be such a simple solution to such dire maladies, but it has been proven to be a great stress reliever. It helps increase creativity, retention of ideas, and attention spans, and helps improve working relationships among employees. An additional, more quantitative benefit is the decrease in employee absences and turnovers. During a U.S. laughter study where 33 employees laughed together for 15 minutes each day for 15 days, the self-efficiency and self-competency tests of each employee increased by almost 50 percent. Another study, conducted by University of Wisconsin-La Crosse professor Stu Robertshaw, showed that incorporating humor into the workplace resulted in a 21 percent decrease in staff turnover and a 38 percent decrease in Friday absenteeism.

There are many possibilities for introducing humor into your own work environment. Simply incorporating a space for workers to hang cartoons, or taking a moment to search



for a funny office story online can help with the daily rigors of office life. "Silly hat" days or "wear your worst tie" days can be fun, yet not intrusive to the work schedule. Beginning a meeting with a joke or funny story lightens the mood and encourages an open atmosphere. Many Web sites deal with ways to make your workplace fun, but here are a couple of sites to check out — www.allbusiness.com/humanresources/employee-development-team-building/11357-1.html or www.ryanandassociates.com.au/humourart5.htm.

Even though humor is a great way to reduce stress, it is important to remember that laughter should enhance work, not replace it. Although office humor has its benefits, appropriate office humor is required. Not everyone shares the same sense of humor and being aware of co-workers' beliefs and feelings will be beneficial to all. — JD

"Debit cards" ... continued from page 1

Surcharge-free ATMs are available to members nationwide. There are no restrictions on your choice of ATM usage, but a fee will be incurred if an out-of-network ATM is used. To find the closest in-network ATM, visit the CoBCU Web site at www.cobcu.org, choose "Checking," and click on the link that says "Surcharge-Free ATMs Nationwide." Click on a logo, type in your ZIP code, and select the most convenient ATM. Four free withdrawals and four free deposits are allowed per month before incurring a fee. No fee is charged for balance inquiries or fund transfers.

Courtesy pay for overdrafts is available on transactions up to \$500. A fee of \$25 will be assessed for the service.

For more information, contact CoBCU staff at **888-832-1383** or cobcu@brethren.org. — JD

Credit Union



Going to Schwarzenau?

Attention Pension Plan members! If you are going to Schwarzenau, Germany, to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren, come join us for Brethren Pension Plan photos.

When you arrive for the organized supper next to the Manor house at 5 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 3, we will take 10 minutes of your time to take a group photo and individual photos of all Brethren Pension Plan members. Copies of the photos will be available via e-mail. So, come join us!

For more information, contact Nevin Dulabaum at ndulabaum_bbt@brethren.org or 800-746-1505, ext. 388.



Nevin Dulabaum

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Inside: A preview of Annual Conference events

800-746-1505
847-695-0200
Fax 847-742-0135

www.brethrenbenefittrust.org

1505 Dundee Avenue
Eglin, IL 60120

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