Calendar

Nov. 21-22: Brethren Benefit Trust Board meeting, McPherson, Kan.

Nov. 27-28: Thanksgiving holiday. BBT offices closed.

Dec. 3-5: Church Benefits Association meeting, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
BBT staff attending will be Nevin Dulabaum, Don Fecher, Jeff Garber, and Wil Nolen.

Dec. 25-26: Christmas holiday. BBT offices closed. The staff of BBT wish you a safe and love-filled holiday season. May the Hope, Wonder, Joy and Peace of the Christ Child fill your hearts now and throughout the coming year.

Jan. 1: New Year's Day. BBT offices closed.

Jan. 19: Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. BBT offices closed.

BBT's Will Thomas confers with Sister Pat Wolf, executive director of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) at the annual fall meeting of the ICCR in New York City in September. Thomas serves as chair of the ICCR governing board.

Nevin Dulabaum

In This Issue

Reprinting of articles is encouraged with this credit — "Reprinted from the December 2003 *Benefit News*." **To access article text electronically, go to www. brethrenbenefittrust.org/newsletters.**

***Inside:* BBT and Brethren Employees' Credit Union sign partnership agreement.**

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BenefitNews

NEWS ABOUT THE MINISTRIES OF BRETHREN BENEFIT TRUST — DECEMBER 2003

Credit Union

Brethren Benefit Trust signs a partnership agreement with Brethren Employees' Credit Union

Brethren Benefit Trust and Brethren Employees' Credit Union (BECU) signed a partnership agreement on Oct. 1 that calls for BBT to become the credit union's third party administrator (TPA) in 2004. As the TPA, BBT will assume the credit union's daily administrative responsibilities, meaning all staff and office functions.

Following that announcement, on Nov. 17, BBT named Dennis Kingery as Director of Credit Union Operations and operational support for the Brethren Foundation. Kingery, who has served on the BECU board of directors since 1999 and has served as Director of Financial Operations and Assistant Treasurer full time for the Church of the Brethren General Board since 1998, will oversee the daily management of the credit union. Kingery is expected to begin his new duties on Feb. 16.

The TPA agreement between BBT and BECU, which will take effect on April 1, is viewed by both agencies as the first step in what could lead to expanded credit union membership availability and services.

"The potential to offer many financial services to all Brethren is great," said Wil Nolen, BBT president. "With BECU's competitive rates and BBT's socially responsible investing strategy, all Brethren are expected to soon be able to benefit from myriad financial services that will help support the church while working to promote Brethren values throughout corporate America."

"It makes a lot of sense to combine an established member-owned credit institution with the national denominational agency whose charter calls for it to provide financial services to Church of the Brethren agencies and individuals," said Russ Matteson, BECU board chair. "We see this partnership as opening up many opportunities for both organizations, to the benefit of all Church of the Brethren members."

Discussions about forging a partnership agreement between BBT and BECU have been ongoing for nearly

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Eric Thompson

Dennis Kingery has been named as director of Credit Union Operations for Brethren Benefit Trust, effective Feb. 2.

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Send to *Benefit News*, Brethren Benefit Trust, 1505 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. Call **800-746-1505, ext. 374.** Or send e-mail to **newsletters_bbt@brethren.org.**

Insurance Plans

BBT to offer long-term care insurance to members

You have probably heard of long-term care insurance: It is a form of protection against the potentially devastating cost associated with a lengthy illness requiring skilled care. Many of us could benefit from having such coverage. And it's not just the elderly that need long-term care. Studies indicate that 43 percent of those who need long-term care are under the age of 65.

One of the primary functions of Brethren Benefit Trust is to provide benefits and services that help to build and protect the assets of those who serve the Church and its agencies. We are happy that a voluntary long-term care plan is now available through BBT. It is for active and retired Church of the Brethren clergy and lay employees and their families. This includes employees and retirees of agencies and other organizations that participate in the Brethren Pension or Insurance plans. MedAmerica Insurance Company, an established leader in long-term care benefits, will offer the plan.

Brethren Benefit Trust has asked MedAmerica to provide information about the plan directly to all eligible individuals. Watch for the materials to arrive soon. They will explain the plan and the variety of options available. Costs will vary depending upon the age of the individual and the plan options desired. After receiving the mailing, anyone wishing to enroll in the plan will be able to apply for coverage by calling a toll-free number and working directly with representatives of MedAmerica. — Jeff Garber

Brethren FlexCare

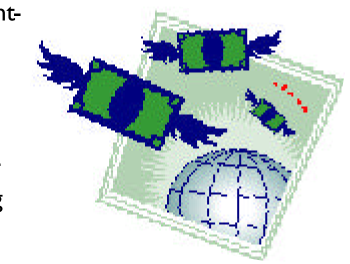
Don't let your 2003 flexible spending account dollars get away from you

As the end of the year quickly approaches, if you have a medical flexible spending account, you may find yourself with unspent dollars in your account. Because those dollars are not refundable and cannot be carried over into the next year, it is wise for you to ensure that the money is used before the end of the year.

Out-of-pocket medical expenses for you, your spouse, and your eligible dependents are eligible for reimbursement. These expenses include, but are not limited to, office visit copays, deductibles and coinsurance, reasonable and customary overcharges, prescription drug copays, medical equipment, and dental and vision expenses not covered by insurance.

If you have expenses for 2003 that you have not yet submitted for reimbursement, you should do so now. Once you have submitted all your receipts, if you still have funds in your account and do not anticipate further medical expenses this year, you may want to find ways to use the money.

There are a number of ways you may not have thought of to use your flexible spending dollars. Buy an extra pair of glasses or prescription sunglasses. Stock up on disposable contact lenses. Make an extra payment to the orthodontist. Schedule that dental or vision appointment that you've been putting off.



Your flexible spending account is designed to save you money. Don't let those dollars get away from you. Call the Insurance Plan office at **800-746-1505** for a full listing of eligible expenses. — N.M.

General BBT News

New addresses for bank lockboxes

Effective immediately, the addresses used for submitting Insurance payments, Pension contributions, and Foundation deposits have changed. Please refer to the graph below for the correct addresses for submitting monies to BBT and discard any forms you may have that use the former addresses.

These address changes are for payments/contributions *only*. Any general correspondence sent to BBT should still come to our Elgin, Ill., address, also noted below.

Insurance	Pension
Brethren Benefit Trust Insurance **2717 Paysphere Circle** **Chicago, IL 60674**	**Brethren Benefit Trust Pension** **2724 Paysphere Circle** **Chicago, IL 60674**
Foundation	**General Correspondence**
Brethren Foundation, Inc. **2750 Paysphere Circle** **Chicago, IL 60674**	**Brethren Benefit Trust** **1505 Dundee Avenue** **Elgin, IL 60120**

Credit Union

Continued from Page 1

two years. A third party administrator agreement was tentatively reached in July, but was contingent on a market study conducted this past summer to assess whether a credit union with a broader membership base and expanded services would be utilized by Brethren nationwide. After conducting focus groups at the 2003 Annual Conference and initiating a survey that was mailed to more than 9,000 Brethren across the country, BBT and BECU both believe the answer is "yes."

With the TPA partnership agreement now signed and with Kingery set to direct the Credit Union for BBT, both agencies will begin exploring the possibility of expanding the Credit Union's membership base and services. BECU currently serves 1,200 employees of Brethren-related congregations and agencies and their family members and Church of the Brethren members who reside in Illinois and Wisconsin. Its loan services consist of new and used auto, motorcycle, and boat loans; and general unsecured loans. Its savings services include general savings accounts, Certificates of Deposit (CDs), and Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). — N.D.

Pension News

Pension Plan members to receive revised Participants' Handbook

Pension Plan members will soon be receiving a new Participants' Handbook, pictured at right. The revised book, to be sent to all Plan members with accounts that have not been annuitized, includes updates on tax laws and Plan changes that have occurred over the last five years.

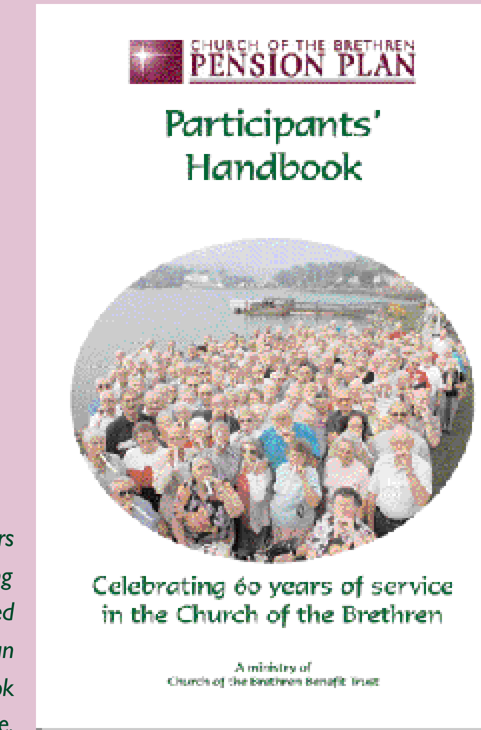
Changes to the Plan outlined in the handbook include provisions for hardship withdrawals and the establishment of "A" and "B" accounts for those participants with accumulations from contributions made prior to July 1, 2003.

The handbook serves as a reference for participants, addressing many of the issues and questions that may arise during the years from enrollment to retirement.

The Participants' Handbook, a summary plan description, is revised every five years in accordance with guidelines from the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). Although the Brethren Pension Plan is not required to follow ERISA regulations, it is administered in the spirit of ERISA, providing protection to members through sound principles and responsible administration.

Each Participants' Handbook will also include an Employer's Plan Supplement, containing rules and guidelines specific to the Plan member's employer. Questions regarding the supplement should be addressed to the Plan member's human resources department.

If you have questions about the Plan or the new handbook, contact the Pension Plan office at **800-746-1505.** — N.M.



Pension Plan members can anticipate receiving the newly revised Pension Plan Participant's Handbook in the near future.

Investment News

Fair Trade Certified coffee helps ensure a fair wage for coffee farmers

Conscientious coffee consumers can purchase a new gourmet coffee while at the same time helping to ensure that the farmers who grow the coffee will be paid a fair wage for their product.

A recent effort by shareholder activists on behalf of small-scale coffee farmers has resulted in Procter and Gamble (P&G), the largest coffee seller in the U.S., announcing in September the introduction of a new line of gourmet coffee that is Fair Trade Certified, meaning the coffee grower is guaranteed a fair price for the product.

Nevin Dulabaum

The purchase of Procter and Gamble's new Millstone Mountain Moonlight Blend Fair Trade Certified coffee helps small-scale coffee farmers while encouraging the company to expand its Fair Trade line.

Shareholders and advocacy groups have engaged P&G in discussions on the issue of Fair Trade Certified coffee over the past two years. In December 2002, a coalition of investors, including BBT, engaged the company in dialog on the issue. In April 2003, the coalition filed a shareholder resolution to address the crisis. In response to P&G's announcement, the resolution was withdrawn.

The new coffee, Millstone's Mountain Moonlight Blend Fair Trade Certified coffee, is currently available to wholesale accounts (universities, restaurants, etc.) and to individual consumers through Millstone's Web site (**www.millstone.com**) or by calling **800-729-5282.** The cost for a 10-ounce bag is $8.99 plus shipping, with coffee growers receiving $1.26 per pound — nearly twice what they would receive on the open market. The product will be available on store shelves within a year if sales support it, according to a company spokesman.

Additional information on the coffee crisis and Fair Trade Certified coffee can be found at **www.globalexchange.org** and **www.fairtradecertified.org.** — N.M.