



*Volume 30, Issue 1
Spring 2022*

BCBSM Retirees Newsletter

A note from our President



As I continue in my second term of leadership as President of the BCBSM Retiree Association during one of the most unstable times in our country history, I count myself fortunate to be a part of this social network. As we move through these uncertain times, it's good to know that all is not lost when you have a group of individuals that you can count on. Without fail, promises made will be broken, handshake deals compromised but its organization like the Retiree Association that keeps its promising mission to provide social engaging activities.

So, what were you doing 40 years ago? Our Association is celebrating its 40th Anniversary commemorating decades of food, fun and laughter. What is most amazing is that we've recently achieved the milestone of over 4,000 members joining the association. These accomplished milestones will be celebrated this year as we begin to reemerge with our annual planned social activities, more to come! Please enjoy the newsletter as we reflect on members' stories and interests following retirement. Be safe until we meet again.

Jerome B. Brown

Hallelujah!!! The Retiree Association has a new Secretary

After a long absence, the position of Secretary has been filled by a person who many of you will remember from her many years of serving as an Executive Assistant, Janet Kean. Janet worked at BCBSM for 31 years for executives in Legal and

Human Resources, the last 12 with the VP of HR and the last 2 for both the now SVP of HR and the EVP/COO. Quite a feat for one person!

During her first Board Meeting on Zoom, Janet asked me if I remembered her which of course I did. If asked to describe my memory of Janet in three words they would be smart, charming and most of all, humble. We are just thrilled she has decided to donate her time and efforts on behalf of the RA and our members.

Much appreciation goes to Joyce Obenhoff for filling in for the past couple of years in the role of Secretary along with her work as Treasurer. She spent many hours keeping it all together doing the many tasks required to fulfill both roles. Thank you, Joyce!

Officers

President	Jerome B. Brown
Vice President	Kathy Elston
Treasurer	Joyce Obenhoff
Secretary	Janet Kean
Past President	Ray Newak

Committee Chairpersons

Finance - Richard Dow
Fundraising - Beleta Williams
Internet - Imogene King-Dugan
Membership Liaison – Helen Huseltine
Operations – John McCrary
Planning – Ray Newak and Pam Rechul
Social - Annette Foster

Genitti's Hole in the Wall

Kathy Elston

Generally speaking, I hate plays unless they include rock music or someone I know is in the play. Genitti's in Northville makes a liar out of me. I love this place! The seven course Italian food is excellent, the staff is friendly, professional and proficient and the actors are quite talented.

A group of the RA members attended the play, Murder In The Mansion, on March 24, 2022. We had three "volunteers" from the audience who literally stole the show. Kudos to Della Beck, Steve Parker and Sheila Reeves for being such good sports and doing a fabulous job on stage. The audience loved you!!!

A great time was had by all and it was just plain great to be out and about!



Fundraising

Beleta Williams

Last year, each of our seven sponsored charities received \$300 each.

- The Salvation Army
- Gleaners Food Bank
- Forgotten Harvest
- Capuchin Soup Kitchen
- Society of St. Vincent DePaul
- Alzheimer's Association
- Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries

Within the Capuchin Soup Kitchen's organization, they have a Men's Shower Program which caters to the homeless. The men are allowed to come in and shower, given toiletry items, clothing, socks and three-square meals.

This is our second year in donating to this program. We collected a total of 443 items at our Holiday Party, which was presented to them on December 15, 2021.

Many thanks to all the Retirees who have donated over the years.



Here are two poems written by *Emma Thomas* **an Author and Self-Publisher who has written six books that are available on Amazon.com and Kindle.**

Blade of Grass

Riding your bike
Hurry to school
Learning to read
Needing my help!

Falling at play
Understanding pain
Needing my help!

Birthday Celebration
First Date
Needing my help!

Graduation
Off to College
Needing my help!

Wedding Day
Grandchild
Needing my help!

Old Age Came! *I'm needing your help!*

Retirement

No more working a 9 to 5 job
No more daily alarms set for 7 a.m.
No more stressful meetings, deadlines, projects or tasks
No more missed lunch hours
Retirement! Yes this is the life!
Watch out! Be careful!
They come seeking your knowledge and time!
Retirement is wonderful, smooth and simple!
Please! Keep it that way!

Social

Annette Foster

2022 is looking good so far! Our Genitti's event was wonderful. The food was excellent and our Retirees did a great job with their acting contributions to make "The Murder at the Mansion" play even funnier. As Social Chair, it is my responsibility to work with the Planning Chair to explore events that we feel our members will be interested in and attend. When the decisions are made, I gather the

data and create a Matrix that helps everyone involved understand timeframes and processing of the flyers. I would like to find two interested retirees with new ideas to help out using their computer and organizational skills. I would never overwork you and I am very flexible. Please consider it as a steppingstone to networking with fellow retirees. My cell number is (313) 779-8353.

Snowbird Luncheon

Marilyn McCowell

The snowbird/resident luncheon was held on March 2, 2022, at the Lake Sumter Landing Red Sauce Restaurant in The Villages in Florida. The weather, the food and the conversations were enjoyable and brought back many memories. Although the group was small everyone seemed to be having a great time and no one wanted to leave, but since some of us had traveled a distance, we had to. Dave Watroba won the 50/50 drawing and Marilyn McCowell won the door prize. Cindy Warf (Vanderlinden) Social Coordinator, Sharon Isgan (Wornock), Marilyn McCowell, Dave Mamuschia, Al Reeves (guest), Peggie Reeves, Maxine Mamuschia, and Dave Watroba attended. It was so good to see everyone!



Pictured back wall. Front to back

Cindy Warf (Vanderlinden), Sharon Isgan (Wornock), Marilyn McCowell, Dave Mamuschia

Pictured on right. Front to back

Al Reeves (guest), Peggie Reeves, Maxine Mamuschia, Dave Watroba

Internet/Communication

Imogene King-Dugan

We are sure you are enjoying the events we have had so far. We are working hard to keep our website updated and to keep you abreast of what is happening with the Association. Please take time and visit our website at www.miretireassoc.com.

We currently have 1657 members on our email directory. If you have a new email address, please send an email to information@miretireassoc.com.

If you are interested in volunteering and helping on the Internet/Communication Committee, please send an email to information@miretireassoc.com.

Planning and Social Committees

BCBSM RETIREE ASSOCIATION

2022 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Ray Newak

January No Event
February No Event
March 24, 2022 (Thurs) Genitti's Hole In The Wall Northville
April 20, 2022 (Wed) Fundraising Event at Plymouth Manor Plymouth
May 12, 2022 (Thurs) Spring Luncheon at Sindbad's Detroit
June 21, 2022 (Tues) Edsel Ford Estate Tour/Lunch G.P. Shores
July 20, 2022 (Wed) Portofino's Lunch and Boat Cruise Wyandotte
August 18, 2022 (Thurs) Casino Bus Trip to Firekeepers Battle Creek
September 9, 2022 (Fri) Annual Golf Outing Riverbank GC South Lyon
October 20, 2022 (Thurs) Annual Meeting Gazebo Banquet Center Warren 40 th Anniversary Celebration
November No Event
December 8, 2022 (Thurs) Holiday Party at St. John Armenian Hall Southfield

Membership Memories - TIME

Helen Huseltine

Well, here we are again! How is it that time can be passing by so quickly when it seems that so many things have been disrupted or come to a halt? One thing that hasn't stopped moving is my calendar. Don't ask me to explain but I keep having to literally turn the page every 30 days or so. We were doing the Huseltine birthday gathering this past Sunday and comparing notes with all the trips that are coming up due to cancellations and re-scheduling. Both brother-in-laws and their spouses are doing Alaskan cruises (one in May and the other in August) and we have good friends doing one in June. All are on the same cruise line. We have a different cruise coming up in June and we were sharing plans for a new river cruise in November 2023. We'd already re-scheduled the cancelled Caribbean one from this January. But I suddenly turned to my newest sister-in-law and said something like "wait, is next year 2023 already?" 2023 is now less than a year away! What happened?

We now have a great-granddaughter! I announced at the onset of this wonderful news that I would make myself available for babysitting one day a week. I was not trying to be stingy. I was trying to share the wealth because there are a LOT of grandparents and great grandparents. I only asked for some notice because obviously, since I'm retired, I have a great many things to do and my calendar gets busy. So here we are a month later and I've had only one real babysitting experience for about two hours. The baby is usually dropped off by my son's house and since he had a work conference call and my daughter-in-law had an appointment at the same time, I was asked to come over. I almost had another chance last weekend but between the Friday afternoon request and that Saturday night, plans changed. It's convenient to drop the baby off by my son's because he lives so close and if there's a problem with time, my son can address it. So, this is simply the ongoing process. A schedule is not being made by the parents and I now understand that my grandson can't handle the planning that goes along with making schedules. My son told me that he'd asked the other day "6:00 in the morning. Is that AM or PM?" I can't wait to see how it goes moving forward as things really begin to get busy in their lives.

My middle brother called me today to let me know about the passing of our paternal grandfather's last brother. He'd had a good conversation with our uncle who now holds the title of "oldest patriarch" on that side of the family. And he reminded me that he'll be in Michigan this September for the annual Labor Day Bridge walk. He'd warned me last year (yes, warned is the right word) that he wanted to do it again for his 60th birthday. When did he do it before? On his 50th! Ten years ago! Don't ask me to explain how those ten years have gone by. All I know is that we're going to handle his involvement in our trip very differently this time. Because even though it'll be ten years, I expect it'll be just like yesterday. Oh, yes, he's definitely the middle child!

My husband and I have been able to take advantage of some special showings at the movie house. They call it "classic" cinema. "The Wizard of Oz" is certainly classic. But "Shrek", "Back to the Future", "Jumanji", and "Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory"? Those are all great movies that came out when we were younger. It's startling to see that they were 20+ years ago! Where does the time go? How does that happen? So whatever you do, do it. What's that saying about today being the present? Because we don't know about tomorrow. Enjoy the day! And enjoy your time!

Operations

John McCrary

The Operations Committee is responsible for maintaining membership records of Retiree Association members. This involves adding new members, revising address information and deleting members who have passed. This Committee also initiates the process of Association communications distribution, both email and USPS mail, which is controlled by the Membership and Communications Committees. New member information is provided by BCBSM, or received from individuals after completing the enrollment form, found in our webpage, and submitting it to the Association PO Box address. Deceased Association members are deleted from our records when notification of their death is received from the individual's family.

Interview with Sandra Gatewood

Kathy Elston

Most of the "Retiree Interview" articles have been about travel, special skills of all kinds and what our members do as hobbies. This one is different! Many thanks to Sandra "Sandi" Sharp Gatewood for sharing her passion for solving food insecurities, especially for children. Here is her story:

How Many Years at BCBSM?

Forty-three years in total, 37 years as an active employee and 6 more as a contractor, ending in 2016.

What Areas did you work in and what did you do there?

Clerk in Underwriting, Account Service Specialist in National Accounts, Benefit Analyst in Group Administration, Senior Benefit Analyst in Product Development & Administration, and Senior Benefit Communication Analyst in Benefit Administration.

What was your favorite job and why?

Working as a contractor on Health Care Reform/"Obamacare". It was an honor to be part of this historical enactment customizing ASC (self-funded group) documents to reflect Health Care Reform mandates.

When did you retire from BCBSM?

May of 2009.

When did you start volunteering?

Started volunteering in 2016 for a small non-profit organization that serves children in low-income areas. This is where I learned of the food insecurities in our communities. Sure, I knew families had challenges but not at the level I witnessed. I was so unaware and devastated at the poverty level and food insecurities.

Where do you volunteer?

Samaritan Homes, Inc., Detroit Recreation Centers and Detroit Rescue Ministries Mission.

Why did you pick this opportunity?

After experiencing how important it was to meet the needs of the children in our communities, the food insecurities and food insufficiency, it became near

and dear to my heart. I began to look for ways and organizations that involved feeding the children.

What do you do when volunteering?

Volunteering led me to a job with the City of Detroit. The City of Detroit is a sponsor for the Federally Funded Food Program administered by the Michigan Department of Education, Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Summer Food Services Program/Meet Up and Eat Up Program. During the pandemic, I had the opportunity to work as a Lead Program Monitor for the food program in which we served over ONE MILLION meals at various Detroit recreation centers from March of 2020 through September of 2021. The city partners with a local vendor, Edibles Rex, and nutritional and safe meals were delivered to each location and distributed curbside.

As a Lead Program Monitor, I would monitor the recreation centers to ensure that meals were maintained at the proper temperature, meal distribution at the point of service was in compliance, policy and procedures were adhered to and in compliance. Personal, Protective Equipment supplies were sufficient and worn by staff, and assisted with meal distribution. This was such a humbling and rewarding experience. The images of long lines at the recreation centers and the appreciation that the parents and children displayed was overwhelming. The "Thank You" and "God Bless You" responses from the people we serve were so appreciated!

What is "your wish" for a change and/or result of what you do?

My wish is to reach out to as many families and children that experience food insecurities and food insufficiency as possible. I hope my experience will motivate others to help in their communities.

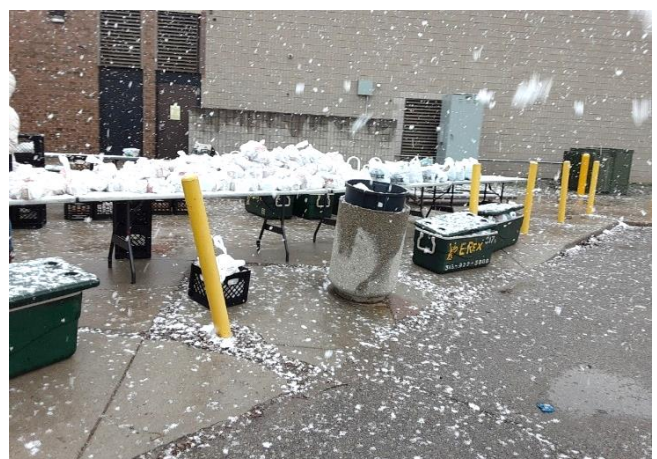
What else do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy traveling abroad, experiencing the different cultures and landscapes. I enjoy reading spiritual/inspirational books and spending time with family and friends.

Anything you would like to add?

Traveling is an experience that I recommend to everyone. Traveling is like reading a good book/Reading is like taking a good trip! I enjoy helping people and making them smile. If I can make a difference in your life, then I'm good!

Many, many thanks to Sandi for all that she does and her willingness to share her passion with all of us. I am inspired and I feel privileged to know her!



CANS!

So below we have 61 words with the word "can" in them. The words can be across, up, down, or diagonally and all contain the word "can". When you find them, circle them. No cheating. Here's just a few clues: there's 4, 5, and 6-letter words that are also within larger words. Those 4, 5, and 6-letter words are also standing by themselves in this word find. So don't just circle the smaller words within the larger words. The words you're looking for are on the last page of this newsletter and, of course, within the word find puzzle below. Can you handle it? Good luck!

A	N	T	N	A	C	E	R	C	A	C	A	N	A	C	N	O	N	A	C
C	A	N	N	U	L	A	N	O	I	L	C	A	N	A	C	C	I	W	A
N	C	A	N	O	P	Y	C	A	N	D	E	L	A	B	R	A	C	C	N
S	K	C	Y	B	A	C	C	B	C	S	Y	I	K	A	D	B	A	C	S
E	L	D	O	O	N	A	C	A	A	R	A	C	D	E	I	D	N	A	C
A	C	A	N	A	I	N	C	A	N	T	A	T	I	O	N	L	T	N	A
C	A	N	C	A	N	D	O	R	D	T	C	A	N	D	L	E	O	T	N
A	N	O	N	A	C	L	O	V	E	N	H	E	N	A	C	L	N	A	A
N	D	C	A	N	O	E	A	C	S	C	A	R	C	A	N	I	E	L	C
K	I	N	A	C	A	S	N	A	C	A	N	N	O	L	I	G	S	O	U
E	D	E	C	A	N	T	I	L	E	V	E	R	A	P	N	H	E	U	O
R	C	H	U	R	R	I	C	A	N	E	A	C	F	U	Y	T	A	P	T
C	N	A	M	E	R	C	A	N	T	I	L	E	R	E	N	A	C	E	C
N	S	U	O	R	E	K	N	A	T	N	A	C	I	R	E	M	A	L	A
A	C	P	R	C	C	A	N	E	E	T	N	A	C	T	R	A	N	I	N
C	A	E	R	O	T	N	A	C	A	N	C	N	A	O	E	A	A	C	A
A	N	C	O	N	O	N	B	C	A	N	N	O	N	R	C	D	P	A	Y
N	V	A	C	A	N	T	I	C	L	E	N	A	C	I	N	A	E	N	D
C	A	N	A	C	N	A	S	A	N	M	E	X	I	C	A	N	S	C	N
U	D	E	N	N	A	C	N	I	A	R	E	T	N	A	C	A	N	E	A
N	O	Y	N	A	C	V	U	L	C	A	N	O	T	N	A	C	A	L	C

COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET

Listed is a brief description of each committee.

If you are interested in volunteering, please fill out the attached form and a Committee Chairperson will contact you.

<p>FINANCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Produce an annual Association budget with breakdowns by committee *Monitor budget activity and produce periodic reports 	<p>MEMBERSHIP LIAISON:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Review the monthly membership file for new members *Send out welcome letters and communication forms
<p>FUNDRAISING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Conduct all prize drawings at Association events whenever possible *Conduct other fundraising events 	<p>OPERATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Coordinate business portion of Annual Meeting *Coordinate with BCBSM HR to obtain the most recent membership file
<p>INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Manage the website design and layout *Send out email information alerts and other communications (including activity flyers and newsletters). As directed by Association Board *Ensure photographs are taken at designated events 	<p>PLANNING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Evaluate/develop a list of activities for venues, speakers and entertainers *Review and propose entertainment or speakers – get Board approval *Obtain contracts from vendors for all upcoming events
<p>NEWSLETTER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Produce a periodic newsletter *Review and edit articles received from other sources *Get newsletter ready for the website and mailed out to members 	<p>SOCIAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Develop fliers for events and determine mailing dates *Obtain copy of contract from Planning Committee *Finalize the interface with venues, vendors and speakers
<p><i>All Committees prepare an Annual Report of activities</i></p>	

COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET

Please PRINT CLEARLY and circle the committee(s) you are interested in helping

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Home or Mobile

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|------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| (1) FINANCE | (2) FUNDRAISING | (3) INTERNET COMMUNICATION | (4) NEWSLETTER |
| (5) MEMBERSHIP LIAISON | (6) OPERATIONS | (7) PLANNING | (8) SOCIAL |

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Home or Mobile

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| (1) FINANCE | (2) FUNDRAISING | (3) INTERNET COMMUNICATION | (4) NEWSLETTER |
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May They Rest in Peace

Douglas Caddy	5/12/21
D. Michael Murphy	10/27/21
Robert Asmussen	10/31/21
Ronald Kurkowski	11/6/21
Ernest Miriani	11/7/21
Eddie Brown	12/21/21
James Karavite	12/9/21
Richard Polomski	2/27/22

Family members should contact BCBSM Retirement Administration at 1 800 922-0699 to notify them of a member's passing. Along with the Retirement Administration, it is important that family members also notify the BCBSM Retiree Association of loved one's passing in order to remove the name from future communications. This may be mailed to the Association's PO Box or sent by email to: information@miretireeassoc.com

** Please note that the Retirement Administration's number, 1-800-922-0699, is also the designated number for pension and member health and life insurance questions.



Welcome New Members

Thomas Adams	Michele Anderson	Mark Bartlett	Della Beck
Barbara Benson	Willie Beville	John Bialowicz	Daniel Blazo
Christopher Boka	Robin Bossio	Karen Bristle	Harold Brock
Ken Broser	Colette Cain-Ogletree	Thelma Caison-Sorey MD,MBA	John Cartier
Michael Centers	Nancy Charnesky	Viola Cheeks	Katherine Cherluck
Tracy Cobb	Sharon Coger	Lori Colby	Sylvia Cook
Renee Cords	Yolanda Croxton	Terri Davis	Catherine Delbrugge
Tina DiFranco	Pamela Eaddy	Pamela Eaddy	Cynthia Esmont
Suzanne Evans	James Flint	Diane Flint	Leslie Foley
Marcia Ford	Steve Gargano	Nancy Garrisi	Susan Gillette
James Gladysz	Tracy Glass	Sylvia Gordon	Charvette Goss
Cindy Gourlay	Douglas Gourlay	Kelly Gray	Kathy Grinsteiner
RoseMary Gundel	Sandra Ham	Bill Hammond	Kristina Hudson
Sherry Hueston	Kathleen Hunawill	Celeste Hurst	Jane Ilitch
Brenda Inman	Connie Jacobs	Monica James	Jackquelynn Jennings
Ophelia Johnson	Mitchiko Johnson	Patricia Johnson-Taylor	Karen Jones
Tracy Jones	Michele Jones	Victoria Jones	Howard Kellicut
Sandra Kempton	Karen Kobylinski	John Konopka	Patricia Kreek
Linda Kroll	JoAnne LeChevalier	Susan Loveless	Julia Lupinacci
Donna Macek	Mark Mailloux	Jennifer Manion	David Manning
Melva Marshall-Showers	Wanza Martin	Minnie Martin-Bonner	Hazel McCullum
Laurie McIntre	Cathleen McPhail	Kimberly McWilliams	Mike Meedhleder
Marcia Meisner	Michelle Metcaff	Jill Money	Janet Moody
Barbara Mooradian	Sandra Musich	Donna Musser	Draga Nesin
Suchin Mastbergen	Kathy O'Kane	Sharon O'Neill	Raquel Palady
Sunil Patel	Carol Pelc	Cathy Phelps	Susan Phillips
Cynthia Pierce	Kathleen Popiela	Timothy Rafferty	Kevin Rafferty
Mary Raguso	Vanessa Reed	Sheila Reeves	Robert Reynolds
Ann Marie Reynolds	Ulysee Rice, Jr.	Barbara Rivait	Parrish Roberts
Annette Robertson	Joanne Rusch	Joan Schanta	Catherine Schebil
Batya Schreiber	Cindy Schroeder	Kaushik Shah	Rajendra Shah
Sharon Shaw	Yvonne Simpkins	Veronica Sims	Frances Sinclair
Seneca Singleton	Marsha Snyder	Latricia Solomon	Renee Stallworth
Sandra Stimson	Kathy Swartz	Dahlia Tapper	Desiree Thomas
Emma Thomas	Marilyn Thompson	Lawrence Tomenello	Diane VanEck
Corinne Vignali	Ellen Ward	Lauren Warren	Elaine Weider
Paul Welch	Sherene Wells	Karen Whitmore	Marisa Williams-Roberson
John Wing	Judith Wood	Kimberly Wray-Norman	

This newsletter is published by and for members of the BCBSM Retiree Association.

Be sure to check our website at miretireassoc.com for information about upcoming events and photos of past events. We also publish an E-mail Directory, which is a voluntary listing of members who wish to share their e-mail address with fellow retirees. To add your e-mail address to the Directory, make a correction or remove your name from the list send your request to information@miretireassoc.com.

The BCBSM Retiree Association is an organization of former employees of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan that is not otherwise affiliated with the company.

African	Cannula	Moroccan
American	Canoe	Oilcan
Arcane	Canon	Pecan
Canada	Canoodle	Pelican
Canapes	Canopy	Puerto Rican
Can Can	Cantaloupe	Recant
Cancel	Cantanterous	Scan
Cancer	Canteen	Scandalous
Cancun	Center	Toucan
Candelabra	Canticle	Vacant
Candid	Cantilever	Volcano
Candied	Canton	Vulcan
Candle	Cantonese	Wiccan
Candlelight	Cantor	
Candlestick	Canyon	
Candor	Canucks	
Candy	Decanter	
Cane	Hurricane	
Canker	Incan	
Cannabis	Incandescent	
Canned	Incantation	
Cannoli	Lycanthropy	
Cannon	Mercantile	
Cannot	Mexican	