



**NATIONAL CONFERENCE
SPECIAL ISSUE**

Those of us who attend the BPW/USA National Conference on a regular basis know that it's always a busy, exciting, and worthwhile week. This year was no exception. The agenda included some terrific speakers, interesting workshops, plenty of opportunities to meet new people and re-connect with BPW members from across the United States. Oh yes, there was BPW business to attend to as well.

From the Individual Development "Train the Trainer" course that started on Tuesday, to the Installation Tea and President's Reception on Saturday, BPW members accepted the challenge "Dare to Change". We were informed, challenged, and energized during workshops, business and plenary sessions, but still had the chance to relax and recharge at both formal and impromptu social get-togethers.

Members participated in frank and thoughtful discussions of BPW/USA's financial and membership status at the pre-convention meeting of the Board of Directors on Wednesday, a Town Hall meeting on Friday, and during the business session on Saturday. Workshops provided ideas for building and growing our organization to be responsive to the needs of workingwomen in the 21st century. Speakers addressed many of our issues. The Young Careerist and Individual Development competitions informed and inspired. Leadership training was available for Area Representatives, State Officers, and local organization leaders.

This special edition of the Bay State News is intended to provide an overview of all that took place in Atlanta. The common theme: Our renewed commitment to BPW.

NEWS ON THE INSIDE:

- President's Challenge
- BPW/MA Board Meeting Reminders
- BPW/USA Convention Business
- Reports from the National Conference
- Massachusetts Conference for Women

**BPW/USA NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ALTANTA, GEORGIA
JULY 22-26, 2008**



BPW/MA President Kathleen Pavelchek and Lilly Ledbetter wear their Working Woman pins at the BPW/USA National Conference in Atlanta. Kathleen met Mrs. Ledbetter at the Woman, Wages and Work Conference in Boston this June. They had a chance to continue their conversation in Atlanta before Mrs. Ledbetter spoke at the conference.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sept 27: BPW/MA at Kimball Farm Westford
- Sept 27: NE PSP Meeting Sturbridge
- Oct 4: Board of Directors Meeting Brooksby Village, Peabody
- Oct 19-25: National Business Women's Week
- Dec 11: MA Conference for Women Boston
- February 28: Board of Directors Meeting Cranberry District
- Late March: BPW/USA Policy & Action Washington, DC



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Accept the Challenge

At the installation of officers at the National Conference, incoming BPW/USA President Diane Polangin issued the following challenges to each of

the State Presidents:

- ◆ To recruit 20 new members in any category.
- ◆ To sign up 20 new Friends of BPW/USA.
- ◆ To recruit 20 contributors to the PAC at the \$20 level and 2 contributors at the \$100 level.
- ◆ To ensure that every state holds an Equal Pay Day event.
- ◆ To increase your state's total contribution to BPW Foundation by 5% over the 5/31/08 total.
- ◆ To secure at least 5 donors to BPW Foundation at the Financier level and 15 at the Friend level.
- ◆ To send to me five news clippings about BPW, featuring either your State Federation or a Local Organization.
- ◆ To charter one new Local Organization by June 30, 2009.
- ◆ To ensure every state hosts a WJF activity.
- ◆ To hold at least one election related event this year during National Business Women's Week.
- ◆ To take the ID program to the women's shelters in your state or local area.

President Polangin extended the challenge to all BPW members, charging the State Presidents to take the lead. "I also challenge our members to accept this call to action. I challenge you to take this call to action back to your communities and to fellow members."

This issue of the Bay State News reports on the news from our 2009 National Conference; the highs and the lows. I pass the challenge to each local and to each member.

How will you respond? What action will you take?

DON'T FORGET

BPW/MA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Brooksby Village - Peabody, MA
October 4, 2008

Registration deadline is September 22, 2008. Late charges will occur for registrations postmarked after this date.

Registration begins at 8:00 a. m. and the meeting will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m.!

Those attending meeting will need to check in at Brooksby Village gate. Ask for directions to "Town Center" parking. Parking is a short walk from the building. A shuttle bus is available every 10-15 minutes.

First agenda item will be a forum with representatives from the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns. Former Lt. Governor Kerry Healy will speak for the McCain campaign. (Representative from the Democratic party to be announced.) Please have questions ready!

KIMBALL FARM - WESTFORD, MA
September 27, 2008
9 AM TO 1 PM

Come to Loren and Wally's Yard Sale at Kimball Farm in Westford, MA on Saturday, September 27 from 9 AM to 1 PM to sell our Working Women Pins and Earrings and talking about BPW.

Kimball Farm is a short distance from Route 495, Exit 31. Head east on Route 119 towards Littleton Common. Take a left at the traffic light onto Route 110. Kimball Farm is less than a mile down the road.

MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN
Boston, MA - December 11, 2008

For the fourth consecutive year, the Massachusetts Federation of Business and Professional Women is a supporting organization of the Massachusetts Conference for Women. This year's event promises to be even better than last's.

Although we will not be an exhibitor this year, we are hoping to reserve a table, if at least 10 members register. An information sheet is enclosed and more information will be available at the Board of Directors meeting.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Only a half day of the National Conference was scheduled for a formal business session. (Future convention planners may reconsider this decision, since the agenda was full and the session ran significantly over time.)

The meeting began with reports from the National Treasurer, Susan Parsons Reed, Finance Committee Chair, Tina Garner, and our Executive Director, Debbie Frett, summarizing current membership and financial status and outlining plans for the year ahead. BPW USA Foundation Chair, Roselyn Ridgeway, reviewed several projects, including the Employers Summit meeting and a newly-released study concerning how decisions made by young women earlier in their career impacts their entire lives.

BPW/USA President Barbara Henton's report emphasized the challenges BPW faces and the need to recommit to our mission, both as an organization and as individual members. In her call to action she reminded us that we need to do this for all working women. We need to follow in the footsteps and keep faith with the generations of women who have come before us. She said: "You know we can do it. We have to do it. For ourselves, for our daughters, for all women. All in favor: stand up and cheer!"

The Legislative Platform was adopted. Under our new procedures, this platform will remain in place until the Legislative Platform Committee recommends a change.

The convention body then debated and amended the proposed non-public policy resolution: Vote for BPW. The amended resolution passed with an overwhelming majority.

The BPW PAC presentation included information on the work and mission of the PAC. During the most recent election cycle, Over 50% of the candidates endorsed by the BPW PAC were elected. The PAC continues to monitor the voting records of our representatives in Congress. As of the end of the National Conference, the BPW/PAC had not endorsed a candidate for President.

A number of items of new business came forward as motions from members. Several motions, specifying changes in BPW/USA financial and administrative policies (including a requirement for a balanced budget) were defeated. Two motions were proposed by the Young Careerists attending the convention. A motion to include the individual named the BPW Young Careerist each year to the Board of Directors for a one year term was referred to the Bylaws Committee for consideration. A motion proposing the creation of an advisory committee to the Board of Directors consisting of recent participants in the Young Careerist program was adopted.

Elegant Cuisine is back in Western Massachusetts!

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THE NUMBERS

BPW/USA continues to face challenges related to membership and financial stability. There is good news, but serious issues still remain.

BPW/USA investments had were in the stock market were transferred to more conservative money market investments. There was a market loss when the stocks were sold, but this action took place before the recent drop in stock values. This action prevented even future decreases in our assets.

Although 2,700 new members joined BPW last year, the numbers did not offset those who do not renew their membership. Retention rates have actually improved in the last year, but not enough to avoid continuing losses largely because member dues income have not met projected amounts. New membership categories, intended to be more attractive and more accessible to younger women, have been established to expand our membership base. To date, only a small number of individuals have taken advantage of these options.

In February, the Board of Directors votes to transfer funds from the working reserve to our operating account to meet our financial commitments. Significant operational changes, including relocation to less expensive office space, were made to cut expenses.

The lower than expected attendance at the National Conference resulted in significant loss on the event, adding more stress to our financial position. There will be need for even more cutbacks.

Despite the challenges, BPW continues to work to achieve its mission. We continue our advocacy for fair pay, better healthcare, paid sick leave, and insurance reform. BPW's Women Joining Forces is the only non-government program addressing the needs of women veterans. We are building strong coalitions with others who share our concerns. Our National Conference in Atlanta featured an impressive group of speakers and valuable workshops. BPW continues to be the Voice of Workingwomen.

THE RESPONSE

BPW members are responding to the call for action adopted as the "Vote for BPW" resolution at National Convention:

- Pledge to renew membership
- Encourage e-membership
- Promote Friends of BPW
- Demonstrate commitment of BPW by financial support.

The BPW/USA Board of Directors and the BPW/USA staff are taking action to address and resolve membership and financial situation. Following up on a suggestion raised during convention debate, BPW/USA has approached BPW Foundation to secure a grant. The BPW Foundation has accepted our grant request and we expect a formal announcement of a significant gift soon.

The BPW/USA budget for Fiscal Year 2009 was adopted with \$500,000 cut from expenses, including the cancellation of the 2009 National Conference. The Membership Committee has developed an approach for encouraging and recruiting e-members and Friends that will be communicated to states and locals soon.

Since the National Convention, the number of Friends has increased by about 10 to 12 new Friends each week. There has been an increase in the number of e-members as well.

As of September 16, approximately \$25,000 in voluntary contributions have been received from members. Several federations have issued challenges to other states to match their contributions of \$1,000, \$5,000, or \$10,000.



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THE PAPERLESS LOCAL

Elizabeth Manns
BPW/MA Vice President

One of the workshops I attended at National was put on by the members of a Florida Local who have gone almost completely paperless. There were two reasons they made this change. The number one and main reason was to make their local attractive to the thirty and twenty something generation of women. The second reason was cost saving. They achieved this feat by making a radical change from the traditions that most locals continue to follow.

This local recognized that the upcoming generation of women are most comfortable communicating via the electronic media. They do not want to spend a large portion of their valuable time away from work at meetings or on the phone. They might be willing to do give up some of their time for a special event or relevant program that the local is sponsoring, which is why the local retained a once a month luncheon meeting, but not to do the basic work of the locals. Because of this trend the local made the decision to revamp their website so as to take full advantage of the electronic options one can get with a website.

With a website you can get a members only section where bylaws, minutes, reports, and procedures for programs can be stored and be made readily available to the members of the local. With this feature the need to store boxes of paper is gone. With an email specifically linked to the website given to all the members it is possible for a member to immediately recognize when BPW, whether it is the local, the State, or National is communicating with them. Updates and newsletters can be instantly delivered to the members, saving on postage and communication turn around time. When the change was instituted, there were no exceptions made for senior members. If they wanted to continue to be a member of the local they had to get this email and learn to use it. Younger members spent time tutoring the senior members but eventually they are left on their own. According to the presenters, once the older members got the hang of it, they became internet junkies and wondered why they did not learn to do this sooner.

Members sign a pledge when they join the local that they will check this email address and the local's website at least once a week. Members on a committee can either choose to do their

communicating via email to organize an event or they can go into a specific chat room set up for that committee to do their work. All communications via email is backed up and stored at the site for at least 6 months so there is ample time to retrieve communication when needed. All files in the storage remain as long as the website is active. Nominations, elections and any other votes are done via email with a specific time frame given in which to cast your vote.

When people from outside of the local visit the website, the home page carries the upcoming events, calendar, and contact links. This page is their face to the outside world so the emphasis is on current or upcoming events rather than past events. There are links to learn about the local and its mission on the homepage as well so that the intrigued visitor can quickly learn more about the local. Their site according to statistics received two hundred hits a day and they have gotten 30 new members via the website alone. The members of this local firmly believe that this decision saved their local and is the future that BPW must embark on if it is to remain attractive to the younger generation of women the organization needs in order to survive.

*Written by
Elizabeth Manns*

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FROM OUR YOUNG CAREERIST

Dawn Schraude



BPW/USA
President Barbara
Henton
congratulates
BPW/MA Young
Careerist Dawn
Schraude during the
Legend Awards
celebration in
Atlanta.

I had the pleasure of representing BPW/MA as the Young Careerist at the National BPW Conference in Atlanta, GA. This was a wonderful experience.

I was able to be involved with a wonderful group of Young Careerists from all over the United States. I learned that it's important to find new ways to recruit young women into our organization. We connected on many levels.

The Young Careerist interview and speech process was a wonderful experience. The speeches were all so different and wonderfully done. The ideas coming from these young women were inspiring and made me feel lucky to be a member of this group. The interview process helped me think more about my goals and what I can do to help BPW.

I learned a lot about our organization and how things work the while I was in Atlanta. The workshops I attended helped me understand my role in BPW and helped me improve my life. I will never forget my experience in Atlanta and hope to inspire more young women in my community to join BPW and to get involved in the young careerist program. I also want to thank all the women from BPW/MA who supported through this process and cheered me on in Atlanta.

Thank You,
Dawn

**BPW/MA THANKS OUR
BAY STATE NEWS SPONSORS!**



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**OVERHEARD AT
NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

- "This organization is important."
- "Let's make history -- Dare to change."
- "Recognize members at every opportunity."
- "We are an organization in transition. All the better for meeting the needs of women in transition."
- "Our voice is being heard."
- "We love our local members, but we need e-members."
- "Meet members where they're at."
- "We are positioned for success."
- "Can I get a Standing-O?"
- "What's more important? The structure and the traditions of our organization, or the mission?"
- "Do we believe in ourselves?"
- "Failure is impossible." – Susan B. Anthony
- "All those in favor – Stand up and cheer."

National Conference Report

Patricia Stowell

BPW/MA President 2005-06

Attending BPW/USA's national conference is always a highlight of my year. Meeting fellow members from throughout the country, renewing acquaintances and sharing our successes and tribulations makes for a busy four days. It is apparent that Massachusetts is not the only state suffering from declining membership – everyone that I spoke to indicated that their federation is feeling the same reductions. Our membership is aging and younger women are not joining at the rates women joined in earlier years.

It is also quite clear that our leadership is working hard to hold BPW together – and that every one of us needs to work equally hard if BPW is to remain the “Voice of Workingwomen!” As members we must commit to building and maintaining a membership base. We must look closely at our way of doing business and recognize that it is very twentieth century – we must restructure BPW to be **the** organization for women in the **twenty-first century**. We must make changes that will provide an organization that 21st century women want and need to belong to – and that meets their criteria for efficient use of their time and money.

To this end, the national organization has made many changes to the management of the organization. The headquarters staff has been reduced. Services that do not require full-time staff involvement have been obtained on a contract basis. New membership options such as E-Member, Member at Large, Corporate Memberships have been added. The Friends of BPW category has been added to provide a low cost introduction to BPW, its issues and platform.

In recruiting new members, we need to expand our vision and our “sales pitch.” We need to look at BPW membership more globally – encourage women to join to support the national efforts – to join as an E-Member or even as a Friend. If we look short term at expanding the national base of women in the organization, we can develop connections with these women and potentially expand their involvement in the future to include local membership. We cannot see national memberships as a loss to the local, instead we must see them as women committed to our cause who

we can later develop into members involved at the local level. We must use this tool to continue the organization as women's voice on Capitol Hill. Once we have them hooked, we can slowly reel them in to greater involvement at the state and local levels.

While for many of us monthly meetings with their networking and friendships that develop are a valuable part of BPW – we must recognize that this is *only part* of BPW. BPW was founded on the premise that through the strength and credibility that an organization brings, workingwomen's issues could be addresses legislatively. Today, many of the issues that our founders advocated for have not been addressed fully. The workingwoman of today still struggles to make ends meet as a woman still earns only 76 cents for every dollar a man earns. The Equal Rights Amendment is still not the law of the nation. Insurance, health and childcare are still the first benefits reduced or eliminated when budgets must be cut. Domestic violence is still a problem in many households in this country. Unemployment and underemployment of women remains prevalent.

Strong advocacy and support of woman- and family-friendly legislation in Washington and in every city and state in the country is the only way these issues will be addressed. Although we can and must advocate as individuals, it is essential that a formal structure be in place to provide research studies and document the status of workingwomen, present legislation, monitor its progress, lobby for its passage, and celebrate its victories. BPW has served as the leader in these efforts since 1919 and we must rally together to support its continued prominence in pursuing equality for all workingwomen.

I call on each of you to look to your local – your bylaws, your structure, your members – and ask what you can do to make it more welcoming to younger members and still inviting to seasoned members. Make changes – reduce the bureaucratic red-tape – become user-friendly! **Participate at all levels of BPW and learn more about our vision to be the leading advocate for working women and our mission to achieve equality for all workingwomen through advocacy, education and information.**



Business and
Professional
Women/MA

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