

BPW Virtual Newsbites

Volume 1 Issue No. 1

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Vi Andersen

The Business and Professional Women's Club of Canada new Virtual Club is a reality. We can thank and commend the daring and commitment of our first ten charter members to explore and take on this new venture to set up a virtual club.

Each month new members join to partake in the Virtual Club because it allows them freedom to be members from any location where there is internet access.

This is so very important for Working Women:

- Living in mobile and home situations
- In remote areas without BPW Club access
- Who want to be engaged in advocacy.

This coming year the Virtual Club vision is to:

- Become part of a web site so that we can become password protected
- Increase our membership
- Produce a newsletter
- Conduct telephone survey of existing members
- Become more active in advocacy work.

-Vi Andersen

BPW Virtual Club IS A REALITY!

The BPW Virtual Club virtually received its charter on April 29th, 2006. At the 40th Biennial Convention and 75th Anniversary in Toronto, Ontario from July 13th to 16th, 2006 it was officially declared a reality! Both the new BPW Virtual Club and the Winnipeg Club received their charters in a presentation made by Darla Campbell.

Vi Andersen and Kathy Laing received the charter, signed it, putting BPW Virtual into the BPW Canada history books as a new and exciting venture for business and professional women all across Canada no matter how far away from one another. Using the internet as

a tool we are shrinking our vast country even further and making a sound base for new and exciting possibilities for Canada as a whole!



[Top left Darla Campbell gives Vi Andersen the Virtual Club's Charter, Top right Kathy Laing and Vi Anderson signing the Virtual Club Charter – we're the real thing! Bottom the charter!]

The BPW Virtual Club Charter!!!



Virtual Reality!!

Go to: <http://www.bpwcanada.com> for more pictures and information. The site is updated regularly!

We are already making a sound impact. At the national convention we introduced our first resolution – Emergency Resolution #2: Special Agency for Women:

Therefore be it resolved that BPW Canada commend Stephen Lewis for his efforts to give a greater voice to women of the world, and

Further be it resolved that BPW Canada urge the federal government as well as BPW International to recognize this initiative of Stephen Lewis, and support him in his efforts to establish a United Nations Agency for women to advocate for a greater voice for the women of the world.

This resolution was passed unanimously. As noted by Vi Andersen in her President's Message for more information on this venture see www.thestar.com.

[For the list of resolutions passed and their exact wording, go to the national site, and check the 'Resolutions' Committee.]

In addition to making our presence known in this way, Vi Andersen, Kathy Laing and Crystal Sissons made sure BPW Virtual had its voice heard on as many issues as possible. One comment overheard "That BPW Virtual Club may be small, but it is making a big impact!" Just think – we only just got started – who knows where we can go and what we can accomplish? The sky's the limit!



[Informal Virtual Club Convention Meeting Crystal Sissons, Kathy Laing and Vi Andersen – Skydome "Rogers Centre" backdrop.]

EDITORIAL – Crystal Sissons

BPW is important because...

As BPW Canada just celebrated 75 Years in Canada it is a good time to reflect on the past as we look ahead and anticipate the future. I challenged all of our members to stop and think why is BPW important for you as a member. Why did you decide to join? And, by what is it about BPW that appeals to you?

Some of the answers received include the following:

"BPW for myself was the stepping stone that became the foundation for my career. I have always been so proud to belong to BPW because the women I worked with in the club shared their ideas and themselves allowing for the opportunity for lifetime friendships. Through the friendships, created the support that is so critical to a career, to a business. The importance of our power to lobby the government for changes for the women of Canada is just one of the reasons I belong and feel honoured to be a member of our organization. We need to stand tall and to stand proud..."

-Val Clemont

"My thoughts on why I joined BPW over 12 years ago:

- 1. A safe forum to exchange ideas on a variety of issues facing women today.*
- 2. Invaluable leadership skills and self confidence building by being involved on committee work.*
- 3. Great group of diverse women to network and develop friendships with.*
- 4. Ability to lobby for changes to the government on issues important for all women.*

-Shannon MacNeil

- 1. It enables sharing of ideas on relevant issues facing today's working women;*
- 2. It allows access to a legitimate organization to discuss women's issues, which is key to promoting positive change; and*
- 3. It's a phenomenal networking opportunity, for both civilian and government agencies and organizations, to address issues affecting professional women.*

-Allana Nicholas-Barnett

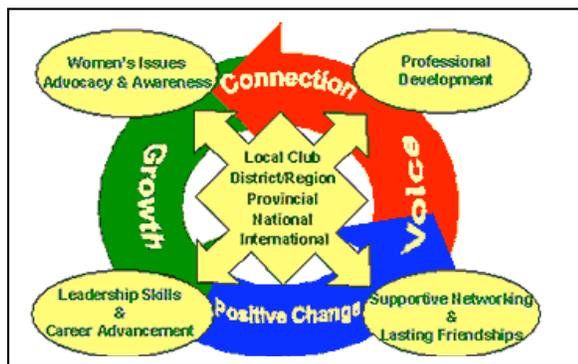
Why I joined:

I work as a psychotherapist with women and addiction and I see a lot of misery which I can help with – being part of BPW will allow me to feel I am also making a difference at the decision-making level of society.

-Marguerite

As the above responses illustrate BPW has many meanings for each of us, but if you take them all collectively the four guiding pillars of BPW Canada are clearly present

- Women's Issues – Advocacy and Awareness
- Personal Development
- Leadership Skills & Career Advancement
- Supportive Networking & Lasting Friendships



As we are a new club, and our members have varied degrees of experience with BPW it is important to share our ideas and learn from one another. Taking time to reflect on questions and statements relative to BPW members will be a regular feature of the newsletter. Members who have been involved in BPW for longer periods of time can share ideas and thoughts they have formulated from their wider experience within BPW, while newer members can offer possible new slants and perspectives as BPW continues to evolve. Through such an exchange we can mutually question, challenge and grow together as a new club as we work towards the national vision statement

“To achieve a just and equal status for women in all levels and areas of society where decisions are taken in true partnership with

men, based on mutual respect, for a more balanced and peaceful world.”

As noted by our National Immediate Past President Darla Campbell in her May 2006 Annual Report,

“We will provide a safe environment for working women to train for leadership and to assume roles of influence and power in their chosen field of endeavor and/or to serve with confidence and competence on public boards, corporate boards or serve in public office. We will be vigilant and steadfast like the Famous Five and we will not stop until we have made a significant difference for women in the 21st century.”



[2006-2008 National President Fran Donaldson]

Moreover our new National President, Fran Donaldson has challenged all BPW Clubs to “*Make Democracy Work/La démocratie au feminine*”. Having a beat to stir people to action, and keep them going is something Fran is well aware of. Through a generous gift of her friend and songwriter Jeanette Arsenault now BPW Canada also has a theme song:

“Women of the World”

“The song reminds us that “There’s work to be done”, that BPW offers not just benefits but great opportunities to work with and for our sisters everywhere. In fact, that’s just what our Handbook has always listed as the first benefit of membership: “Working toward improving the status of working women throughout the world”.

The “equality of opportunity and economic security for all women” in our mission statement is no longer a matter of justice or emancipation, but an urgent social need. The world needs women to take leadership roles, to take responsibility, to take care of the earth and help heal humanity.

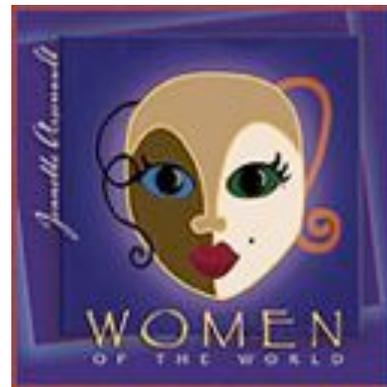
“The time has come”, sings Jeanette. We have to move from being petitioners, asking others to do what we want (the approach of most of our advocacy efforts in the past), and start taking action ourselves, being more involved in politics, getting into decision making positions in the workplace, in our community, in our country.

Quite simply, we have to transform the democratic process, infuse it with the “feminine” principles of collaboration, inclusiveness, transparency and nurturing. We need to shift the paradigm from majority rules to minority rights, with a voice and a vote for everyone. If we really want to, we can, beginning with our own organization and working with others who share our goals.

*“Come and walk by my side,
Sing out with pride,
Come on, you women of the world!”*
[quoted material from the 40th Biennial Convention 75th Anniversary Workbook]



For more information regarding Jeanette Arsenault [above] and her new CD “Women of the World” see www.jeanettearsenault.com



NEXT NEWSLETTER QUESTION:

Where do you see BPW Canada heading in the future, and how can the Virtual Club be an active part of this vision?

Biennial Convention 2006 – Highlights

July 13th-16th, 2006 saw BPW women from across Canada and around the world gather for the 40th Biennial Convention and 75th Anniversary of BPW Canada in Toronto, Ontario.

The pace and work were intense, but so was the fun that accompanied them. The convention opened Thursday July 13th, 2006 with the Opening Ceremonies and the keynote speaker Elaine Allison.

Elaine Allison, an international speaker and author of *The Velvet Hammer*, shared her experiences “as one of Canada’s first female prison guards in an all male maximum security jail at the age of 19” and a wide range of women specific leadership strategies. Women lead differently, and she helps to illustrate how. For more information on Elaine see: www.thevelvethammer.com



[Elaine Allison –during her talk at Convention]

Friday July 14th, 2006 was the first full day of the convention and it opened with a Political Breakfast moderated by Janet Ecker, former Ontario Finance Minister and a panel including Joan Browne of Jamaica, Peggy Nash, NDP MP since the 2006 election, and Avril Benoit, CBC Radio journalist speaking on the Burundian elections.

The Breakfast was co-hosted by BPW Canada and Equal Voice. Equal Voice, an multi-partisan organization has been running in Canada for five years and works to increase the number of women in Canadian politics. The fact that women represent only 21% of those in politics needs to change and Equal Voice strives to help make this change. Through the education and support it provides all the essential information and connections to help women who have an interest in politics. Women who want to know politics are right for them, will find the answers to their questions and the support to make a successful bid for their active involvement.

One of the key points emphasized was that women in Canada claim to be equal, but if they are not at the table when the decisions are being made, their voices will not be heard. For more information on Equal Voice see:

The first business session of the conference commenced after this breakfast. The business sessions were the periods when resolutions, by-laws and the budget were discussed and voted upon.

Lunch that day was hosted by the Young BPW and featured a talk by Colonel Cheryl D. Lamerson. Colonel Lamerson provided a detailed overview of Canadian women’s active involvement in the Canadian Armed Forces. She clearly illustrated that while there are differences between the Armed forces and civilians, the goal of the two groups are not as different as we would assume. In fact women both in the Armed forces and civilian ranks have and can continue to work together for new directions for Canadian women and society overall. By working together we can truly build an exciting future for women throughout Canada!

Saturday night was the Gala Dinner. It was an exciting time as BPW Canada celebrated 75 Years and welcomed in the new 2006-2008 Executive headed by Fran Donaldson.

Immediate Past President Darla Campbell provided a moving powerpoint presentation of some of the BPW milestones. Then it was time to turn the floor over to Elizabeth “Liz” Benham – 2nd Vice President of BPW International [Immediate past president of BPW New York] and Monica McNeil BPW International Regional Co-ordinator [of Jamaica] to install the new BPW Canada Executive.

New National President Fran Donaldson gave a brief opening address and then introduced her friend singer/songwriter Jeanette Arsenault who gave a private concert including her song and BPW Canada’s new theme song “Women of the World.”



[Members of the new national executive cheered on by Liz Benham far left, [L-R] Fran Donaldson [national president], Sue Calhoun [1st VP], Julie McSorley [Young BPW VP], Barbara Hall [Secretary/Treasurer], Doris Hall [VP].

The conference resumed Sunday morning with the final business session. The organizing team – Ontario BPW District 4 deserves another loud round of applause for a simply outstanding convention!

Members can now look forward to the next National Convention hosted by BPW Manitoba, July 23rd-27th, 2008 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. For more information see:

www.bpwmanitoba.com

Newsletter Notes

As this is the first Issue of *BPW Virtual Newsbites* it is only a beginning. It is my hope to get out about four newsletters a year – but that is something that will depend on the membership. Currently the newsletter subcommittee consists of a chair with no members. I am eagerly looking for other interested members. Also to keep the newsletter vibrant and growing input from the membership is imperative.

What is going on in your community, and province? What are your concerns? What do

you think the BPW Virtual should be doing, working towards? Do you have ideas and thoughts about BPW Canada, International? Do you have questions you would like to be answered? Do you have information that business and professional women may benefit from? Do you think there is a political issue we should consider getting involved in?

All these questions and more can be a part of the newsletter as we work to keep each other informed and motivated. Moreover, the newsletter can be a means that each member can advertise the club. We are growing and need all the voices we can get. We have a vibrant membership committee. It was noted at the convention that it cannot work independent of the club's membership and that membership is the responsibility of each and every member – if we all do our part to assist the membership committee imagine where we could go! The reason BPW is important to you was the opening discussion in the editorial – this is not something we need only share with other BPW members – share it with those you around you, both old and new acquaintances. Your interest and passion if nothing else will serve to make them curious!

I have a wide range of ideas for possible sections of upcoming newsletters. Some of them include:

1) **NEW & HOT Business & Professional Women Section**

This section could feature important new appointments of women across the country and celebrated milestones women have achieved. Members could advise of new brief bios of the person in question and pointers from the individual. This could also serve as an outlet for attracting new members. BPW has a history of writing to women who have had such successes and also promoting the club and seeing if they would like to be involved.

Some possible examples from the *Globe & Mail* on Monday August 7, 2006:

- Dr. Martha Cook Piper was appointed to the Board of Directors of the BMO Financial Group
- Dr. Sue MacLean, MD, CCFP, FCFP, was appointed to Medical Director for Ontario of the Clinidata Corporation
- Marth McCallum was appointed Vice-President, Finance and Administration of Kaneff Group of Companies
- Barbara Mason was appointed to Executive Vice-President of Wealth Management of Scotiabank
- Jane Rowe was appointed to Executive Vice-President, Domestic Personal Lending and Insurance, and President and CEO, Scotia Mortgage Corporation of Scotiabank

And there was a feature entitled “Canada Post boss sees balanced team as crucial” by Karl Moore of the *Globe & Mail* recounting an interview with new president and chief executive officer of Canada Post Corp Moya Greene. One of the points she makes stands out in response to the question “Does it matter in your career that you’re a woman? [...] Some might argue that a woman at your level might be forced to take on some traditional male characteristics.”

What I say to that is I have been trained and groomed and had experiences in the environment, that I have them, and so I don't think that I've taken on male characteristics. I certainly don't look like a male. But there is a manner of being in the Canadian business world, and there is a manner of being in almost any environment that is at least partially attributable to those who have been there, and what has been the culture created by those who have been there. Does that mean that you've taken on male attributes? I don't think so. But it does mean that you have become, at least subconsciously, aware of what the culture is of that place. And you have to fit in with the culture.

I do know something that I think is an important thing: Women are afraid of their ambition, and they are

afraid of their ambition to become known. I think that must be because they believe that is not an attribute that is appropriate for women. They're afraid that that will somehow have a negative tone to it with people. I don't think that's right because that's going to choke off women's ability to see themselves in leadership roles. That may be the last thing that we have to get over.

2) Different Mediums/Reviews & Comments

This section could be a chance to promote different books/articles/ideas/music promoting women and/or offering important information. We all have our areas of interest and expertise and we could share it with each other.

For example, just looking at interesting music, take the time to explore Jeannette Arsenault, but also consider the following women:

1. Shania Twain's song “She's Not Just a Pretty Face”
2. Nellie Furtado's new song “Afraid” – Note the lyrics below! What do you think?

Afraid

(Lyrics by N.Furtado/ Attitude)

What they say what they say what they say

You speak out all you feel is defiance

All you need is some self-reliance

Cuz this world is gonna always try us

And all you wanted was to run for cover

Well here's looking to yourself and no other

We're all searching for that special something

And we keep on running

We all have the choice to take the lead or follow

I want to feel the light shine on me

You're so afraid of what people might say

But that's okay cuz you're only human

You're so afraid of what people might say

But that's okay you'll soon get strong enough
You're so afraid of what people might say
But that's okay cuz you're only human
You're so afraid of what people might say you're going to
break so please don't do it

You wanna spread your wings but you're not sure
Don't wanna leave your comforts
Wanna find a cure
We're afraid of who we see in the mirror
We wanna let go but it feels too pure
Who wants to be alone in this world
You look around and all you see is hurt
But the light it always guides us
If we move with a little trust

A diamond don't define what shine is
I don't need a rolex to know what the time is
You got yours let me find what mine is
I'm a survivor look how strong my mind is
I stand on my own it's all me
Regardless of whatever they call me
I'm a leader not a follower
And I'd rather be paid and popular
Ride homie get your dollars up
We're in the belly of the beast that already swallowed us

[From Nellie Furtado Site:

<http://www.nellyfurtado.com/music/default.aspx/pid/2194>]



3. Jem's song "They"

4. Pink!'s song "Stupid Girls"

Women are reaching out musically and calling attention to serious action that needs to be taken! We should take a note from them!

In relation to books we could learn wonderful things from autobiographies and memoirs such as:

- Adrienne Clarkson's *Heart Matters* (release date September 12th, 2006)
- Kay Macpherson's *When in Doubt, Do Both: The Times of My Life*
- Thérèse F. Casgrain *A Woman in a Man's World*
- Mary Kinnear *Margaret McWilliams: An Interwar Feminist*
- Hillary Rodham Clinton *Living History*

3) BPW Past Tense

How well do you know your BPW history? What year was it founded in Canada – hint this year marks 75 years ☺ Participants at the convention were challenged by a quiz about BPW history and women's history and HUGE gaps were found. Can you name the Famous Five by name? And what piece of Canadian currency are they featured on?

4) Political Spotlight/Advocacy Action

This section could feature everything from important provincial legislation i.e. Bill 101 in Ontario which I sent around in email a while ago, to local, national and international action you feel we need to get informed about and take action on. What's getting under your skin?

Other possibilities are highlights of Canadian women's political successes. The most recent major success for Canadian women was seeing a new woman, Elizabeth May, become leader of the Green Party. For more information on this story see:

<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=fbb5b69e-b42b-48d1-b8ca-533160c4c2fe&k=67153>

At the homepage of the Green Party there is also a link if you would like to send a note of personal congratulations to Elizabeth May! We could also send a note from the Virtual Club, would anyone object to this?

5) Upcoming Events/Conferences/Conventions

If anyone is interested the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) is celebrating its 30th Anniversary this September! They are having celebration on September 22, 2006. See the website for more information:

http://www.criaw-icref.ca/indexFrame_e.htm

October is Women's History Month!

This year the theme is: **Aboriginal Women – The Journey Forward**. We could consider doing something in relation to this, possible resources suggested on the national sight are found at:

Http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/dates/whm/index_e.html

A brief summary of the theme which is noted on the site states the following:

Aboriginal Women: The Journey Forward

The objectives of *Women's History Month* 2006 are to make Canadians aware of Aboriginal women's contributions to Canada, to their communities and to their families. It is also intended to promote understanding of the realities of Aboriginal women's lives and the unique challenges they face.

This year marks a number of significant anniversaries: the 25th anniversary of Canada's ratification of the [United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW), the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the 10th anniversary of the

release of the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, [People to People, Nation to Nation](#).

Also check out the BPW Canada Website for more information on this important month!

Feedback and suggestions for the newsletter are welcome! Please let me know what you think! Together who knows what we can do – let's experiment and also have some fun!

Crystal Sissons

whitewolfblack@yahoo.com

