A message from our President, Joan LaSalle

We often say this time of years that “the days are getting longer” – actually daylight is getting longer, days are still roughly 24 hours long. It seems that we all have so many things to do, and without deadlines and priorities, we would likely not achieve many of those things. Hats off to those who are placing BPW in their schedule, and making BPW a high priority.

I am pleased and proud that we have good leadership, experience and knowledge in our club that allows us to achieve great things TOGETHER. For example, the 31 Bingo Team met at Hoss’ and ironed out more details last week. Juls has thirty one Bingo experience and knowledge and is guiding us and helping with planning. Chris stepped up to lead the committee, and pulled us together. Each person at the table had something to add – a good idea or two, some sponsors or potential sponsor, or signed up to help. The energy level was awesome!

The upcoming Meet the Candidates night was planned by Melissa. The executive committee put together a revised schedule and Melissa and Faith quickly pulled communication together for all candidates and public. Chris got the news in the paper, and Jeannie is taking lots of reservations. This will be a great night, a way to show that BPW wants to help inform the public.

Inside this newsletter is the history of our club. This was a required assignment for the upcoming district meeting. Thank you to Faith, Rita, Laura and members who helped dig through old articles and records to pull the information together. I trust you will find it interesting and informative. Starting in April, we will have a bit of the “old records” read at each meeting.

I am so proud to be part of an organization that is on the move. Thank you to every member for making Bedford BPW a priority and working as a team to make a difference for our club, community and women everywhere. Look inside the newsletter for more upcoming events.

Don’t forget to turn your clocks ahead this Sunday!

Many Blessings, Joan
Our Spring Fundraiser is just a month away. The thirty-one Bingo will be held at Bedford Elks on April 7th, doors open at 1 pm, games begin at 2 pm. We need members to sell tickets, spread the word (Hang up posters, share on facebook, tell your friends) help set up, clean up, bring snacks and work at the Bingo to sell tickets for our additional raffles and special games. Tickets can be picked up at March meeting, at the County Treasurer’s office or from Chris Bollman. You can contact Chris to volunteer, to get more tickets or to sign up to bring snacks. christinabollman@howardhanna.com

District 5 Spring District Meeting will be held April 27, 2019 in Altoona. Details will be shared when available.

Equal Pay Day is April 2, 2019. Equal Pay Day is the symbolic day when women’s earnings “catch up” to men’s earnings from the previous year. It’s also a powerful occasion to raise awareness about and organize action around the gender pay gap. Bedford BPW will attend the County Commissioner meeting closest to the date and read a declaration signed by the commissioners and attended the Equal Pay Day Rally in Harrisburg. Look for more news regarding rally and declaration. More information can be found here: https://www.aauw.org/resource/how-to-equal-pay-day

There is still time to register for State Convention!
BPW PA State Convention is June 6, 2019 – June 9, 2019. Early Registration closes on March 9th. To register go to bpwpa.wildapricot.org. Convention this year is at Doubletree by Hilton, Pittsburgh Meadowlands, 340 Race Track Road, Washington, PA 15301. If you want to know more about state convention, please ask members who attended last year: Laura Whetstone, Rita Bush, Ranee Grush, Ella McElwee, Jeannie Plummer, Nancy Mellott, Joan LaSalle.

- Would you like to help a young lady training for a new career? There are many ways to get savings and help students – Contact your local Cosmtology school for discount nail, skin and hair services. Need your teeth cleaned? Allegany College Dental Hygene students need patients, and it is only $20 for cleaning wing bite X-Rays and check-up.

March Birthdays
Faith Price March 1
Lura Shaffer March 6
Juls Bratton March 8

If you know of an occasion to send a card, please contact Nancy Mellott: randmell@pa.net
If you have news for our April Newsletter, please send to Joan LaSalle: jlasalle929@gmail.com
History of Bedford Business and Professional Women’s Club

The Bedford BPW was organized on April 14, 1948 and chartered on May 4, 1948 with 104 members. Officers were Mary Hughes, first President; Mary Pearl Hunt, first Vice President; Ruth Banner, Irma Diehl, Alice Nave and Betty Brown. The Johnstown BPW sponsored the Bedford Club and it became part of District Five BPW. The first meeting was held at the Community Center in Bedford.

The charter dinner was held at the Bedford Springs Hotel on May 14, 1948. Mrs. Grace Constable, director of District Five, presented the charter to the first president, Mary Hughes. This made the club a member of the National Federation.

The club held a Christmas Lighting contest in 1948 and awarded prizes for best home Christmas lights. The contest continued until 1954 when the club voted to use their funds to donate $100 to the Bedford County library instead of the lighting contest. During this time various fundraisers were held including fruit cake sales and fashion shows. In 1950, the club pledged $500 to the Memorial Hospital of Bedford County.

There were 76 active members in Bedford BPW in 1949, and this increased to 100 in 1951. Club news was reported regularly in the local paper, many times on the front page. In the 1950s and 1960s Bedford BPW officer installations were held at Bedford Springs, and the 1955 BPW state convention was hosted by District 5 and held at the Springs. It was the most highly attended convention that summer with over 700 women on Saturday.

The Bedford Gazette newspaper reported on Sept 27, 1956 that Bedford BPW was “considering establishing a college scholarship program for a deserving local girl.” In 1965, a scholarship was awarded to Mary S. Heming a Bedford High School senior in the amount of $25. In the 1970’s the amount was increased to $50. Fashion show and salad tasting fundraisers were started in 1979 to fund the scholarship fund, and in 1984, BPW voted to increase the scholarship amount as a result of this successful fundraiser. Scholarship amounts increased to 500 -1000 dollars annually. The fashion show continued through 2014, raising nearly $40,000 before being replaced by a 31 Bingo fundraiser. In 2004 Bedford BPW began selling giant gobs at Fall Foliage At its peak the fundraiser netted over $12,000. Bedford BPW has raised over $100,000 to date from gob sales. With the success of this fundraiser the average annual scholarship total increased to 6000 dollars with scholarships awarded to graduating female high school students, non-traditional female students, and a degree-pursuing BPW member if any apply.

In 1964 Bedford BPW won an award for PR and news items concerning 1963 BPW Women’s Week. The women wore roses and attended church together as well as holding other functions.

In the 1970s Bedford BPW held prayer breakfasts in October as part of the fall foliage festival and in conjunction with National BPW week that continued until 1990. Membership during 1970’s – 1990’s was about 60 members. Many interesting programs were recorded through this period. In particular, when Bedford BPW invited the public to the March 1994 meeting where Dr. Torres spoke on menopause, the meeting was attended by 120 women.
Starting the new millennium, Bedford BPW won the 2001-2002 Grace B. Daniels Foundation award. This was the first time a district five club ever won such an award. The award is for bringing social issues of concern to working women to the attention of the business community.

Bedford BPW members participated in Equal Pay Day rally the past 3 years and for the past 10 years we have held readings of declarations for Equal Pay Day and National Business Women’s Week at the Bedford County Commissioners’ meetings.

The women of the Bedford BPW have always been aware of the needs of the community. In the early years, the Bedford Business and Professional Women’ club sponsored the Little League Baseball Club. Money was donated to the Bedford Memorial Hospital when it was erected in 1950. Aid was given to the New Hope Care Center in Everett in 1965. A bedroom was furnished in the Mary Jane Mitchell House and donations were given to Your Safe Haven in the early 2000’s.

Contributions were given to the American Cancer Society, the American Red Cross and the Association for the Blind. For many years, the Bedford BPW directed the Heart Drive for the American Heart Association. The Christmas lighting Contest was sponsored by the Bedford BPW. Over the years we have donated to the Bedford Community Center and the Bedford County Library and the Bedford County reading competition, Retired Senior Volunteer Program.

Today we receive many requests for donations which are reviewed and acted accordingly. Recently the club donated to Camp Cadet, All for Smiles, Junior Achievement, and various local school projects. In 2008 Bedford BPW became co-sponsor of the annual Athena award. We have two current club members who have received this prestigious award, Carol Stump and Rita Bush.

In 2017, a club member asked if there would be interest in an Outreach committee to help women in our county. Bedford Business and Professional Women formed an Outreach Committee in 2017 for the purpose of helping women and children in our county. Working with Bedford County Children & Youth we found needs or gaps that BPW could work to fill.

Bedford BPW prepared kits of personal care items for women and for children. The goal was to support families with a gift to allow a little relief to their budget and provide the tools/supplies needed for everyday grooming that most of us take for granted. These items enable women and children to be more confident in job interviews, work, school, appointments and everyday life. The kits were donated to Children and Youth and distributed by Children and Youth caseworkers.

Bedford BPW was awarded a grant in 2018 from Somerset Children’s Aid Society in the amount of $1000 for our Community Outreach to women, families and children. We purchased clothing and personal care items for babies and children and assembled personal hygiene kits for children. The items were given to and distributed by Children and Youth. This club year we started a cooperative effort with a local high end resale shop where members can donate items, and when sold, the money is placed into BPW’s account to allow women in need to purchase clothing.

Bedford BPW is a diverse group of over 40 women who bring different experiences, wisdom and skills to our club. We are professionals in many areas. Many things have changed in the past 100 years, and while great progress has been made, there is still work to be done. Bedford BPW will remain strong and continue to be an advocate for working women.