

5 Year History of PEO Chapter BL March 1, 2017 – February 28, 2022

Introduction

Chapter BL was founded on May 3, 1952. Our chapter is 70 years young this coming May! Chapter BL continues to thrive and donate to all of the P.E.O. projects as well as local charities.

We are grateful to our past presidents who provided great leadership and helped the chapter to meet its many goals. Our presidents during this 5 year period are: Carol Kussow, 2017-2019; Ginny Corwin, 2019-2021; Mary Brewer, 2021-2022.

Membership

Our membership has continued to stay relatively constant, especially considering that we have many long-time members in our chapter. Recent 50 year members honored are: Nancy Moore and Trudy Bangsberg in 2019 and Sara Lee Hinckley in 2021. This brings the total of 50 year members in BL to eleven, which include: Sandra Balfour, Mary Lou Hogan, Ann Nelson, Judy Nicolet, Ann Olsen, Jean Rennebohm, Sarah Rose and Jane Stark.

Below is a summary of membership changes over the last 5 years:

Year*	Total Active	Total Inactive	New Members	Transfers & Reinstatements	Chapter Eternal
2017	65	16	Ann K. Nelson Mary Jo Olson	Nancy Widder Carol Lawler Julie Pederson	Dorothy Leon (50+ years) Betty Land
2018	64	16	Linda Braden	Lois Benton to MS/IA Marylyn Smetzer from IH/CO Nancy Ross from KK/MO	Marlys Sloup Betty McMurry Martha Reynolds
2019	64	15	Sally Miley Mary Deininger Rebecca Stockwell	Betty Keeney from KC/IA	Jane Rogers (56 years)
2020	66	16	Janet Cabot	Ann Harsh from EI/WI	
2021	68	15			Jean Frank (60 years)
2022	62	18			Donna Suby

*Note: These dates are for PEO Fiscal years March 1, 2017 - February 28, 2022

Giving Back

We continue to raise money for PEO projects as well as other non-profits in our community. For several years, our **Ways and Means Committee** has sponsored a “non-event” fundraiser. This has been very successful as some of our long-term members are not able to attend our meetings and/or are not physically able to participate in as many activities.

The donations made to local non-profits are often related to programs where we learn about these organizations in our community. These donations can be financial as well as gifts-in-kind.

Below is a summary of the chapter's financial giving:

Note: These dates are for PEO Fiscal years March 1, 2017 - February 28, 2022

Projects	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Totals
Cottey College	\$300	\$500	\$300	\$270	\$1,570	\$2,940
Educational Loan Fund	300	400	300	300	600	1,900
Int'l Peace Scholarship	400	500	100	100		1,600
PCE- Cont. Education	200	300	300	300	500	1,600
P.E.O. Scholar Award	500	500	500	500	1,000	3,000
STAR Scholarship	200	300	200	200	600	1,500
WI Cottey Scholar	200	250	200	200		850
IPS Designated Scholar	500	500	500	500	500	2,000
H.E.L.P. Fund	200	500	500	500	500	2,200
P.E.O. Special Gifts			0	100		100
The 150 Fund	150	150				300
Local Non-profits		1055	1350	1200	1100	4,705
Totals	\$2,950	\$4,955	\$4,250	\$4,170	\$6,370	\$22,695

Our sisters also support a small library at the Lussier Community Center in Madison, WI. Once a week, sisters work at the library straightening the shelves and checking in newly donated books. Over this 5 year period, our chapter donated 2500 new children's books to families served by the Center at their Christmas event!

Meetings

Our Chapter meetings changed abruptly when the COVID-19 pandemic spread through the U.S. in early 2020. The International Executive Board issued directives for all chapters to follow, including no longer meeting in-person. Fortunately, Zoom technology was both affordable and easy to use. BL held virtual meetings from March 2020 – November 2021, with the exception of having one in-person meeting to handout Yearbooks in September 2021. Attendance for virtual meetings averaged in the mid 20's, but also enabled some non-resident members to attend.

In February 2022, we began in-person meetings while wearing masks and not serving food. Our members were really happy to meet in person and socialize again. Our preference continues to hold as many meetings as possible in members' homes and eliminate the sit down lunches.

Prior to our business meeting, we often have a program on topics from health and wellness to non-profits providing goods and services to our community. Our **Program Committee** continued this tradition by arranging virtual programs. Three examples are:

- Katherine Kunau, (niece of Audrey Dybdahl) Associate Curator of Art at the Museum of Art in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, discussed artist Grant Wood and showed us his art on display at the museum.
- Sheila Shigley, a UW-Madison Linguistics scholar, spoke on the Ho Chunk Language and Preservation Program
- Robin Rider, PHD in History of Science, talked about UW Memorial Library's collection of rare books with a focus on Works by Women.

Our business meetings conduct the business at hand, including updates from our project chairs on applicants and recipients of PEO scholarships or loans. We are fortunate to have many sisters actively connected to our community, including the University of Wisconsin, to help our chapter find and nominate excellent candidates for these International projects. Over the last five years, we have nominated 7 candidates for scholarships and loans: 1 PCE grant, 1 ELF loan, 3 STAR scholarships and 2 PEO scholar awards. The following awards were approved:

2017 – Continuing Education Grant for \$1,800 to Nicole Nouchi

2017 - Education Loan Fund for \$15,000 to Tessa Nutt, granddaughter of LaVonne McCrill

2018 – STAR Scholarship for \$2,500 to Eliza Bowers-Chen, granddaughter of Betty McMurry

2019 - STAR Scholarship for \$2,500 to Julia Rosendahl, granddaughter of Carolyn White.

Interest Groups

The chapter has three interest groups that our members enjoy. They are a Bridge group, a book group that meets once a month, and a Mah Jongg group that plays twice a month. During COVID, only the book group held virtual discussions.

We are also grateful to our **Courtesy Committee** for lovingly visiting and supporting our members during their shut-in times.

Social Events

COVID challenged our **Social Committee**, but they did plan some well attended events:

- Norwegian dinner and program honoring BIL, Phil Dybdahl, in Stoughton, WI. (2017)
- A play at the American Players Theater in Spring Green, including a BBQ supper. (2018)
- 20 sisters dined at two different restaurants during Madison’s Restaurant Week. (2019)
- A virtual Christmas program with live music and singing performed by BL Sisters. (2021)
- Special sister holiday greeting card exchanges (2020-2022)

Special Project

With encouragement from WI State Chapter President, Mary Lou Bradstreet, in the Fall of 2021, Chapter BL submitted proposals to amend the wording for 1.) the Constitution, Part III, Article VI, Members by Initiation and 2.) the Ceremony of Installation, paragraph 4 (for the Chaplain.) Unfortunately in surveying the WI state chapters on whether or not to present these at the June 2022 State Convention, they were not accepted.

Conclusion

Our sisters continue to give of their time and talents to the best of their abilities and our committees and officers keep our chapter running smoothly. Throughout these challenging times, we are proud that we were able to continue supporting P.E.O.’s mission of helping women reach their education goals.

Submitted by:

Ginny Corwin, Past-President on May, 2022