

**Five-Year History**  
**Chapter BL, Madison, Wisconsin**  
**1997-2002**

When the last five-year history was read on our 45th anniversary in 1997, Audrey Dybdahl was serving her first year as President of Chapter BL. She served again in 1998, and, in March of 1999, Nancy Moore was elected to take us out of one century and into 2000! In March of 2001, Nancy Hertel became our 26th president and is currently serving her second year.

In 1997, we had 56 active, 12 non-resident, and seven inactive members. As we have gained members, so have we lost some through dimitts, moves, and sadly, death. Renae Magera and Carol Lawler have dimitted to chapters in South Dakota and North Carolina; Sigrid Jensen and Sharon Baker have moved to warmer climates and are attending P.E.O. groups there.

We have initiated four--Jean Nordlund in 1998, Jeanine Olson and Sharon Baker in 2000, and Ann Lubenow in 2001. Julie Pederson joined us by dimit in 2000, and, in March 2001, Sara Lee Hinckley became the 153rd member of BL when she dimitted!

A concentrated effort was made to contact former members in our area, who for one reason or another, had gone inactive. As a result, three former BLs--Marjorie Hibner, Fran Bright, and Janice Walden--reactivated.

Edna Rieman, who at the time had turned 100 years old and was our oldest living member, passed away in July of 1997. Past president Florence Nordholm, the mother of Ann Nelson, died on December 28, 2000, and Mildred Wedemeyer died in 2001 in Alabama. Memorials to all three were given toward P.E.O. projects.

Our average attendance continues at 25 members--less in the winter, more when the "snow birds" come back from warmer climates.

Thanks to great program committees, we continue to have interesting, informative meetings. We've heard expert speakers from the community, as well as sisters educating us on their fields of interest. We've also had several sons of our members detailing mostly volunteer work here or abroad. We learned more about Madison by holding meetings at various University sites, the zoo, local garden spots, museums, and in June, we'll be touring the new Hospice Center. We've also held luncheon meetings at two retirement centers in which we have members residing.

Of course, we include BILs in at least one social occasion a year. Last summer, we took a dinner cruise around Lake Mendota.

We continue a custom started many years ago of honoring our daughters who are to be brides--usually at a tea in a member's home. Each bride is given a silver candle snuffer from her Mother's sisters.



We've gotten to know P.E.O. members from other chapters by sharing luncheons and programs at both Nakoma and Blackhawk Country Clubs. Thanks to our Sandra Balfour's involvement with IPS, we have included many of the foreign students as our guests at these meetings and they have provided us with interesting insights into their lives both here and in their homelands. Sandra keeps us informed on their special accomplishments or problems; some have used their special talents to perform for us. Sandra also rounds up cookies from our members and sees that they are delivered to each IPS student before the Christmas holidays. (Our shut-ins also benefit from this BL baking.)

In 1999, after hearing a program on scrapbooking, BL members decided to put together a book of their own. With the help of the local shop experts, each member did a page with her biography and pictures of family. In the process we've all learned more about each other, and the book is loaned to each new member for help in getting to know her new sisters.

Because of increasing difficulty finding homes when needed, we discontinued our B&B project in 2001. Despite losing that income, we have been able to increase our earnings in a multitude of ways so we can continue to support P.E.O. projects nationally and locally. We still sell brooms, dishclothes, BL cookbooks, and Beth Ross's beautifully photographed greeting cards. Our participation in the fall Madison P.E.O. Boutique, our ongoing book club, and yearly bridge marathons not only raise funds but provide other ways to know our sisters better.

In 1999, the Ways and Means<sup>2N</sup> Committee began the year with an "English High Tea." Members were sent beautifully hand-made invitations to attend or<sup>INVITED</sup> to make a donation in lieu of other large fundraisers. Over \$1,000 was raised in one delightful afternoon! Our members liked the idea so much that the "English High Tea" was repeated in 2000, with even better results.

In August 2001, a dinner meeting put on by the Ways and Means Committee featured an auction of individual BL members' time and talents. Selling our creative talents to each other enabled us to learn even more of our sisters' interests and abilities, and also raised \$1,502.50 for our projects.

BL has participated in two P.E.O. conventions recently. We were one of the local chapters involved in the 1999 state convention held in Madison and our members helped in many ways: Lois Benton was treasurer, Ann Nelson was chairman of the BIL banquet, and Sandra Balfour headed up the hospitality room which put the "BL bakers" to work.

In 2001, we were asked to help with the International convention held in Milwaukee. Sandy Balfour and Cathy Barker were in charge of table decorations. Several members and their BILs were hosts at the BIL banquet, and Cathy kept a crew busy beforehand addressing (500) envelopes and preparing ingredients for table decorations.

We have an on-going search for women who need help furthering their education. In 2001, we sponsored Xix Xix Yu for a PCE and she was granted \$750. This year, we gave her \$200 to help with her expenses.



Since 1997, Zo Kussow, Fran Bright, Charlotte King, Fran Kingery, Connie Todd, and Harriet Nordholm have been recognized at state convention as 50-year members. In June 2002, Beth Ross, Carol Wilson, Jean Frank, and Mary Heine will be so honored.

BL has had a busy five years, during which we saw the end of a century and the beginning of another. As we prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary on May 8th, we realize that we have remained a strong, viable organization in which caring, giving, friendship, and love play the most important parts.

Mimi Koenig  
Chapter BL Historian  
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