



BPW Celebrates 90 Years

by Patricia Monahan



2011 Cranberry District Women of Achievement Awards Dinner

The Massachusetts chapter of the BPWMA is celebrating 90 years of advocating for women.

In 1919, during WWI, the Government recognized the valuable skills of working women and assisted in forming the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Club to organize their resources. That group is now known as Business and Professional Women's Foundation.

In 1920, women won the right to vote and the BPW has been working for fairness and equity in the workplace ever since.

The Massachusetts chapter was founded in 1921 and continues a long-standing tradition of assistance, compassion and empowerment for women as we celebrate our 90th anniversary.

While the state and local chapters focus to assist those within their regions, each region helps to unite the working women within the nation, and hopefully one day throughout the globe.

We have two chapters currently here on Cape Cod that make up the Cranberry District of the BPW/MA: BPW Upper Cape and BPW Lower Cape. We are striving to increase the awareness and support of our group for, as women, we have many struggles yet to fight and a long way to go before we reach full equality in the workplace and in our own backyard.

The mission of BPW Lower Cape shall be to achieve equity for all women in the workplace through advocacy, education and information.

We offer scholarship programs, Women of Achievement recognition, and contributions to local charities. This month we are working on our raffle donations to help support the Cape Cod Children's Place.

I am a single mother of one daughter and two sons. It has not always been an easy road. As my children begin college, I continue to teach my daughter to always move forward with her dreams, and for my sons to see her and all women as equals so that they may reach those dreams.

In 2007, I won a lottery draw for a Habitat home and began to build. Along with the home I was building, I began to realize I was also building a new life for myself and my children, one nail at a time. Although Habitat supports low-income families, it also supports new opportunities.

In 2008 my good friend, Lisa Still, currently Underwriting Counsel for First Title Insurance Company and a past President of the BPWLCC, suggested I join her for a night out for dinner, networking and friendship. It was a wonderful beginning to a longstanding friendship with these women of the Lower Cape.

That night, as it continues today, I found a diverse group of working women of all job types and educational background. They are all friendly, supportive and non-pretentious. When Lisa first suggested I join her at one of these meetings, I was a bit skeptical. I had a decent job as an office manager for a local construction company but I struggled to pay the bills and drove a beat-up Ford Explorer.

Here she was, a successful lawyer who participated in a professional women's group, with members like State Representative Sarah Peake (one of our greatest women's advocates.) I thought, what am I doing going to a meeting like that?

But by the time the meeting was over, I was hooked. I joined Lisa as a guest month after month and found strength and self-assurance that I belonged and I deserved better in life.

When the time came to move into my home, many women brought plants from their gardens to a meeting to place in my yard as a friendship garden. It was an amazing show of support.

The following year, I was laid off from my job and began taking an online certificate course to broaden my options. I was encouraged to apply for the BPWLCC scholarship award. Each year our local organization awards two \$1,000 scholarships to local women who are taking classes to better their career choices and their lives.

With the help of the BPW, I was able to finish the course and although I did not enter that field, the knowledge gained through the course increased my job skills and has served me well in my current job.

I made the commitment in March 2011 to join this wonderful organization and assumed the role of Treasurer in June. I've jumped in with both feet, and half my body, to this group as I feel so strongly connected. I still call myself the "newbie," although I have been attending meetings since 2008. We currently have 55 members in the Lower Cape Chapter (including two more "newbies," inducted at November's meeting.)

There are many women in our group and we all have a story to tell. With each story we become empowered. Some are stories of struggle, some are of success. But we all share a bond and we all want the best for each other and our communities.

One of the fantastic women I've come to know at the BPW is Kristin Whitfield. Kristin is owner of Innerweave Asian Healing, (<http://innerweavehealing.com/>) located at 46 Crowell Road in Chatham. She is also a past Local and State BPW President, and a strong advocate for women and families.

A mother of two, and a new Grandma of baby Olivia, Kristin gives of herself to others both in her professional practice and with her volunteerism.

Her interest in the study of acupuncture and oriental medicine began in 1998 with her first own acupuncture treatment for a sore back. Then her life took an unexpected turn with a diagnosis of breast cancer late in 1998.

With the support and guidance of her acupuncturist and mentor, Kristin began her studies at the New England School of Acupuncture in 1999 and ended up with her Master's degree in 2002. Through her own "Inner-weaving," as she calls it, she has opened her heart to helping others who need help with their own "weaving" journeys.

She opened her practice in 2002 and has helped people help themselves ever since. Aside from her practice in Chatham, Kristin also devotes her time helping military veterans and their families work through their PTSD issues that arise from serving abroad.

On Thursday nights, from 5pm – 7pm, at the Hyannis Veteran's Outreach Center, Kristin (along with a group of five other acupuncturists) runs a walk-in clinic known as VAC of Cape Cod, Veterans Acupuncture Care of Cape Cod.

Here veterans and their families can get FREE treatment for any stress disorder they are suffering. Her goal is to alleviate their stress and anxiety, and acupuncture has the power to do that.

The treatment is in a quiet, relaxing group setting. Five tiny needles are placed in each ear to stimulate the five elements that work the body. Once the needles are in place, all one has to do is close their eyes and relax.

This form of treatment usually lasts from 30-45 minutes, depending on the individual. Some find clarity after one treatment, many choose to come weekly.



There is plenty of space and with the holiday season upon us, Kristin would love to see more join them, to help find serenity during this often busy and stress-filled time.

On Wednesdays at her office on Crowell Road, Kristin holds an Acupuncture Happy Hour. From 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., people can drop in for this 45 minute 5-point ear treatment for only \$15.00. All money collected helps fund the VAC clinic on Thursday nights.

Never having acupuncture before, and considering myself an adventurer, I went to one of Kristin's Happy Hours recently and I too am convinced in this stress relieving practice.

Everyone was seated in a circular, group setting. There was soft music, a hint of eucalyptus in the air and green tea to sip. One

doesn't even think of the tiny, painless, pins attached to the inner ear.

It was a wonderful way to relax and meditate. I even returned the following Saturday for a regular energy cleansing treatment with Jennifer Makihara, who shares space with Kristin on Crowell Road. I will be back for sure.

Kristin offers hands-on pressure treatments that don't require use of needles, for those who would love to reap the same benefits of acupuncture but may be leery of needles. In addition, Kristin also offers a wide variety of Chinese herbal treatments.

Whatever your journey, Kristin is sure to weave something up for you. Stop by and see her, try it out during her Wednesday night fundraiser, and begin your inner journey to stress-free living.

Our local BPW meets on the second Tuesday of each month from September through June at various restaurants around Lower Cape Cod. Each meeting has a varied topic of interest. It is a good night to get out, meet and support other women. Join us at a BPW meeting and see what we have to offer you, and let us know what you have to offer us.

Join the camaraderie and together we can make positive changes to the world of working women everywhere.

For more information on topics and location of monthly meetings, please contact either co-presidents [Roberta Annese](#) or [Patricia Bolduc](#).

Find us on [Facebook](#)

Patricia Monahan is a new contributor to CapeWomenOnline magazine. She is currently the Accounting Supervisor at Vacation Resorts International in Hyannis and current Treasurer of the Lower Cape BPW. She is a mom of three and resides in Brewster.

BPW COLLECT

Keep us, O God, from pettiness; let us be
large in thought, in word, in deed. Let us be done
with fault-finding and leave off self-seeking.

May we put away all pretense and meet each other
face to face without self pity, and without
prejudice. May we never be hasty in judgment and
always generous. Let us take time for all things;
make us grow calm, serene, gentle. Teach us to put
into action our better impulses, straight forward and
unafraid.

Grant that we may realize it is the little things that
create differences, that in the big things of life we are
at one. And may we strive to touch and to know the
great, common human heart of us all,
and, O, Lord God, let us forget not to be kind.

Mary Stewart