

# “Aim High: Reach for the Stars and Change the World”

A 2013 Report: President-elect Jacque Hillman

**Attending the Region I, II and III meetings this spring**, I have been inspired by our members who believe in the mission of Business and Professional Women of Tennessee. While we may have differences in style and approach, we are united in our goal to help BPW/TN prosper. You are each serving the women in your regions in ways that help them succeed. Many of you have emailed me in the past three months sharing your thoughts. Thank you for your input.

**At the November Interim Board**, our “lifetimers” gave voice to their opinions. Not all are major proponents of change. As a former newspaper editor, I know how much holding that newspaper to read means to me, although I also work with social media daily and appreciate online. But our lifetimers are equally intent on the Achiever newsletter. We will do our best to make certain they receive their Achiever by mail and copies of email blasts sent to other members.

**Focus groups:** At the same time, I have had many conversations with our younger members on what they expect BPW/TN to offer them. I have researched what other women’s organizations are offering for \$90 a year. I have asked young women ages 21 to 35 what they expect of a businesswomen’s group. These are the top five points: 1. Building relationships face to face, building trust, through gathering, sharing, learning. 2. Networking in an interactive community online, and also training courses online. 3. Having fun. 4. Making a difference in the community while using “my” time wisely. 5. Support each other and make business connections for success: At each meeting, create 30-second commercials; offer testimonials on other members; share weekly tips on marketing and growing your business. Hold roundtable discussions. Build a nice group of friends but also business resources. Many have children with all the scheduling that entails, and they want every minute to count.

They were largely unaware of the influence BPW/TN has in working with the legislature on laws that affect women in the workforce and their families. We need to educate on that topic.

As part of my goals to fulfill our hopes for BPW/TN, I have set in progress several initiatives, following steps that our president, Terri Curran, has begun.

## **Increasing membership:**

- **New mentor chair:** Margaret Heath. She plans to call each new member, thank them for joining and ask them what we can do in BPW/TN for them. I am thrilled that she will take this position! We seek other mentors to join her committee.
- **College chapters/mentorship:** Right after Interim Board, I began meeting and talking with officials at colleges and universities about the procedures to follow to create local chapters on campus. I have met with four of five in the Jackson area. At least two possibilities exist: 1. Charter actual college "locals." Colleges generally require six members to charter an on-campus group and a college adviser. 2. Have our mentors hold a program once a month on campus to introduce students to BPW if

there are any issues with creating a local on campus. We can still recruit students into locals.

- **Veterans/mentorship:** Ret. Navy Cmdr. Debbie O'Bryant of Carroll County has agreed to become State Women Veterans Mentor/Trainer. She will hold her first local meeting in July at University of Memphis-Lambuth on veterans' benefits for them (and their family members) that will enable them to attend college.

Meeting dates are being set now for Union University, Freed-Hardeman University, Jackson State Community College, Dyersburg State Community College and Southwest Community College.

For convention, we are creating a plan that will reach out to women veterans as potential members and to create a conference "track" at convention.

We are working hand in hand with BPW Foundation to make this happen.

[Business and Professional Women](#) are *Joining Forces for Women Veterans*® across the country. We are working to provide support and resources to women veterans and their families as they return to their civilian lives, including providing including providing [mentoring relationships](#) for more than 1,000 women veterans and military spouses.

Please watch the video of a woman veteran working with her BPW job coach that was on NBC Today: [http://www.bpwfoundation.org/index.php/issues/women\\_veterans](http://www.bpwfoundation.org/index.php/issues/women_veterans)

A big thank you to President Terri Curran and Lee Ann Gaddis for attending the State Women Veterans Summit and representing BPW/TN well! Now we will all continue their efforts.

- **Meeting with locals:** Beth Bates and I met with Milan BPW and talked to members in Paris. I am thrilled that President Terri Curran revitalized Cumberland County BPW. We will continue to help locals and encourage them to continue but accept that they may prefer to join a larger organization BPW local that offers more flexibility in officer selection and programming.

#### **New website and one domain host:**

We are creating a new website design. We hope you will like the new look, which has email linked to the new website; plus we are using Mail Chimp. Thank you, Martha Ervin, our Finance Chair, for taking on this task at no charge. Thanks go to Sharon Taylor-Carrillo for her work in past years on the website and as AA and for continuing as Historian and Region II director. Her diligence is greatly appreciated.

#### **Legislative platform:**

I have talked to members, and we will keep our Legislative Platform as is. We may consider adding two points to our legislative platform after reviewing Ohio BPW's page. First, they have:"

**Dependent Care:** Actively work to strengthen and improve enrichment programs, physical facilities and funding for affordable quality dependent care of all ages." Second, Zulfat Suara has suggested adding one on **Human Trafficking**. These points will need a vote to add them.

**Creating partnerships:**

As a long-time supporter of the Tennessee Economic Council on Women, I have written Yvonne Wood to express my hope that we will continue our partnerships working for women in the state of Tennessee. President Terri Curran has done an excellent job working with TECW.

**Convention 2014:**

Convention chair Beth Bates and I, along with a convention team, are moving forward and creating a different convention "style," which has been President Terri Curran's goal. We agree with that concept.

Many of us have been businesswomen for years, and we've all attended many conventions. We would probably agree that those with a double track for learning sessions and fun were the ones we enjoyed the most. Members who give vacation time to come to convention should have fun as they learn.

I also believe that the best way to recruit new members is to open the convention to regional visitors who can register for both the learning sessions and the fun events. We intend to recruit actively at the 2014 convention that will be held in Jackson.

So whatever we need to do to make that happen, I am open for your suggestions. Beth Bates is convention chair.

**Bylaws:**

I am studying bylaws. I strongly support keeping bylaws discussions in a separate session at each convention as President Terri Curran has done.


**Keys to Success:**

Keys to success include: 1. Communication 2. Strategic Planning. 3. Passion, dedication and perseverance.

Yes, I believe if we aim high, reach for the stars, we can change the world.

*"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking." Albert Einstein.*

Thank you for taking this journey with me in 2013-2014. I appreciate your help, your wise counsel and your support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen W. (Jacque) Hillman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned at the bottom of the page.