

The Iowa Business Woman

"What's Past is Prologue." Those words written by the immortal Shakespeare many years ago continue to be appreciated today. Patrick Henry, famed pioneer American statesman, put it another way when he asserted, "I know of no way of judging the future but by reading the past," and the illustrious Thomas Jefferson said, "A morsel of genuine history is a thing so rare as to be always valuable."

So we endeavor to review briefly the history of the bulletin or magazine that has served as the official publication for the Iowa Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs for the past "fabulous fifty years!"

It all began when Helena M. Mitchell of Davenport started her regime as Iowa Federation president. She assigned her second vice president, Ethel D. Henry of Clinton, the task of establishing some sort of communication between the clubs in Iowa, then numbering thirteen. In November, 1921, with a borrowed typewriter as its mother, the *Bulletin* was born. Sometimes it had four pages—sometimes eight—according to the editor's time and the contribution of the clubs. Three or four issues appeared. Then came the *challenge*: "The

Bulletin will be what your club helps to make it. Let's all pull together now for a bit of pioneering in Iowa." It hasn't changed. After fifty years the editor's cry is still the same!

The first issues were mailed to clubs in Cedar Rapids, Fort Dodge, Mason City, Spencer, Marshalltown, Davenport, Boone, Keokuk, Des Moines, Sioux City, Waterloo, and Clinton; also copies went to the National magazine, the state president, and Carrie Bell of Des Moines, who was secretary of the Department of Women's Affairs of the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce. In a letter dated November 3, 1921, the latter wrote: "Best wishes for the new venture, a real task but a worthwhile one. I read it before my board of directors today. We are for the Business and Professional Women in every forward movement." The *Bulletin* became the parent of *The Iowa Business Woman*.

After the state bulletin was nicely launched in 1921 by Ethel Henry, little was done to follow up her efforts. Consequently, plans were made for a new state bulletin. Lydia M. Barrette then became the first editor of *The Iowa Business Woman* on a permanent basis, with Agnes Helbig as business manager. Both deserve great credit for the five issues that followed. The first one was financed by thirteen of the sixteen clubs who inserted business cards at \$5.00 per card. The other four issues were financed by advertising sold by local

clubs. Fort Dodge was the first club to sell a quarter page ad, while Marshalltown was first to report advertising sold for each of the five issues.

Early in 1924 it was decided to publish seven issues during the year and in September, 1924, *The Iowa Business Woman* began publication on a monthly basis, following the precedent of having the staff from the same town as the state president.

During 1925-1926 the IBW appeared four times. Considerable discussion was held as to the advisability of continuing its publication. Finally it was voted unanimously to continue with six issues a year.

The year, 1927-1928, saw *The Iowa Business Woman* published four times and, to use a quote, "each a finished magazine in every detail—each one of which we could be justly proud." An editorial in one issue that year received an award from the National Federation, which had offered a prize for the best editorial in a state magazine.

In 1928-1929 it was decided to issue the IBW on a smaller scale as a means of informing the membership of club news, committee activities, and other matters of interest. It was at this time that the by-laws were changed so that only the amount necessary to cover the cost of the magazine was to be set aside in the budget, rather than the fifty per cent heretofore used.

In 1933-1934 the state magazine, still newsy and to the point, was being published four times

a year. As time passed *The Iowa Business Woman* continued on an even keel—as even, that is, as any publication can when confronted with the usual run-of-the-mill obstacles such as deadlines, financial hurdles, and rising costs in both printing and mailing. Then (alas!) came zip codes!

The Iowa Business Woman today (1971) is still being published four times yearly—August, November, January and April. It is the sincere hope of the present editor that it fulfills the purpose for which it was established: that of being a means of communication among clubs in Iowa—not the thirteen that existed in 1921, but the ninety-one clubs that exist in the Iowa Federation today.

The Iowa Business Woman has always been a labor of love. No compensation has gone to any one editor, or to any other individual who may have spent time on its publication. It is hoped the material recorded in the state magazine, representing fifty years of growth and accomplishment meets the approval of those who have given the Iowa Federation a rich heritage of service.

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