

Ladies of the Lake Luncheon Meeting - January 2017
by Barbara Galvin

Anticipating snow and cold in January, the Ladies of the Lake made both January and February meetings "Brown Bag lunches" with no ladies being designated as hostesses. It worked not only with more ladies braving the cold, but also with less severe weather. We had the cold, but little snow.

The Ladies of the Lake coming out to meet and greet one another after the Christmas Holidays were hale and hearty. Stories were being told at every gathering and that was before the brown bags were opened.

Jane Stevens took charge and told the ladies about the higher cost of printing the Ladies of the Lake Directory. Discussion centered on whether the price would be raised for each lady purchasing a directory or whether the money should be spent from the treasury. A vote was taken and seconded. Ladies will be treated to the colorful new directories. (Make sure to secure one if you missed the January meeting).

The next order of business was checking the new listing of hostesses for 2017 in the directory. Several changes needed to be made because schedules do change. The March 2017 hostesses will be Judy Brown and Sharon Butler. Thank you, ladies.

The Brown Bag lunches were as diverse as the ladies who brought them. Not so many sandwiches, except for unique sandwiches substituting all kinds of delectable treats for bread. One lady even had "Subway" make her lunch. We are creative and determined. Do what needs to be done! (Maybe a New Year's resolution?)

Several ladies also treated the Ladies of the Lake to dessert. Several pies and cookies and scones were graciously baked and made to share.

Then Jane Stevens asked, "How many of you know all the ladies present?" Everyone looked around! Jane was right on target. For many years, the membership of the Ladies of the Lake remained constant, not anymore! There are new neighbors to be welcomed and not-so-new neighbors who were still working when they moved to Little Swan Lake. Now these ladies have discovered the "Wonderful World of Retirement."

We needed to become re-acquainted or even introduced to new members. Jane proposed that each lady introduce herself by sharing birthplace, jobs, family and whatever else makes her special.

Jane Stevens let the way by volunteering to be the first lady to introduce herself. Jane's father was a farmer, so a significant part of Jane's story was on the farm. Then she shared her interesting variety of positions at a freight line, where Ed Stevens would eventually win her heart, after Jane had been widowed for 14 years.

Judy Brown, who was born in Springfield, met her husband at Western. She listed all her teaching positions in Avon, where she did it all--teaching classes from kindergarten through high school. Eventually Judy moved on to teaching at Western, where she taught for 26 years. She also raised five children with Dick, her husband. She now delights in her eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Barbara Galvin was born in Chicago and taught for 38 years at Chicago Public Schools in high school, and shared her "trials and tribulations" deciding on what to teach. Teaching was the given, but she began studying for kindergarten through 1st-3rd grades. That only lasted through a few

courses before she decided older students would be more challenging, so she moved to elementary curriculum. Once again, that was short lived, before the true love of her life was found-- literature, drama, journalism. And English major was born.

Bev Ver Steeg, born in Iowa, loved taking care of people so nursing was a perfect fit. She was also inspired by an aunt who worked in India, helping people. She married Bob, the banker, and they had four children, three boys and a girl. They lived in Bushnell for 30 years before finding their dream house at Little Swan Lake. Bev now travels to Colorado and Texas to see her sons and their families. She also plays the piano at her Methodist church.

Gail Maher, born in Iowa, has two children and has been married to her Jim for 52 years. She worked in a Davenport bank in the proof department. She became a full-time mom and a volunteer after Jim and her had their daughter. She also lived in Mississippi when Jim was transferred by Caterpillar from 1982-1987. The family happily relocated to Chenoa IL next. But the best move was to Little Swan Lake for both Jim, a Navy submarine veteran, who loves his Bass boat and fishing, and for Gail, who gardens and wants to be close to both her son and daughter, who also likes lake property.

Elizabeth Hiel, a business woman, worked with her husband to establish their trucking company. She emphasized how she never really has gone far from her roots. She went to school in Bushnell, where she graduated, and eventually returned after graduating from Western, to student teach. She taught 4th grade in Bushnell until she and her husband John bought out trucks from Quincy IL. That was 40 years ago. Elizabeth shared how she and John did all the required jobs until the business was doing well. Elizabeth and John have been married 50 years. The business has been passed on to their sons when John and Elizabeth retired to Little Swan Lake.

Nancy Hoppes, an only child, was born in Indiana, and was blessed to have been raised by a kind and gentle grandmother who inspired her to go to business college. Nancy also shared how she met the love of her life, Dave, in school, where he was older and obviously not interested in little Nancy. But things changed when they met years later at Bradley University. Nancy and Dave married and they moved to Rockford for Dave's job. They would relocate to Roscoe for a super school district for their two children. Now, it is Nancy's turn to pursue the love of her life--- no, not Dave, but her love of art, design and interior decorating. Nancy and Dave retired to Little Swan Lake where they treasure time with their children and grandchildren.

Ladies of the Lake enjoying Brown Bag January were Gail Maher, Sharon Butler, Laura Jennings, Sandy Morrow, Judy Brown, Jane Stevens, Barbara Jonckheere, Elizabeth Hiel, Peggy Garrett McGrew, Bev Ver Steeg, Pam Gaskill, Nancy Hoppes, and Barbara Galvin.

Join us in February for another breezy easy Brown Bag luncheon. We will continue to learn about each other to foster better friendships and greater appreciation for one another.

Remember: Save that "Stuff" for the Annual Rummage Sale on May 20, 2017. (No clothes, electronics or accessories, please.)

See you on February 1st! Mark the calendar so you aren't unpleasantly surprised. We need to share your story, too.

