

District V

By Kathryn Greiner

(a consolidation of Districts 13, 5 and 2)

The states of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin were the foundation for **District 13** which was organized as Credit Women's Breakfast Club in 1937. The majority of the members were people who either worked for a credit bureau or were subscribing members of the credit bureaus in the major cities. The first President of District 13 was Helen Sargeant who was a co-owner of the Credit Bureau of Chicago Heights, IL. Her partner Ed Strasma from Kankakee was instrumental in helping organize similar locals in Kankakee, and Joliet where he also co-owned credit bureaus. Helen Sargeant was instrumental in organizing more "breakfast clubs" in nearby cities, as they were called in the early days since they met early in the morning before going to work.

Illinois had locals in Chicago, Chicago Heights, Danville, Galesburg, Joliet, Kankakee, Peoria, Rockford, and the Quad Cities while Indiana had locals in Gary/Hammond area, Indianapolis, Evansville, Ft Wayne, Goshen, Corydon, Marion, and Terre Haute and a couple of other locations. Wisconsin had locals in Milwaukee, Kenosha, Racine, Madison and perhaps some smaller cities as well. Chicago Heights was the first local and also had the first District President. Sue Heusing joined in 1966-67 when the membership was about 50 to 60 women. They met twice each month, the first Tuesday for Breakfast and the 3rd Tuesday for Dinner. At one time Chicago Heights had 125 local members (thanks to the Sears Call Center in the area). Chicago Heights became the current **Illiana** local.

The consolidation of local credit bureaus being acquired by the big three was part of the reason that many of the local associations did not survive even after some locals merged in

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order to try to maintain their presence. The officers of the locals and the District in an effort to continue a strong position decided to join with District 5. The two districts had been meeting jointly for the District Conferences for many years alternating each year for the local who was hosting. The merger took place in 1998 and District 13 members became members of District 5 and remain so today. The 2002-03 CPI manual lists District 5 as including the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and New York (formerly District 2).

District 5 was established in 1940 as the Lake Erie Council, with Catherine Doody Bartlett from Cleveland, Ohio serving as the 1st President. Ida Bell, author of the International Creed, was also from Cleveland. The quarterly news publication was named "The Lake Erie" and the sailboat was the motto.

District 5 developed associations in Canada, Ohio, Kentucky and Michigan in the cities of Akron, Alliance, Ann Arbor, Ashtabula, Bardstown, Battle Creek, Blue Water, Canton, Chatham, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Elyria, Essex County, Hamilton, Hardin County, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lexington, London, Louisville, Monroe, Royal Oak, Southfield, Springfield, Toronto, Waterloo, Windsor. At one point

there were 782 members. The Annual meetings were held in April jointly with District 13 and the Fall Seminar was held in October in Windsor. Some of our members were also with Creditors International-Great North Central Assn. Their members from Nebraska, Iowa, Kentucky and Ohio hold their annual conference jointly with CPI, and some of their members have joined District 5.

District 5 is now comprised of 6 local associations: Ann Arbor, MI; Goshen, IN; Illiana, IL; Indianapolis, IN; Jackson, MI and West Central, IL.