

## **Celebrate March!**

**W**hen many of us think of March, thoughts of shamrocks, St. Patrick's Day, lions and lambs, spring, first daffodils, Passover, Easter or even the Ides of March come immediately to mind.

Yet this month was named for the Roman God, "Mars," and many celebrations take place such as National Irish American Heritage Month – designated by Congress in 1995; Red Cross Month; National Frozen Food Month; National Peanut Month; National Nutrition Month along with (some a bit bizarre) National Bubble Week; National Crochet Week; Employee Appreciation Day; National Salespersons Day; Hug a GI Day; and even National Popcorn Lover's Day!

However, there is one day in particular, **March 8**, that has very special significance.

It is not only the **BPWSOC monthly meeting date (6 PM – Kristy's Restaurant, Rt. 9 Township of Ocean,** but it is also **International Women's Day!**

International Working Women's Day, as it was originally called, is marked every year in different regions of the world with the focus from general celebrations of respect, appreciation and love towards women, to observance for women's economic, political and social achievements.

This date is also commemorated at the United Nations and is designated in some countries as a national holiday. When women on all continents, frequently divided by national boundaries as well as by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to celebrate this important day, they can reflect to a tradition that represents at least 9 decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.

International Women's Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history; it is ingrained in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men.

The idea of an International Women's Day first came about at the turn of the Century, which in the industrialized world, was a period of growth and confusion, booming population growth and radical beliefs. The first International Women's Day was held March 19, 1911.

Few causes promoted by the United Nations have generated more intense and widespread support than the campaign to promote and protect the equal rights of women.

The Charter of the United Nations, signed in San Francisco in 1945, was the first international agreement to proclaim gender equality as a fundamental human right. Since then, the United Nations has helped create a historic legacy of internationally agreed strategies, standards, programs and goals to advance the status of women around the globe.

Over many years, the action of the United Nations pertaining to the advancement of women has taken noticeable directions from the promotion of legal measures and mobilization of public opinion and international action to training and research and direct assistance to disadvantaged groups.

Today a central organizing principle of the work of the United Nations is that no enduring solution to society's most threatening social, economic and political problems can be found without the complete participation and full empowerment of the world's women.

