

January 17, 1961

Dear Opal and Sisters,

Just as I do not believe man can be measured by a slide rule, the growth of a chapter is too intangible to find itself expressed in statistics. We cannot measure inner values, warmth of personality, and added knowledge of each other. These are qualities that only time develops and reveals. This has truly been a year of "Growing Friendship."

We have gained two fine sisters in Chapter BL; Dora Schenk from Chapter GG, Illinois and Ginny Zimmer from Chapter N, Green Bay. We feel as if they are part of us in the short time they have been with our chapter. We now have 31 active resident members. In a close knit chapter such as ours, it is always difficult to have even one member leave the city, but Chapter BL found itself with three of its family packing and making new homes for themselves in far away places. Nancy King left for Prairie Village, Kansas, Isabel Hughes for Barrington, R.I. and Marian Blair went to Florida via Iowa. Marian is a charter member of Chapter BL and has given much of herself to our chapter. We so enjoy hearing from all of our non-resident members and know that they will both find and bring happiness to those around them in their new surroundings. And we were happy to hear that Mary Justice had conquered the South, as we knew she would, and we issued her a demit to Chapter A, Alabama.

We began last January with a cooperative reciprocity effort that produced the installation of Chapter BY. This was an impressive service and a day to be remembered, but perhaps the most inspirational aspect of the affair was the complete harmony of the Madison chapters in planning the day for BY. It is hard to imagine that there are over 300 P.E.O.s in Madison.

In November, we found another way to exemplify the theme of "Growing Friendship," as many of us heard Viji Meesad, our International Peace Scholarship student speak. She and the two other IPS students at the University are certainly a living proof of the value of our fine scholarship program. The luncheon was at the Embers and found many of us meeting new friends in Madison who are P.E.O.s.

After "Reaching for the Stars" last year as a program theme, this year we are on an exploratory trip through Wisconsin. Nancy Regatz and her enthusiastic program committee have appropriately called it, "On Wisconsin." We have already discovered so much of interest to us. We have always had a large share of unaffiliates in our group and many of them have come from out of state. Therefore, what could be more worthwhile than to learn about our own state? And as always, we find that the talent within us is developed as we uncover our subject. You would have enjoyed our Christmas program when Jeannette Thomas told us about Swedish customs and the triple trio sang "Santa Lucia," and Mary Heine dressed in costume offered us the traditional Christmas bread. You would have loved to see our scholars under the direction of Zo Kusow tracing the history of Wisconsin from the Ice Age to the present day.... and they accomplished it all in a single evening. Or perhaps you would have enjoyed hearing about some of Wisconsin's historical homes as Jean Rennebohm and Marilyn Anderson made us feel as if we were actually on a tour. And Beth Ross pointed out colleges in Wisconsin we never dreamed existed. Our P.E.O. guest, Gladys Meloche, was a welcome visitor with her sweet philosophy and magnificent quilts. I shall always remember how she compared life and quilts. It was a lovely picture story of our heritage.

And to bring us up to date on the fascinating history of Madison, Martha Reynolds found a wealth of material we had only begun to uncover. Truly, this is a learning year.

Marilyn Anderson led the social committee to a most successful adventure in outdoor cookery at the BIL party held on the Reynold's patio last May. Our gentlemen friends enjoyed the informality and they were treated to musical selections by the triple trio.

The triple trio sang at the Appleton convention at the invitation of Connie Elvehjem and Nancy Ragatz and I were simply bursting our buttons to think they were ours. The devotion of these members of Chapter BL to the triple trio is an honor and a credit to all of us. We are proud of their ability, but it is the spirit in which they do their work that is the most noteworthy. Their generosity of time and talent has brought to our chapter a special halo of sisterly love. In fact, they have so much fun, the rest of us are secretly thinking of enrolling in singing classes and who knows...we may have a BL choir. Now there's a thought!

Of course, we had to have babies and Jo Anne Hedlin very smartly produced a girl to go with her boy, Andy. We had another baby in our chapter this year and I know you will be happy to hear that Betty Land and her BIL found a darling baby boy that just suited them and he has already been camping...so you know what a good baby he is.

We have outlived the "shakedown cruise" as Betty Rennebohm called her term of office. We have become a real family, sharing joys and even some sorrows. Now just as a family finds itself beyond the early year, we have the opportunity to grow into a more mature understanding of each other and the inner meanings of the sisterhood. In the words of Florence Earle Coates,

Thank God, a man can grow!
He is not bound
With earthward gaze to creep along the ground;
Though his beginnings be but poor and low,
Thank God, a man can grow!
The fires upon his altars may burn dim,
The torch he lighted in darkness fall,
And nothing to rekindle it avail,
Yet high beyond his dull horizons rim,
Arcturus and the Pleiads beckon him.

Lovingly yours in P.E.O.,
Jane Kresge Secord
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