

EARLY DAYS OF CHAPTER BL:

During the fall of 1951 and winter of 1952, a group of unaffiliates met twice monthly to plan and prepare for the new Chapter BL. The chapter was formed of 13 dimits from 8 states, and 4 initiates, including Beth Ross. Chapter AX sponsored us. Marion Peterson was their chairman.

In those days we held the top officers in high esteem and a little awe. Wisconsin's state organizer, Eleanor Dorschel, who installed Chapter BL, was one of those. Dressed in conservative suits and dresses, hats and gloves, over 100 Madison P.E.O.s gathered to support us at the installation and luncheon at the Lorraine Hotel.

During the two years that Betty Rennebohm was our first president she was truly our alma mater (Latin – nourishing, sustaining). We had many changes and honors. During the first year four members moved, and we initiated six new members. In 1953 our chapter presented the model meeting at state convention. This exemplification of a meeting is no longer part of convention. The Record called us an “infant chapter.” Jeanette Thomas and I were with infant, delivering baby boys that summer. In 1956, five babies were born to BL members. Two members married sons of other members.

Early initiates were Mary Heine, Marge Hibner, Jean Clausen and Virginia Malmquist. Jeanette Thomas was our second president. A talented comedienne, she kept the chapter laughing, even as we worked selling peanut crunch to build up a little money in the treasury. Betty Land was the third president.

In the early years all programs were presented by members – book reports or subjects researched. The idea was to use any talent we possessed. And we possessed a lot – our triple trio sang at Supreme Convention and at President Connie Elvhjem's state convention. For years the triple trio performed many times, even as membership changed.

I think Betty Rennebohm would be impressed if she were to visit our chapter today. It is my sense that we are becoming true philanthropists in our support for our wonderful projects. Even as the chapter grows larger there seems to be a solid and growing sense of affection and caring among our members. (Submitted by Beth Ross, January 2005.)

P.E.O. - Historian