

P.E.O. PROTOCOL

This program gives us important reminders of what it means to be a P.E.O.

I checked the dictionary to see how protocol might relate to P.E.O. The dictionary said, "The form of ceremony and etiquette observed by diplomats and heads of state". This program is divided into two parts, the first "Did you know" and the second one, "Let's Remember".

To begin...

Did you know that all the taps of the gavel by the president, with the exception of two, mean to rise? The exceptions are the very first tap, which is the president calling the meeting to order. We rise on the second tap and the guard comes forward for the password on the third tap.

Did you know that we send what is called a "Green Bouquet" to newly formed Ohio chapters? The "green" refers to monies to help a chapter get started financially. What a special gesture of support and welcome.

Did you know that if a name is proposed and not enough people come forth to sign the voucher, the name is proposed for more signatures at the next meeting?

Did you know that if a name is proposed and for some reason there is an objection, it is far better to call the president to express your feelings, as hard as that may be, than to vote unfavorably? Then, the sponsoring sister can determine if she wishes to withdraw the name. This certainly can be done very discreetly.

Did you know that after a name has been proposed for membership and the sponsoring sister has signed the voucher, the other two who wish to sign should wait at their chairs for their turn rather than rush up and form a line? Remember, the proposed person never really knows who sponsors her, as it isn't customary to tell her, nor who the other two vouchers are, so if we do not get a chance to sign, it is not the end of the world.

Did you know that a new member may not propose a name until she has been a P.E.O. for a year?

Did you know that we are not to talk about P.E.O. matters when in the presence of those who are not P.E.O.s? It is all right to talk about programs and the projects as long as it is not about P.E.O. matters.

Did you know that during "Remarks by Visitors", if you are visiting another chapter, it is customary to say, "I bring you greetings from Chapter ___"? If you are out of state, add your city and state after chapter letters. It is important to thank the hostess and the chapter for having you and then tell them whatever else you might like about your chapter.

Did you know that “For the Good of the Chapter” is not a time to use as a forum for selling things for other organizations? Instead, it is a wonderful time to express thanks for things well done or appreciated. It is a good time for extra spiritual moments, a poem or a reading by anyone, not just the chaplain. Perhaps, we can make the chapter aware of a sister in need, or accomplishments, or a prayer for a sister and her family. There are many occasions when we can express words about things of interest to our chapter. It can be an awareness time.

Did you know that we always use the King James version of the Bible for the Lord's Prayer? The chaplain may use any version of the Bible that contains the Old and New Testament for the scripture.

Did you know that we do the “Exemplification” every year for a very good reason? This does not mean just the initiation ceremony, but all of the procedures. In doing so, we provide future officers with knowledge of what is expected of them. Our ritual is a preserving ceremony of sorts – so we don't lose touch with what binds us and why we are here together tonight. Every chapter in our Sisterhood conducts the ritual exactly the same way. Every chapter has its own personality, of course, but it is most comforting to attend another chapter's meeting and to feel so at home, even though you might be among strangers, in a sense. We need to avail ourselves of the opportunities of meeting other P.E.O.s. Reciprocity luncheons are a great way to meet other members if you live in a larger city area.

Did you know that reports of projects are given once a month? More should be said about our projects than “no report, Madame President”. Articles from the Heartline should always be read about the projects. One can always find something of interest to read from The RECORD. Our projects motivate our purpose and growth. We need to be reminded often that we are working for very worthwhile projects.

Did you know that we wear our pin over our heart on a dress or blouse, but if we wear a suit jacket and leave the jacket on, then the pin is to be on the jacket? Our pin is on loan, but when we die we may be buried with it. Also, there are bronze stars which can be incorporated into a grave stone or mausoleum. It is important to tell our family where we keep our pin, with instructions to return it to our chapter when we die, if we are not buried with it. It will then be returned to the Executive Offices in Des Moines, Iowa by the local chapter president.

Did you know that when you move it is your responsibility to inform The RECORD? There is a toll free number to call for address changes only: 1-800-343-4921.

Did you know that individual gifts to our P.E.O. Projects or to the P.E.O. Foundation should be forwarded directly to the P.E.O. Executive Office. Gifts to Cottey College should be forwarded directly to the college, and gifts to Ohio Scholarships should be sent to the Ohio State Treasurer. All donations must always be sent with a Gift Transmittal Form available from the local chapter treasurer and may be given by an individual “in memory of” or “in honor of” a sister.

You did know that when we accept our invitation to P.E.O. membership we affirm our belief in God. It is important to remember the spiritual side of P.E.O. in planning at least one program a year to bring this to the forefront, perhaps as an Easter or Christmas message.

And now for the second half of this program...Let's Remember.

Let's Remember that when we were invited to become a P.E.O., we should not consider it a status symbol to accept. Cliques do not form within the chapters of P.E.O. as they do sometimes in other organizations. We are chosen to become a P.E.O. This does not mean that we are better than others, but that we have characteristics which should continue in dignity and growth. We are not a club, nor are we like any other organization. We are P.E.O., a Sisterhood, and we are connected by a common bond of love. That makes us unique. We vow for the common good when we are told not to find self-seeking.

We keep our love for each sister alive by making an effort to keep in closer touch, not just at meetings, and not with just our contemporaries or special sisters. We must always be committed to remembering our inactive members and shut-ins. Small chapters seem to make more of an effort to remain close because there are fewer to carry on the duties, but larger chapters need to make more of an effort to keep in touch. Meeting twice a month promotes closeness. It is important that the president keep in close touch with her officers. It forms a bond. Her vice president should be consulted on decisions for it prepares her for the presidency and makes the transition easier. Having a scheduled "officer exchange" soon after the March election and installation of new officers gives each officer the opportunity to explain her duties to her successor; to explain the supplies; and to share insights gained during her tenure. This could be the time that the out-going officers review their chapter goals and outcomes and provide the continuity desired to make the transition a comfortable one.

We all know as recipients of cards and notes, how very much they mean, not only during illness, but also for good times. We need to phone absent sisters after a meeting just to tell them what went on at the meeting. Love can be expressed in so many ways, a touch, a smile, an encouraging or sympathetic word, and during good times, too. Is not P.E.O. really like "The Wind Beneath Our Wings"? If we do not keep track of each other, how will we ever know when a sister is in need, not just a sister you are close to and see often, but all members? The telephone tree helps to form a bond within a chapter and should be considered as another way to help chapter health.

Things do change, but it is nice to know some things never change. Think how much the traditions of our families mean. We are sisters and that makes us a family. We need to pass on what is passed on to us by preserving each beautiful and enduring thing, and the traditions of P.E.O., and then move beyond the rituals which hopefully will always be with us.

Attitudes are very important to our chapter. We should magnify our five virtues in ourselves and others. Personal growth can only be achieved if we open our hearts to all sisters, regardless of age. Do we sit with just our age groups at meetings? How many of us older gals make the effort to get to know our younger sisters or visa versa? We grow by risking, and that means being willing to leave the comfort zone!

As one of our International Presidents said at her convention, "In our present society, when moral institutions are under attack from all sides, I am convinced that the women of today need P.E.O. just as surely as they did in the 1800's when our Sisterhood was young". How true those words remain.

The future of P.E.O. depends on each of us. No less important to our future, is the commitment of each member to the traditions and values of our Sisterhood.

When we recite the "Objects and Aims", each of us has a favorite part. "To express a loving concern for each sister" looms up stronger for me, than any other words because loving concern seems to personify what P.E.O. means. Our objects and aims have meaning beyond our meetings if we are truly upholding the ideals of P.E.O. One sister said in today's words, "P.E.O. is my high". Another said "P.E.O. is my heaven". We should come away from each meeting uplifted. I think we have to remember if our activities are motivated by caring for those around us, then our shortcomings will be forgiven.

Do any of you wonder what's in the President's Box? Maybe being asked to be president or vice president would not be so awesome to some, if we understood what was expected of us. It makes a great program to reveal to the membership all of the treasures and helpful hints in the President's Box.

Let's Remember that we are supposed to place family first, church second, and P.E.O. third in a list of priorities. P.E.O. should always be a prior commitment to other activities, not the other way around. We make a vow to give a due share of our time to P.E.O. and as we give, so shall we receive. When we realize that P.E.O. is unique in its membership, then we really know what it is to uphold our objects and aims. To strive to become all our virtues just has to make us happier and more fulfilled individuals, and as we pass it on, it should stir love in all of us.

When we faithfully wear our pin, we are showing a bond of identification. One of our founding sisters, Ella Stewart, called our star "a symbol for our lives, made radiant by the reflection of God's love upon our hearts, giving us light and wisdom".

Our star is our challenge to receive that light and wisdom and send it back into the world transformed by our own light within us. We cannot all be shining examples but we can all twinkle a little.

We are nearing the time for officers to be chosen. When you are approached and asked to serve as an officer, be willing to do so. You will not have any leadership

opportunity like it. You will be appreciated and supported and encouraged. Your time will be rewarded and well spent. It is a time-worn expression but let's remember that a P.E.O. never says "NO". In a more positive way, a P.E.O. always says "YES".

Now finally, let's remember that P.E.O. is really a gift given by a very special friend who believes in our potential to radiate light, not darkness. We return the gift by our attitudes in our chapter, by our faithful attendance and by magnifying our five virtues in ourselves and others. In repeating the objects and aims at each meeting, we strive to bring the words to life. Let us always cherish this unique and precious gift.

Chapter BR
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