



**From the left:** Denise Lenk, Deb Skinner and Diane Bond

## Sisterly Introductions: Great Things Happen When Sisters Introduce Friends to P.E.O.

*by Debbie Clason, Coordinator of Membership Development*

**Barbara Cole has a knack. When her chapter receives an Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O. form in the mail, she picks up the phone and gives the potential sister a call.** Thanks in part to her efforts, Chapter AG, Louisville, Kentucky, has initiated three members and transferred one since last March.

### The Gift of P.E.O.

“When you get a form like that, you pursue it,” Barbara says. “What a golden opportunity to give the gift of P.E.O. to someone you don’t know who comes highly recommended.”

Barbara’s great regard for the process was instrumental when she called to introduce herself to Kathy

Huck in the spring of 2007. Kathy had recently moved to Louisville from North Carolina after her husband retired from the military. Soon after they arrived in Louisville, Kathy’s husband was called to Washington for a year-long assignment. Jamie Kirkley, Kathy’s friend who was also a military wife, sent the introduction form to local chapters in Louisville after Kathy confided she wasn’t meeting people in her new community.

“Barbara asked me to meet her and a few friends for coffee,” Kathy said. “I had been on my own for so long. It was like a lifeline. I never stopped talking! I chatted those four ladies up something awful!”

Three months and two visits to other local chapters later, Kathy was initiated into Chapter AG. Although Kathy was unfamiliar with P.E.O., she admired Barbara’s enthusiasm, intelligence and sincerity—characteristics she admired about another close friend, now living far away.

“Jamie Kirkley embodies everything that a P.E.O. should be,” Kathy said. “She is a fine, faithful woman of good character and a wonderful peer. Barbara is so much like that. I knew that if Jamie and Barbara were members of this organization, I would like to be one, too.”

Kathy calls her P.E.O. story “heartwarming” and says, “On many levels it’s a very deep story

about loyalty and wanting the best for someone. Here I am, a sister of Jamie Kirkley! Now the Marine Corps tie has gone away, but this one is very lovely. It's been a blessing. She did a wonderful favor for me and really got me on my feet in a new community. I am involved and always will be."

## A Tale of Three Sisters

The Eckersley sisters have definitely made P.E.O. a family affair. In 1986, Diane Bond sent an Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O. form in for her sister, Deb Skinner. Diane,

who was initiated in 1982 into Chapter DU, Chardon, Ohio, has served on the state P.E.O. Educational Loan Fund, P.E.O. Scholar Award and Membership committees and is currently serving as Ohio State Chapter president.

Her sister, Deb, was initiated in May of 1987 into Chapter DN, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, served on the Michigan State Chapter board from 1998-2006, and was appointed to the P.E.O. Educational Loan Fund Board of Trustees in 2007.

To complete the Eckersley hat trick, Deb brought her youngest sister, Denise Lenk, into her Mount Pleasant chapter in 1989. Denise is currently

Michigan State Chapter organizer.

"I didn't know anything about P.E.O. until I began tagging along with Diane," Denise said. "I remember sitting in the bedroom while they met, then having lunch with them."

Although they were already sisters, P.E.O. has deepened the Eckersley sisters' relationships.

"P.E.O. is hard to explain to people who don't know about it—the bonds you form and the support you receive. I think it's amazing that three sisters who became P.E.O.s went on to serve on their state boards. See what a little form can do for a woman who is not a P.E.O.?" 🌸

### Tips for submitting an Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O. form

**Who do you know who might make a good P.E.O.?** Take a few minutes to think of women you know who live in communities other than yours. Would they make good P.E.O. sisters? If so, download and print the Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O. form from the P.E.O. website, and follow the directions. If you need help brainstorming names, use the Franc's List Worksheet to get you started.

**Use the websites to find information.** The P.E.O. website can help you determine what chapters are available in your friend or relative's community, as well as when they meet and who the contact person is. To find the contact information of the organizer in her state, province or district, click the State Chapter Websites link. Usernames and passwords for all state, province and district websites are the same as they are for the P.E.O. website.

**Write a few comments on the back.** Take a few minutes to tell each chapter about your friend or relative. What are the characteristics you love most about her? What are her hobbies and interests? These insights are great conversation starters when your P.E.O. sisters contact her.

**Don't hesitate to follow up.** Although most of the women we recommend through the Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O. form are usually contacted, some are not. When this happens, don't lose heart. Follow up with the state, province or district organizer or membership committee chairman. "When Diane first sent my name to another area, I never heard from anyone," Denise said. "Then Deb pursued it when I moved to Mount Pleasant."

### Tips for following up on an Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O. form

**Ask the right person** to take charge of this activity for your chapter. "You need to have someone who's detail oriented and persistent," Barbara suggests. "I'm a very detail-oriented person and have also served on the reciprocity council. Even when I wasn't president of my chapter, it was my pleasure to meet and invite unaffiliates. It just happens to be one of my passions."

**Be persistent and enthusiastic, but not pushy.** "Just keep in touch," Barbara says. "Invite her to programs, lunches and BIL events. When I first met Kathy, she was actively pursuing a job. I just kept pursuing the relationship and she came when she could. We really

became quite good friends through all of this."

**Encourage them to visit other chapters.** In order to ensure potential members meet a variety of P.E.O. sisters, Barbara encourages transfers and women who have been recommended through the Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O. form to accept invitations to visit from other chapters in their area.

**Act quickly.** Although the chapter receiving this form is under no obligation to extend an invitation, please consider meeting these women. Contacting them quickly is a courteous way of thanking the referring member for taking the time and effort to recommend a potential sister.

### Resources

The following documents are available in the local chapter online membership toolbox, located on the P.E.O. website:

- Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O. form—Membership Forms panel
- How to Make a Cold Call—Programming panel
- Easy Steps for Making a Cold Call—Resource Document panel
- Franc's List Worksheet—Programming panel