

## Educators... An Historical Perspective

During the 1968 - 69 school year representatives of the B'nai B'rith National Office came to me in the administration building and asked for my help in establishing an Educators Lodge in Philadelphia. They explained that B'nai B'rith was embarking on a campaign to organize lodges made up of people in particular occupations and professions and asked us to take a leadership role in this effort. As a member of the William Portner Lodge of B'nai B'rith, I was aware of the very significant work of the organization and so I readily agreed to establish a lodge that would include a membership composed of people living in the Philadelphia area who were involved in the field of education.

While my immediate acceptance of a responsibility for increasing the level of B'nai B'rith presence in our area was due primarily to a commitment to the goals and worthwhile programs of the organization, I will freely acknowledge an additional highly significant motivational factor.

Some of you will recall that one of the manifestations of the tumultuous "Sixties" was the very disquieting and dangerous climate which developed in our school system. A Superintendent of Schools who had been attempting, in a thoughtful manner, to seek solutions to urban education problems and to "open up" opportunities for all, was replaced by one who completely misread desired needs and desirable means to meet those needs. Imbued with a commitment to administer through creative tension, he managed to create a climate of tension and distrust and to threaten the careers of dedicated professionals in the system and to cloud the future of many who looked forward to entering the system. A very disturbing factor was his enthusiastic acceptance of a misguided, poorly conceived, stupid, ill-advised report which concluded that the problem in our system was that there were "too many second-generation Americans" involved in it!

In that setting, I called together a group of twenty Jewish teachers and administrators. We met at the regional B'nai B'rith offices and presented our proposal to form an Educator's Lodge. As you would naturally expect in a meeting of any number of people, there were differences of opinion. Several of our articulate colleagues suggested that we form an independent "protection" group (as New York City Jewish educators did). We explained our desires transcended those concerns. We wanted to become an integral part of B'nai B'rith in order to join with over 500,000 Jews in forty-one countries who were involved in perpetuating our heritage, fighting discrimination, supporting their youth, and giving leadership to many programs providing community service. The group overwhelmingly agreed to work for the establishment of an Educator's Lodge that would reach out to include as many men as possible in their area. Due to the circumstances and conditions existing in the then B'nai B'rith by-laws membership had to be limited to men at the time of the Lodge's formation. Many of their members were not at all pleased by this and continually sought remediation of the situation. We were very pleased that the efforts of many farsighted members were rewarded by the formation, in 1984, of the Educators Unit B'nai B'rith/ B'nai B'rith Women.

From its beginning, the Lodge had grown to become one of the largest and most active in B'nai B'rith. Our Lodge's leaders have gone on to become regional and national leaders and we've contributed very significantly to the improvement of the quality of life in our community.

May we go from strength to strength in the coming years!

I. Ezra Staples  
Associate Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction



**B'NAI B'RITH  
EDUCATORS UNIT  
CHARTER NO. 5290**  
[www.bnaibritheducators.com](http://www.bnaibritheducators.com)

## *Installation of Officers*



*Thursday October 4, 2018*

*5:00 PM*

*Randi's Restaurant*

**1619 Grant Avenue**

**Philadelphia, PA. 19115**

*Lest We Forget – B'nai B'rith Lodge Ostpreussische #541  
Osterode, Germany – Destroyed In the Holocaust*

## ***Program***

### ***2018-2020 Executive Board***

**Judith Gerben Lundy, President**

**Melissa Blatstein, Vice-President**

**Alyssa Heeneke, Vice-President**

**Suzanne Newman, Vice-President**

**Larry Sperling, Corresponding Secretary**

**Sharon Bornstein, Recording Secretary**

**Alice Heller, Treasurer**

**Donald Wittenberg, Chaplain**

**Renée B. Flehinger, Counselor**

### ***2016-2018 Executive Board***

**Renée B. Flehinger, President**

**Judith Gerben Lundy, Vice-President**

**Jill Solar, Vice-President**

**Sharon Bornstein, Recording Secretary**

**Alice Heller, Treasurer**

**Donald Wittenberg, Chaplain**

**Debra B. Drossner, Counselor**

Welcome ..... Larry Sperling

Discharging of Responsibilities ..... Dr. Barry Drossner

Reflections by Outgoing President ..... Renée B. Flehinger

Installation of New Executive Board ..... Betty Klear

Acceptance by Incoming President ..... Judith Gerben Lundy

Ha-Motzi..... Donald Wittenberg

Dinner ..... Randi's Restaurant

Introduction of Guest Speaker..... Suzanne Newman

Guest Speaker..... Rhonda Fink-Whitman

Closing ..... Alice Heller

Schmooze and Dessert

We thank the following members for serving on the Program Committee:

Alice Heller

Suzanne Newman

Debra B. Drossner