



“Annie Won't Help - She Never Does”

A few years ago, I was reading over my committee list to see who I could contact about helping serve refreshments at our Committee Activity Night and with our fundraiser. I came upon a name that seemed vaguely familiar, but whom I had never had the pleasure of meeting. I asked my friends about her and their replies varied from, ' Don't bother to call her - she's really old' to “She never helps with anything - don't waste your time'. Well, that sounded like a challenge to me and I went home that night intent on calling her the next day.

And, I did! I introduced myself, we chatted for a minute, then I told her I was chairman of the committee she had been assigned to for the Chapter year and asked if she would be interested in helping me prepare the letters that would go out to other committee members. There was a pause, then she said she guessed she could do that, but only if I could come to her apartment to do it. I found we only lived a few blocks apart, so we agreed on a day and time to get together.

The appointed day arrived and I stood at her door, wondering what I would encounter. The door opened and there stood this lovely, little gramma, with twinkling eyes and a welcoming smile. The aroma of freshly baked cookies surrounded me and I knew I had just met my new 'best friend'.

As we 'worked' on the committee letters, sipping tea and munching those wonderful cookies, I was treated to an amazing story about her life - and her involvement with the Women of the Moose.

She had been a member for over forty years and had held almost every chairmanship and office you can list. She had earned her Academy of Friendship, her Star Recorder Degree and was a Collegian. She had chaired the Chapter Sunday Dinner for many years, baked tons of goodies for bake sales and, as an avid crafter, had donated many, many items to the annual Bazaar.

She had volunteered in the kitchen, both cooking and doing dishes, and had even waitressed on occasion. She and her husband were on the committee that decorated the Lodge each season and she was called upon often to make centerpieces and table favors for special events held at the Lodge. She chaired the Annual Bazaar several years and her 'cookbook' fundraiser was the most profitable the chapter had ever held. She couldn't count the number of jars of her famous Beet Pickles devoured at Chapter dinners or sold.

With her husband she had been Wagon Masters of the Lodge Camping Club and enjoyed being part of a group that entertained in area parades and local Heath Care Centers. Her family had spend days preparing a mailing to go out to every Moose household in our state. Plus they had been active in Scouting, Jaycees, other Fraternal Organizations and their Church. The list went on and on and I enjoyed listening to her memories as much as

she enjoyed sharing them.

I also learned that she would attend Chapter meeting, but because of failing eye-sight, was unable to drive at night. She told me she would be more than willing to furnish a nice dessert for lunch after a meeting, if someone would just stop and pick it up. Plus, she had boxes of craft items she would donate to the Bazaar, if someone would just ASK.

Before I knew it the letters were done, the cookies eaten and it was time to head home. I decided right then and there that I would make sure Annie had a ride to meetings when she desired and that she would be contacted for desserts and craft items each year. I couldn't believe we had overlooked and neglected such an amazing member, simply because someone thought she was 'too old'.

So - yes - you're right - Annie is a figment of my imagination. But, I have a feeling we all have many 'Annies' in our chapters. Co-workers who gave their all, years before we even thought about becoming involved. They built the fraternity we enjoy today. Now, it's our turn to remember them - to include them as they are able and to really let them know that we value their membership and them. What better place to begin our Retention Program - and to show that we really do "GIVE A HOOT!"

And, a personal note: Many, many thanks to all of you for the wonderful cards, e-mails and phone calls since our return from Anaheim. Each new day seems to bring another 'Smile' or 'hug'. I feel so blessed to have such dear friends - and to have been chosen to serve as your Grand Regent. LIFE IS GOOD!

Hugs, Carolyn

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