



## *Bumblebees in Space*

One of my favorite 'authors' is Jody Houghton, who writes short, faith filled stories about three friends, Faith, Hope and Charity.

In one of her stories she tells: "Bumblebees were taken along on a space mission, for a study of the effects of weightlessness. The bees floated around with great ease. They didn't have to use their wings, they didn't have to spend any energy at all; they just floated without work, without struggle or adversity. After three days, the bees didn't survive. The experiment was summed up with these words; "They enjoyed the ride, but they didn't survive." Bees were never meant to go through life without using their wings, not having any resistance.

In a way, we, as members of the Women on the Moose, are much like those bumblebees. We think we would like everything to go smoothly, without a hitch. When, in reality, it's the challenges we sometimes face that make us more determined to succeed and grow. Have you ever been told, "That won't work" or "We've never done it that way". I have a feeling statements like that only serve to make us more determined than ever to 'make it work' and show 'them' that they are wrong.

Look at what we can do as the Chapter year draws to an end and we are short of our membership goal. We all want to earn our Award of Achievement, so we pitch in, making phone calls, personally contacting members in arrears, signing new members. It's amazing what we can do when we really set our minds to it.

What if - we didn't wait until the end of the year, but worked on our arrearage list all year long. Imagine that! What a great idea! It would be so much easier and we wouldn't have to go into 'panic mode' in April. Better yet, what if we **never** had an 'arrearage list'. What if our members felt so important and wanted that they would never even consider dropping their membership?

How can we manage that, you ask?

Simply this - by keeping in contact with ALL our members!

I suggest sending each member of your chapter a simple questionnaire, asking them what they enjoy doing, what their e-mail address is and when their birthday is. Then plan activities around their answers. You may have to offer a bribe of sorts to get them to return the questionnaire, but in the long run it will be worth the cost of a discounted meal or a small piece of theme jewelry.

Then, plan events incorporating what your members enjoy doing, whether it be line-dancing, playing cards or Farkle, participating in special or theme meals, enjoying an interesting speaker. The list is endless (Check out 'Keys to Successful Membership Retention' for tons of great ideas.)

Once you have your plans in place, use the information you received about their e-mail address and send 'fun' notices and reminders. Of course, for those members who are not on-line, snail mail is still an option. We can plan all kinds of fun, exciting, events, but if we don't let our members know what is planned, how can we expect them to participate?

Consider making a real effort to remember every member with a birthday card, perhaps handmade at a chapter craft night. Who doesn't like to be remembered on her birthday? I sure do, and when I got a card from the North Pole, Alaska chapter, I reconsidered the possibility of not renewing my dues when it comes due. This little card really made me feel that I am an important, valued member for this chapter and I will continue to pay my dues in North Pole as long as possible.

In short, keep your members happy and involved - feeling wanted and needed; the best membership retention plan I can think of. Show them that you really 'Give a Hoot' and, unlike the bumblebees, they will continue to enjoy the ride. It may take a little work, but we were never meant to go through life without using our wings.

So, Co-workers, I hope you will always use your wings to the fullest - and continue in the direction God intended for you.

Hoots and Hugs,  
**Carolyn**

