



MOOSE Leader

Need-to-know information for officers & chairmen of Lodges/Chapters/Moose Legions Vol. 81, No. 5

Increase Your Odds of Renewing New Members

By **KURT WIEBE**/Director, Membership

Flip a coin. If you do it a hundred times, about 50% of the time it will land on heads. Now look at all of the members your Lodge or Chapter has signed over the past year. When it comes time for them to renew their membership, your odds are about the same.

Why is our retention rate at only 53% over the past two years for newly signed Moose members? We wondered the same thing and conducted a survey of new members this past summer to determine how well our fraternal onboarding process introduces members to the organization on both the local and international level. Here's what we did and what we've learned:

■ 25,000 members who have been with the Moose less than one year and have provided us with an email address were randomly selected to participate in the survey. This total was divided equally between LOOM members and WOTM members. Of that total, approximately 5,500 were eliminated from survey distribution based on bad email addresses, bounce backs, or a previous opt-out from the survey tool we were using.

■ 1,952 members responded to the survey questionnaire – 1,146 LOOM, 711 WOTM, and 75 who indicated that they were unsure to which group they belonged. This represented a return rate of approximately 10%, which should provide valid information with only a minor chance for variation if extrapolated over the entire new member population.

■ Over half of the respondents were 56 years of age or older, with another 27% between the ages of 46 – 55, indicating that our current membership is inviting individuals in similar age brackets to be members of the fraternity. Less than 9% of respondents were under 35 years of age. The vast majority join because they were asked by a friend (64%) or a new acquaintance (21%). Only 12% were asked to join by a family member.

■ Nearly half joined because friends/relatives were members and because of the inexpensive food and drinks. This was consistent between men and women and all age groups. 41% also indicated that “belief in the mission” was a factor in joining, and 36% included both the opportunity to participate in Lodge/Chapter activities and that “the Lodge was nearby” as influencing factors.

■ 90% read some or all of the information contained within the new member packet that included their card, with nearly half scanning the information to varying degrees and another 40% reading the entire packet. Nearly half of the respondents felt the packet did a “good” job of explaining the main purposes of the fraternity, but only 25% felt they knew “a lot” more about the Moose and its purpose. Nearly 30% of respondents felt that there could be an improvement on how we delivered this membership information.

■ 63% of new members visited the Moose website after receiving the packet, with Member Benefits and Activities listed as the two most visited areas on our site. The benefit programs that interested new members the most were travel discounts and entertainment programs. Surprisingly, insurance programs rated last.

■ 83% of new members had visited the Lodge prior to becoming a member. After becoming a member, only 10% attended a formal enrollment ceremony and 11% participated in an orientation. If they did attend an enrollment ceremony, the Lodge typically did a good job of telling the story of the Moose. 28% expected a better or different presentation, however. 64% of the new members felt they had a positive experience on their first visit to the Lodge. 36% felt the experience was just OK or failed to meet expectations.

And finally, we offered an open-ended optional question at the end – tell us anything else about your Moose experience. No requirement to answer this question, but 475 people took the opportunity to comment. The most obvious observation is the inconsistency of product from Lodge to Lodge. The most frequent responses were:

- Lack of communications from the local Lodge/Chapter regarding events, volunteer activities, purpose, rules, etc.
- Poor first experience – rude people, ignored, quality of service.
- Too much smoke.
- Dated policies and practices – nothing to offer younger members or little understanding of why men and women are not combined as one organization.
- Great place and people – positive experience.

Moose International has already started a program to improve its onboarding process for new members to include postcard mailings specifically highlighting Mooseheart and Moosehaven after four and eight months respectively of joining the organization; the development of a pilot, inter-active membership packet that will contain an audio message; and the production of a new orientation video that can be used by Lodges and Chapters (spring of 2014).

Locally, your takeaway should be this – tailor your programs and communications to provide better information to those members who are new. Do not assume they know anything about your Lodge and Chapter and make sure your current members and staff welcome them warmly and with respect. Let them know how things operate and how they can participate in activities, or how they can volunteer. Be flexible in how you run your Lodge and Chapter, and expect new ideas and viewpoints and adapt accordingly. This is especially true if you are bringing in younger members.

Put an orientation program in place. Whether it is in person, or simply a brochure or electronic communication, this will go a long way in making that initial connection and offers new members an opportunity to feel relaxed and blend in. Less than a quarter of our Lodges and Chapters offer any type of onboarding program and this lack of orientation is reflected in our second year renewal rates.

A few simple steps is all it takes to increase your odds for year two renewals. If you evaluate your programs and policies, make the necessary changes and begin to meet new member expectations, the next time you flip that coin it may feel as though both sides contain heads. ■

RETENTION WEEK GOT US STARTED — NOW LET'S FINISH THE JOB!

By **ROBERT NEFF**/Director, Ritual & Higher Degrees

During the first week of November the Membership Dept. launched a Retention Week program. Many of our Lodges, Chapters and Moose Legions benefited from the efforts put forth during this concentrated period of involvement. We must now work with continued diligence to maintain the accomplishments achieved. The Moose Legion and even more especially, the Councils of Higher Degrees — should step up and carry this torch of retention forward throughout the rest of the year!

This was never about just a one week effort. It was always about an effort that needs to be implemented and worked all year long. Every Senior Regent, Governor, and Moose Legion President should have appointed a Retention Chairman. They in turn should have formed a committee. That committee should work all year long to contact expiring / expired members each month to stay on top of this needed effort.

By staying current in contacting those about to expire and those who already have, the job is much easier and more manageable. Let's not get so far behind that it is a major undertaking. Each fraternal unit can call on the Council of Higher Degrees in their area for assistance. The Councils are to have volunteers that will come in and assist in these efforts.

That assistance can be to help with mailings, and indeed to assist in making phone calls. The CHD should have experienced persons that can work with your local members to help show them how to make the contacts effectively. Information should be gathered from those contacted and recorded for passing on to the board.

Is there a common concern among some members? Perhaps it is something that can be taken care of if passed along to the officers. If there is bleeding, let's get it some attention to get it stopped and not let it fester and get infected any worse than it may be already. Talk calmly and politely and you may just be surprised in the good that can be accomplished to retain members who do in fact share our common concerns.

Sponsoring new members is important. But, saving those we already have is the real answer to building membership in our fraternal Order. Share the stories of the good times you have personally experienced. Remind those trying to decide on renewal about member benefits that can save them their dues many times over. Have information handy about our kids at Mooseheart and seniors at Moosehaven and share the story of the great works we do and the difference we make in their lives. Show compassion for the member's situation. Be personable, realistic and sincere.

We do have a great program and heritage to share. You can make a difference and together our efforts can enrich the future of this fraternity called Moose to even greater heights than ever before. Our follow through however, is also important. If we promise something — let us be sure we Go the Distance and see it through to the best of our ability.

Yes retention is a year round need and success takes a year round commitment. It is much more manageable a little at a time. We encourage you to work now and all year so as not to get so far behind that an eleventh hour scramble becomes needed. Let's get ahead — and stay ahead of the curve. Working together we can indeed Go the Distance! ■

Holiday Season is Approaching!

By **JANET FREGULIA**/Executive Director, Moose Charities

As Christmas approaches, we look forward to being with our loved ones. We carefully plan for the holiday season and we purchase gifts as our finances permit. But do we stop there? Do we only think of ourselves and our immediate family? Or, do we think of others — those who have less than we — those who have need of us - our understanding, our compassion, our support.

And for our members who do not celebrate Christmas — but do celebrate their respective holidays — the same holds true. Being a responsible, caring individual means caring for others.

The members of the Moose fraternity — we are family! And, as family, we do

what we can to help those less fortunate — our extended family. We provide home, security, sustenance to children in need and to senior members of our fraternity.

Yes — Christmas is approaching — as is the new year. And I/we pray that the new year will bring peace, good health, happiness and security to all members of our family — and to those dependent upon us.

So to you, my family — I am wishing you a Blessed Holiday Season — and a Happy New Year for all!

God Bless Mooseheart And Moosehaven — and God Bless our fraternity. ■

Thank You For Your Support Of Mooseheart's Holiday Lights Displays

By **GARY URWILER**/Executive Director, Mooseheart

What a great response we received this year in sponsorship of the Mooseheart Holiday Lights displays! A huge thank you to all the Moose Associations, Lodges, Chapters, Moose Legions, businesses and individual members who gave generously to support the fourth annual display, which began on Nov. 29 and runs through Dec. 31.

Join us for the 4th Annual Holiday Lights Show at Mooseheart and visit

Santa on December 8, 13, 14th*, 15, 20, 21, 22 and 23 at the event. Need more information? Contact Moose Charities at 630-966-2200.

NEW this year: a Fraternal Night on December 14th so *MARK YOUR CALENDAR* to see the Mooseheart band perform in the Fieldhouse, visit Santa and see the Holiday Lights Show. To be a sponsor of One of Chicagoland's Largest Holiday Light displays visit <http://www.moosecharities.org/DonateMC.asp> ■

Is Your Chapter Going the Distance To Ensure Success?

By **BARB McPHERSON**/Grand Chancellor, Women of the Moose

Now that we are halfway through the Chapter year, I encourage all members of the Board of Officers to check their records and make sure they are on track toward earning the Award of Achievement. The requirements for the Award of Achievement can be found in the July 1, 2010 Women of the Moose General Laws, Section 102.

The officers should review the *Checklist For A Successful Year* found in the 2013-2014 Officers Handbook, beginning on page 58. The completion of each task listed will ensure a successful Chapter year.

We have just completed a successful "Membership Retention Week". The Membership Retention Chairman and her committee should continue to contact the members of the Chapter whose dues have expired and have not renewed. The Recorder, or any authorized officer, has the ability to provide detailed lists via LCL.Net or the new Expired Member Kit that is sent to Chapters each month. The Membership Retention Committee should then make personal contact with the members to find out why they have not renewed. It is quite possible they simply forgot or perhaps they are not happy with the Chapter for one reason or another.

During the International Conference held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Director General Scott Hart challenged the Women of the Moose to increase their membership by 2014 members over April 30, 2013. If we accomplish this goal on April 30, 2014, he will visit the Women of the Moose meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada wearing a Canadian Mountie uniform, the same as he did back in 1998.

Wouldn't it be great to have him eat his words? Let's not disappoint him!

All Chapters recently received a *Missing Documents* report listing all reports that have not been received at Women of the Moose Headquarters as well as a *Missing Positions* report showing all vacant positions. Please correct all inaccuracies as soon as possible to ensure correct records at the end of the Chapter year.

Please check the monthly statements provided by Moose Charities to make certain all contributions to Moose Charities have been properly recorded. Minimum donations must be met monthly to ensure credit toward the Award of Achievement.

Once you have verified that the chapter is on track for the Award of Achievement, please make sure that all co-workers attempting to qualify for their various degrees and honors are meeting their personal requirements – enrolling new members, attending training sessions and holding fundraising projects.

If the Chapter Officers and co-workers are working together, everyone will be successful. Franklin Roosevelt once said "Happiness lies within the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort".

On behalf of the entire staff at Women of the Moose Headquarters, we wish everyone a joyous holiday season and a successful and prosperous New Year. ■

Moose, The Cheapest Place In Town?

By **DARRELL O'BRIEN**/Director, Lodge Operations

For many years the lodges of our Order have been encouraged to make themselves "The Friendliest Place in Town". I don't recall "Moose - The Cheapest Place in Town" ever being promoted on a fraternity-wide basis. Certainly some lodges have self-imposed this designation on their operation, but at what cost.

"Cheap" is not always a good thing. Do you want to be the one buying the "cheap" bathing suit with the threads that dissolve when wet? Picturing only myself in this situation, I cannot imagine a positive outcome for anyone witnessing my next trip to the beach.

As lodge leaders, you must remain mindful of the reputations your lodge has and the perception that others, many likely not even Moose members, have about your lodge, its members and the activities the lodge conducts or supports. It's hard to argue that being "The Friendliest Place in Town" can be anything but positive. Being "The Cheapest Place in Town" leaves much more room for less than favorable interpretation.

Cheap is frequently associated with lesser quality, corner cutting, poor service and being of a generally lower standard than is acceptable to most people. Is this how your lodge is viewed, particularly by those who are not yet Moose members? While some lodge officers are focused on having the lowest social quarter prices in town, they may be unaware of that reputation's cost in terms of decreased numbers of new members, many of whom may be willing to support the lodge's activities long after happy hour is over.

Although not every lodge has received the message yet, the days of being able to pay the bills by merely selling dollar beers is over. One lodge recently visited by a Senior Operations Analyst was found to be selling draft beer for a dollar.

This is the same price that lodge was charging for a draft 10 years ago. In the interim, the cost of that beer has more than doubled! This same lodge's officers wondered why they didn't have enough money to pay the lodge's property taxes.

We are all looking for great values, but great values don't necessarily mean "cheap". I suggest lodges strive to provide the greatest "value" in town. While cheap is most commonly considered to be a relationship to price, value and affordability have many more components contributing to an overall experience.

What might it take to prove the best value in town? Affordable pricing will certainly play a role, but there are many other criteria being factored into this judgment that is ultimately made by the lodge's customers, its members.

Among the more common considerations are:

- Prompt, friendly, courteous service
- 3T Food and Beverage – proper Taste, Temperature and Texture
- Clean facilities inside and out
- Appropriate behavior by both staff and other members
- A variety of activities to attract and entertain the members, their families and their guests

Interestingly enough, none of the above items are likely to cost the lodge any more than it is already spending on payroll, merchandise or supplies.

Most of the lodge experience we provide is attributable to positive attitudes. Our lodge leaders must display positive attitudes, and behaviors, and expect nothing less than the same from the staff, whether paid or volunteer.

When we turn the focus from price to experience, many people will find the lodge to provide much more "value" than the cheapest place in town. ■

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