



Suzanne Dinning
Academy of Friendship Board Member

Create Our Future with Change

When I joined the moose fraternity in 1993 it was so I could bowl in the local lodge's bowling league. I had just moved to Washington State and I didn't know anyone except my family there. So, this was a great way to meet new people. I didn't get involved in the moose fraternity at the local chapter immediately but got to know the chapter members while bowling once a week. We had one of the ladies that kept asking me to come to chapter meetings, but I hesitated because I wasn't sure what the fraternity was all about. Yes, I sat through enrollment and the rose ceremony, but I didn't really absorb everything that was said. 😊 I knew this lady from bowling was important because of how the other's treated her – she was past deputy grand regent, Delores Charbonneau – which at that time I had no idea what that title meant. Well, she finally convinced me to attend a chapter meeting.

After a year of attending meetings, I was approached by Delores to become more involved and take the chaplain position on the board. Sure, why not – I've gotten to know all the chapter members by then and it was fun when we were together. I then moved on to Jr regent and senior regent. Then, wow, I received my cap and gown in Las Vegas in 2008. Another blur due to all the excitement.

As we are all sitting here today, we have served as chairmen, officers and volunteers throughout our years of membership. We have encouraged friends to join us in this wonderful fraternity, mentoring them along the way.

Well, there have been a lot of changes since that day in 1992. I am one who doesn't mind changes – it keeps things interesting. Where I work it seems as soon as we learn a new procedure – yep it is changed. Normally it is for the best. As in our fraternity, we have to accept the changes to keep up with what our members' interests are.

When I joined the women of the moose, we were having dinners, dances and all kind of fundraisers. We didn't have all of the technology we do today. Now our members want to spend time playing on electronic gadgets, whether it be on their phones or on a big screen TV. They also like to be outside playing games like horseshoes, volleyball or bean bag toss. Our lodges need to change to what our new members are interested in to keep them from going out the back door. We can still keep having bingo and dances, but let's think about what type of functions **all** of our members would like too.

We used to ask new members what their interests are – do we still do that? I hear – not sure what we can do to get new, younger members involved – are we asking them what they want from their membership?

We have to get back to educating our new members – show them what Mooseheart and Moosehaven are – how many times have you mentioned Mooseheart or Moosehaven to a new member and they say what is that? Where are they? I hear it way too often.

So many times our sponsors want to sign new members for sponsor credit and don't explain what our fraternity is all about – maybe we weren't educated when we joined. It is okay that maybe someone wants to join to play darts or like me 27 years ago, to bowl. I had to attend an enrollment before receiving my id card. I know the enrollment isn't required any longer, but if we want to continue building our fraternity's future it is required that we educate our new members.

Our leaders of the fraternity are making changes to keep the interest of all of our members – new and old. Embrace these changes.

In 2017 my association was the first to become a joint association – inviting the women to be part of the leadership of the association, to have a vote on business decisions. Even to become officers. We started a change in the fraternity and now ____ associations are joint associations. How exciting is this!

Yes, there were a lot of questions from the chapters – why do we want to be part of the association – why do we want to give the men more money (per capita)? As you know now, we are able to vote on association matters – have a say so as to how the money is going to be spent – we can even be association president after moving through the other association offices - another step in creating our future.

As we all sit here today, we all had a hand in creating the future of this great fraternity. Give yourself a hand. (pause) men and women working together. This is our future.

In November, 2019 more than 600 attended a town hall to get answers on how we could become one moose. Wow – who would have thought? Again a lot of questions and changes. There was so much positive information to take back to our chapters, lodges and associations to begin this next step in the future of our fraternity.

I have to say, I am so proud to be part of this new future for our fraternity. I am not a feminist – I just know we have many women that can offer just as much as anyone in a leadership role. It isn't about gender; it is all about our fraternity – moose heart's and moose haven's future.

So, let us continue to create our future – join me and go back to your lodges and chapters and associations and encourage everyone that this change is good – be a role model for our future members. Help them create their future with this great fraternity.

Wow, as my two years on the academy of friendship board comes to an end, I owe so many of you my gratitude for believing in me and giving me this opportunity. I remember the day I received my letter in the mail and I can tell you, I danced all the way from the mailbox to my house and could not wait to call barb's office to accept the appointment. I so badly wanted to call my mentors Delores Charbonneau and peg Stilwell (which I knew I couldn't), but I would not be standing here today if not for both of them and many others. Delores and peg are no longer with us, but I know they are both looking down on me and proud of my accomplishments.

Thank you all at the moose international office – you are all amazing to work with. I can't thank you enough for the opportunity to have served on this amazing board.

I have met so many new friends – to all of the board members over the past two years, it was amazing to work with you all. Academy of friendship board - past dean, Jeanie Gantz, past board members Lou Ann brown and Ellen Delee. Thank you all for your mentoring and continued friendship.

Dean, Donna Howe, Trisha skinner, Donna Vosburgh, and my deputy grand regent partner, Gloria Weagly. It has been an honor to serve with all of you this past year. We did have fun didn't we?

To my chapters of Washington state northern Idaho association – thank you for your support and encouragement. To my home chapter, Chehalis 250 – you are the best.

My heart belongs to this wonderful fraternity and always will. Thank you all for believing in me and helping create our future.

Love you all.