



*Lisa Reynolds*

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## **Stay Golden**

“Nature’s first green is gold. Her hardest hue to hold. Her early leaf’s a flower; but only so an hour. Then leaf subsides to leaf. So Eden sank to grief. So dawn goes down to day. Nothing gold can stay.” I was reminded of this Robert Frost poem the other day when I saw a picture of several extremely handsome young actors. It was from the 1983 movie “The Outsiders”, based on a coming-of-age novel by S.E. Hinton published in 1967. However, for me, not even Patrick Swayze could make the movie better than the book. The poem represents the fragility of innocence and goodness and speaks to the temporary nature of beauty and life. But this time I viewed that poem in a different light than when I first read it in Junior High School. I thought about our children at Mooseheart and our seniors at Moosehaven. Had they lost their “gold”, their innocence, their youth, their zest for life? Was it gone forever? Aren’t our seniors living the “Golden Years”? Maybe Mr. Frost just never heard of Mooseheart or Moosehaven. Maybe his poem would have been somewhat different if he had.

Many of you may remember a young lady from Arkansas, Heather Hensley, who lived at Mooseheart. She was sponsored by the Saline County Moose Lodge. In her senior year, Heather came home for the Thanksgiving holiday and her birthday and several of us had the opportunity to meet her and take her out to lunch. She was such a self-confident young lady and seemed like any normal teenager. She even had our Japanese grill chef tossing food on the floor because he was so busy trying to flirt with her.

The next year at the Moose International Convention in Las Vegas, Heather was the class valedictorian for the Mooseheart graduating class of 2009 and she shared her story regarding her journey to Mooseheart. She brought the entire room to tears. She endured things in her life that no child should ever have to experience. The YouTube video is still available. I highly recommend everyone view it with tissues close at hand. Heather is now married with two step children and works as a Make-up Artist Specialist at MAC Cosmetics.

We have had several other children from Arkansas live at Mooseheart. Some finished out their high-school days and others left prior to graduating. Christopher “Crittter” Schwartz moved to Mooseheart in 2009 and graduated in 2014. He attended Lewis University with the scholarship he earned and graduated in 2018 with a Bachelor’s degree in Aviation. Chris is now engaged, has two children and works as an airplane mechanic. We

have had the privilege of having Chris speak with us at our Arkansas Moose Association Conferences. We are all so proud of him and his accomplishments.

Thanks to the blessings of Mooseheart, both Heather and Chris are now successful adults with families of their own.

How many more children like Heather and Chris could use the assistance of Mooseheart? How many children in this world live their lives without clean clothes, a roof over their head or a warm meal on the table? How many more children could be saved and receive an education of the head, the heart and the hand? As Moose members, we can and do make a difference in the lives of both children and seniors.

Arkansas also has a resident at Moosehaven, Linda Phillips Reynolds, who was sponsored by the North Little Rock Moose Lodge. Linda and her late husband Bryan transferred to the North Little Rock Moose Lodge in 2011 from Pahrump, Nevada and they instantly endeared themselves to our members. Bryan jumped in feet first, became an officer and accepted the position of Moose Legion Chairman.

Linda took a little longer to convince. We finally asked her enough times to attend our chapter meetings that she threw in the towel and joined us. She accepted the position of Membership Retention Chairman and earned her Academy of Friendship degree in 2013. Then tragedy struck. Bryan was diagnosed with a brain tumor and ultimately lost his battle with cancer. In this life-changing moment, Linda not only lost her husband, she also lost her home and her job as their employers required a management couple for the complex where they worked and lived. Linda had two things on her side. She had her Social Security and she had her Moose membership of over 15 consecutive years. Within a few months, Linda packed up her belongings and moved to Florida.

Several of our Lodge members were outraged that she was “forced” to move to Moosehaven. They had never visited the campus and they really had no idea what it was all about. Through Linda’s regular correspondence with our Lodge and Chapter and with her usual sense of humor, I think she finally convinced most of them that she truly was well taken care of and as always, was having an absolute blast! The few remaining doubting Thomases eventually visited Moosehaven for her wedding to Jim Reynolds which sealed the deal and put their minds at ease. As much as we all miss her around our Lodge, Linda has found a wonderful home and a fantastic life.

Remember, we do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. Have no regrets. The elderly usually don’t have regrets for what they did, but rather for things they did not do.

When talking to prospective Moose members, many of us in our Lodge and Chapter share these life stories of Heather, Chris and Linda. What better testimony about our fraternity than people we know and love whose lives were changed for the better by our twin cities?

Please, take part in community service activities in your area and promote the Moose as the Heart of the Community. Find your mission and see it through in order to help Create our Future. We need to spread the Moose word far and wide and stop being the best kept secret in town. We make a Living by what we get. We make a Life by what we give.

My heartfelt appreciation to the Women of the Moose International staff for everything you do for each and every one of us and for giving me this opportunity to serve our fraternity in a new capacity. Thank you to the Grand Regents, the members of the Grand Council, Academy of Friendship Board and Star Recorder Board I have worked with throughout the years. I will always cherish the laughter, the tears and the friendships. A special Thank you to the members of the College of Regents Board both past and present that I have had the privilege to serve with. You will always hold a special place in my heart.

Thank you to the co-workers of Arkansas and especially North Little Rock Chapter 1568 who have not only stood by my side but have had both my back and my front. We are small, but we are mighty.

Finally, to each of you, my College of Regents sisters; some of you I have known for years, some for only a short time and some of you I have yet to meet. Thank you for all you do for the Women of the Moose, our children and seniors, your chapters and for each other. I am proud to call you my Moose Family. God Bless and Stay Golden!