



Barbara J. McPherson, Grand Chancellor  
Women of the Moose Keynote Address  
2021 International Conference, Cincinnati, OH

Good afternoon! Welcome to Cincinnati, Ohio and the 109<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference of the Women of the Moose. It's great to be here, great to see all of your faces in 3D and I am excited to share a lot of good information with you.

As Loyal Order Lodges all over the country were awakening to the fact that the Woman's Loyal Moose Circle was here to stay, the first Convention of the Women of the Moose was held right here in Cincinnati, just down the street in Music Hall, on July 30, 1913. It was reported there were three good, long sessions held and many things were accomplished.

The most important matter of business was the signing of the articles of incorporation by all of the delegates present, which made us a fraternal order upon our own resources. The Constitution was read and adopted and, addresses were given by Director General James J. Davis and Supreme Organizer Ernest M. Oswalt who were selected to name the officers for the first year.

They also voted on a per capita tax of 50 cents per year as a contribution toward Mooseheart and another tax of the same amount to defray the advancement of the interests of the Woman's Loyal Moose Circle. Please remember that the average wage in 1913 was twenty-two cents per hour.

If you would like to visit Cincinnati Music Hall, it is located at 1241 Elm Street, across from the historic Washington Park in Over-the-Rhine, minutes from the center of the downtown area. Oh, and by the way, Music Hall was built over a pauper's cemetery, which has helped fuel its reputation as one of the most haunted places in America.

And what do you suppose they talked about at that first Conference in 1913? Mooseheart was barely dedicated and still a mere vision of James J. Davis so there weren't any addresses about our kids and what we have done for them or their accomplishments. And I'm sure there weren't many comments about our Chapters – there were only 170 or so that had just formed.

And what about Moosehaven? Forget that. Moosehaven wasn't founded until 1922. So, what do you think they did at that first Conference? The women were anxiously and steadily organizing but for what? I believe their intentions were very real and true to the purpose of what we now know as the Women of the Moose.

One Convention delegate wrote "I have always maintained that the possibilities of the Woman's Loyal Moose Circle for good and noble things were great, but since attending this, our first convention, I realize how small my ideas of what a great work, we as women of the Woman's Loyal Moose Circle have before us. I am confident that we, as women banded together for a good cause will grasp every opportunity to broaden and better our lives, and the higher our aims are along these lines the greater will be our ability and desire to be of real use to others."

The Women of the Moose were organized for the maintenance and support of Mooseheart, and eventually Moosehaven. So what part of our mission has changed over the past 109 years? Nothing. Nothing of our mission has changed but the Women of the Moose have certainly come a long way.

First, I know that if many of you had to complete the application for membership from back then, you wouldn't join. This is an entire 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper and it asks such questions as "Has your weight increased or decreased over the past two years?" And by how many pounds. Yeah right! How many of you have gained just over the course of the pandemic?

"Have you any disease of your breast?" or my favorite "Have you passed the turn of life?" Oh yes, I've turned but I'm not sure what is so bad about it?

Then, you agreed that you were physically and mentally normal! Not sure I fit that bill.

Then we had to have a male "affiliation" who was a member of the Loyal Order of Moose. It had to be a husband, son, brother or father. This was still in effect when I became a member but the options were many.

And for just under 108 years, women had no voice, no vote or anything to say about the operation of our Lodges. Effective May 1, 2021 that all changed. So, why did we lose 52 Chapters this past year? Apparently, the members of those Chapters don't believe in the mission of the Women of the Moose. They don't believe we continue to serve a purpose for our children and our senior members.

Remember, it is the Women of the Moose who provide for the daily needs of our children and senior members, not our Lodges. We provide the funds for things that might not be provided for in a budget. We also help with donations for buildings, piers, gazebos, farm equipment and the like.

And let's not forget the donations we make to our Lodges, Districts and Associations on top of all of this. This past year, our office granted Financial Dispensations in the amount of \$305,953 to assist Lodge's with things like taxes, renovations, insurance, emergencies, utilities and the list goes on. I believe there is still a need.

This has been quite a year hasn't it? The year started last May with such promise of success for our Lodges, Chapters and Moose Legions. We were full of hope for an end to the pandemic and hoped for an amazing increase in membership. Sadly, that just wasn't meant to be and we continued to stay home and continued to be locked out of our Lodges.

With the world on lockdown dealing with a global pandemic, we may have felt far from inspirational and encouraged. The outbreak of coronavirus was stressful for many to say the least. Fear and anxiety were probably overwhelming but finding positive ways to cope with that stress made you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. There was a substantial need for some motivation to move forward even if it was in small quantities.

As members of our beloved family fraternity you continued to focus on our mission of caring for one another. With all my heart, I thank each and every one of you for whatever you did to preserve our future; renewing your dues, sending donations for our projects, staying at home as ordered, keeping our members and those in our care in your thoughts and prayers.

Please accept my gratitude for your efforts, your compassion, kindness and patience as we weathered this horrible storm. We're in this together as One Moose, united in our compassion for others, and we will continue to accomplish greatness on the other side of this crisis.

To those who lost loved ones or dear friends to this virus, like many in our Memorial Service, please accept my sincerest condolences for your loss. Their memories will live on in your heart forever and will remind you when you least expect it and in the oddest of places.

So, what did happen this past year following our first ever virtual Convention? Not a lot happened on the Mooseheart Campus. No special Association days, no Tree Lighting no sports and certainly no visits from our members.

100 days prior to Graduation, a special retreat was held in the Fieldhouse for the graduating class. During this retreat, the graduating seniors were social distance seated at individual tables around the basketball court with special items for each student. They had challenges, played games, ate a great lunch and then were presented with several gifts from various places.

A check was presented by the Moose Legions of Illinois to pay for their yearbooks. I then had the opportunity to present each student with an inspirational message, a card and a cash gift from the Women of the Moose. Something we have done each year during our Senior Scholarship Event.

Additional inspiration was provided by CEO Hart along with watches from Michigan, Class Rings from Illinois District 2 and senior portrait packages from Wisconsin. In addition, the Illinois Northeast Council of Higher Degrees provided luggage. Earlier in the year, our seniors who earned them, were presented with letter jackets from the Greenville and Indian Lake, Ohio Lodges. Our graduating seniors were truly blessed with many gifts from our supportive fraternity.

Many celebrations had to be cancelled this past year but our members in Juneau, Alaska were able to celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary last August. The evening started with the distribution of 100 Tommy Moose between the four Juneau Fire Departments, the Juneau Police Department and the Aware Shelter for the victims of domestic violence.

Hors d'oeuvres and cupcakes were enjoyed by all in attendance.

The Hopewell, Virginia Chapter was finally able to move back into their Lodge this past January following their devastating fire two years ago.

Congratulations Hopewell. Your new home is beautiful!

Let's hope this year allows for more celebrations in our Lodges, Chapters and Moose Legions.

One other comment I would like to add from that first Convention attendee is "I was deeply moved, thankful and proud that it is my privilege to be so closely associated with a body of women with such praiseworthy aspirations as the Women's Loyal Moose Circle are striving for, and this is only one line of our future work. There are many others which we should take up as early as possible."

Good and noble things continue to amaze me. The small but mighty Pomona, California Chapter, who continues to operate without an affiliated Lodge and who will soon become a Moose Service Center has done an awful lot to assist their community. They are #1 in Community Service with volunteer hours, miles driven and donations totaling \$451,241.

How about the members of Hattiesburg, Mississippi Chapter? They drove a reported 121,110 miles to help their community and its residents. They get top billing for Community Service miles driven. Our sincerest thanks to the members of Hattiesburg Chapter.

Middletown, Ohio, where are you? Middletown leads our Chapters in total donations to Community Service with \$35,920. Thank you, Middletown, for all you do for your community.

Next, let's find Buffalo, New York Chapter who had the largest percentage of increase in membership of 97.8%. They started the year with just 45 members and ended on April 30<sup>th</sup> with 89 members. Congratulations Buffalo Chapter.

Our next Chapter leads in total donations to Moose Charities. Indian Lake, Ohio where are you? This Chapter of 2,490 members donated \$15,500 to ensure the future of Mooseheart and Moosehaven. Thank you Indian Lake members for helping to make a difference in the lives of others.

This next Chapter went above and beyond to show an increase in their active membership and outdid the second place Chapter in actual gain in membership by 78 members. Let's give it up for Anna Maria Island, Florida for their outstanding increase in membership of 346. Thank you ~ thank you Anna Maria Island.

While this year has been lackluster for information from our campuses, please know it was far from slow in our office. Remember, we had to re-write every book we have. Two of the most important were the Women of the Moose General laws and the Meeting Procedures and Agendas book. Both are available for sale in the Gift Store during this Convention.

Some of the highlights to the General Laws include the fact that you must first be a Lodge member before you can become a Chapter member. Isn't it wonderful to now have a voice in your Lodge?

There is no longer an application fee in the Women of the Moose or Moose Legion but there is still a transfer fee.

Chapter dues are set at \$15 and cannot be changed. Only one Chapter meeting is required to be held each month in addition to the Chapter Board of Officers meeting. The quorum for Chapter meetings has been changed to 5 and 2 for Board of Officers meetings. Since an Officer cannot meet with herself, if she is the only Officer that will be in attendance at the Board meeting, the meeting must either be rescheduled or the business must be taken to the Chapter floor for approval by the membership.

There are now only four Officers with titles of Senior Regent, Junior Past Regent, Secretary and Treasurer. In addition, there are only four Chairmen. They are Membership, Fraternal Activities, Mooseheart/Moosehaven & Higher Degrees.

The Senior Regent may now be elected two years in succession. Because of this, the Second Chance for College has been eliminated. The Treasurer may now submit her name for multiple years of service provided she attends training every two years. The Secretary may now submit her name for election for 5 consecutive years.

A Collegian may now be elected to any position. The Academy of Friendship degree is no longer conferred at the International Convention due to a lack of attendance. The Green Cap honor is now the Golden Gavel. The 2021 honors grading will be for the Green Cap honor as the 2015 General Laws were in effect. Speaking of the Golden Gavel, this special meeting is now held during the month of January instead of a separate meeting between November and January.

Academy of Friendship is now celebrated in June with Star Recorder celebrated in August. Collegians, you will love this one - hosiery is no longer required to be worn with your cap and gown. This also applies to college and star matriculants. The Midyear and Annual Conferences have been eliminated as we can all attend the meetings of the Association but remember that attendance is mandatory at the Chapter Rally Day Celebration for the Award of Achievement.

Deputy Grand Regents have been eliminated because Conferences have now gone away. Audits are now submitted to the Women of the Moose quarterly. The Financial Review Committee should still audit the books monthly to ensure they are in order. The monthly Financial transmissions have been eliminated as well as the Profit & Loss and Balance sheet. You can now turn off those automatic emails to wotmmail.

You may have noticed that all sponsor history has moved to the members Lodge record. As members are sponsored into the Women of the Moose a new sponsor history will be built within the Chapter record. This is no different from the Moose Legion.

Members attempting to qualify for Chapter honors must now sponsor members into the Women of the Moose for Chapter honors. This will help to ensure our Chapters continue to grow. New Chapter members can only be sponsored by current Chapter members. Finally, elected Chapter Officers can now be paid employees of the Lodge and may also be elected to a position on the Lodge Board of Officers.

Aren't these exciting? As I indicated earlier, the new eggplant purple General Laws are available in the Gift Store here in Cincinnati.

In addition to re-writing our books, we also transitioned all of our Chapters to LCL Web and QuickBooks Online. Both of these programs can now be accessed online from any computer by the Chapter Treasurer. This should help make her job much easier.

Our job is to increase the membership of the Women of the Moose so we are able to continue to help others in need. The number one complaint we receive from those who have not renewed is – no one cared. They were treated badly or poorly, they were not made to feel welcome, and the list goes on. We have talked before about treating others as you would like to be treated.

Please remember that you didn't really know all of the rules, regulations and procedures when you first joined and our new members don't either. Help them, mentor them and teach them the love you and thousands of others have for our mission of caring for children in need and our senior members, assisting our communities and celebrating life.

Apparently, your membership building efforts of this past year and our membership retention mailing did a lot of good. Of our 43 State/Provincial Associations, 11 showed an increase in membership and while I would love to name them all, time simply will not permit. So, as is customary, I will give you the top 10.

In 10<sup>th</sup> place with a + 25 – Mississippi  
In 9<sup>th</sup> place with a + 29 – Dakotas  
In 8<sup>th</sup> place with +38 – Arkansas  
In 7<sup>th</sup> place with +61 – Minnesota  
In 6<sup>th</sup> place with + 62 – Georgia  
In 5<sup>th</sup> place with +103 – Missouri-Northern Kansas  
In 4<sup>th</sup> place with +127 – Montana  
In 3<sup>rd</sup> place with +179 - Colorado

In 2<sup>nd</sup> place with plus 563 - Ohio  
And in first place with plus 1,102, it's back to Florida

A complete list will be posted on our web page following this Conference.

The Women of the Moose began the 2020-2021 Chapter year with 358,495 members and even with all of this success, the Women of the Moose ended the year with 352,853 for a decrease in membership of 5,642. Yes, the COVID-19 pandemic had a lot to do with it. New Mexico opened today to full capacity and the Canadian border is still closed until July 21. Sadly, the pandemic is not over just yet.

You all you did an outstanding job inviting your friends, family and associates to join the Women of the Moose this past year but we can't stop now. You sponsored those new members, now do your part to keep them and encourage them to sponsor their friends, relatives and associates. The Women of the Moose are still, and will remain an important part of this fraternity

Sponsors of new members will receive Moose Reward point for sponsoring members into the Chapter. Chapter members who sponsor 5 new or former members into the Chapter between May 1 and April 30<sup>th</sup> will earn membership in the Moose International 5 Club and will receive this 5 Club cling for your window. In addition, funds will be donated to our Mooseheart Campus toward a climbing wall for our Physical Education class and monies to fund the weight room, TV's and gaming systems for the MAC Center.

Next year, we will visit sunny Orlando, Florida in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Moosehaven. Wouldn't it be great to also once again celebrate an increase in membership? Now is your chance to make it happen! Start now maintaining your membership numbers. Don't wait until the end of the year and then scramble to make it. Your Membership Chairman and her committee should be working all year to maintain those members who are in arrears and to provide Chapter membership incentives to encourage membership growth.

Our founders were anxious and excited to form this very organization that we love so much, to assist our children in need and eventually, the senior members of our Order. They thrived during a time when communication was limited and costly, but grew at a great pace and at a much greater cost.

We have an obligation to fulfill their dream and to continue the mission they envisioned. Without each and every one of you, the future of those entrusted to our care would surely be in jeopardy.

Thank you for everything you do to keep our dream alive.