



*121st International Moose Convention
Chicago, Illinois
Director General Keynote Address
May 22, 2009
Dancing in the Rain*

Good evening! Welcome to Chicago, Illinois and the 2009 International Moose Convention. We are happy you have made the pilgrimage to be with us and we are excited about the reports and programs that will be shared with you during the next few days.

The video introduction you just saw was put together by Cathy Vonhoff of our Department of Communications and Public Affairs. Believe me; it was certainly not assembled at my request, but instead, at the request of Donna Womack – the former Special Assistant to the Director General. Following the passing of her husband this past year, Donna made the decision to retire after 30 years of service to Moose International. Her retirement dinner was Friday evening, February 27, and she was leaving the next morning for a five-week vacation in Florida. She felt that since my birthday was two days later, she could get away with this surprise salute to the Director General and there would be nothing I could do about it. She was right. I must say I was very surprised. She has some explaining to do as to where she obtained some of the photos used in the presentation.

However, with the exception of the surprise video, she did an excellent job during her years of service. She served as Executive Secretary to two General Governors, Phil Morse and Jim Chappell, as Executive Secretary and Administrative Assistant to General Counsel Leonard Solfa, as Administrative Assistant to Directors General Frank Sarnecki and Donald Ross, and as Executive Assistant to your current Director General – myself. She is at the convention this week

providing assistance for her successor, Linda Regner. Please join me in saying hello and thanks to our newly retired Special Assistant to the Director General, Donna Womack.

Can you believe that 11 months have passed since we left Las Vegas ready, willing and able to spread the word that the work of the Moose was truly beyond belief? Our spirit was high, and our pride overflowing. We were beginning a new year. We had elected new officers, and new boards. New councils and committees were appointed. We had new leadership and had formed new teams – each filled with enthusiasm and ready to go to work. What a way to start the year!

Five months later we returned to Las Vegas – to the Golden Nugget, downtown on Fremont Street – to learn the importance of customer service, and how that applies to dealing day-to-day with the members of our Order. Throughout the 3-day seminar Lodge, Chapter and Association officers, and employees of Lodge social quarters throughout North America focused on how they could make a member's visit to their Lodge more enjoyable – an experience they would wish to repeat often; thereby making the future payment of dues not an 'if' but simply a 'when'. A shortened version of this seminar was made available to all Associations for the Mid-Year Conferences earlier this year. The feedback from members attending – both in Las Vegas – and during Association Mid-Year Meetings was extremely positive. Bringin' Home the Bacon was a big success and we thank the staff of our Education and Training Department, led by Director Sue Hawkins for their time and effort in the development of the session.

Thank goodness enthusiasm was high, as what was happening with the national and world economy was going to present this fraternity with one of the biggest challenges in its 121 years. I am sure that top management of Aloha and ATA Airlines, Circuit City, Lenox, Levitz Furniture, Linens 'n Things, Mervyns, Olan Mills, Sharper Image, Tribune Company, Tropicana Resort & Casino, Vivitar, Wachovia, Wickes Furniture, Wilsons Leather, Gottschalks, Hartmarx, Ritz Cameras, Trump Entertainment Resorts and Waterford Wedgwood – to name a few – never thought they would see their corporations go into Chapter 11 bankruptcy, but that has happened during the last 11 months. This recession has had no compassion for anyone. Like a tornado it has hit hard and done its damage quickly.

Nonprofit corporations have been hit just as hard. The Nonprofit Finance Fund reported that America's nonprofits are in real danger. Its recent survey of 986 nonprofit professionals exposed a startling degree of financial vulnerability by a large majority of respondents.

Only 12% expect to operate above break-even this year

Only 16% anticipate being able to cover their operating costs in both 2009 and 2010

31% don't have enough operating cash in hand to cover more than one month of expenses, and another 31% have less than three months' worth

52% expect the recession to have a long-term negative financial effect on their organization

41% have reduced or are considering reducing staff or salaries

39% have reduced or eliminated, or are considering reducing or eliminating programs

As a result of the recession, the endowment fund at Howard University, the 142nd wealthiest university in the United States, decreased by 150 million dollars. Said the Chairman of their Economics Department, "Howard is no exception to what has affected the nation."

If that doesn't knock your socks off, a professionally managed, and held in high esteem fund, such as the Harvard Endowment Fund lost 11 billion dollars through March of this year.

The media reports that, because of these hard times, the Shriners may close six of their 22 children's hospitals. In the past year, their endowment fund fell from 8 billion dollars to 5 billion dollars – a loss of 3 billion dollars in less than a year. The CEO of Shriners Hospitals for Children told the Associated Press that, "within five to seven years we'll probably be out of the hospital business." Wow! What a tremendous loss that would be to our society if we no longer had those children's medical centers doing what they have done so magnificently throughout their history.

Many nonprofit organizations have closed during the last year. These have been primarily social service charities and organizations supporting the fine arts. The huge endowments we have heard so much about, such as Harvard and Yale, were down well over 22-24% from July 1 to October 31, and are likely down another 20% since then.

So where do we fit in the picture? How has the recession affected Moose International? The average endowment fund is down 27.7% for our fiscal year of May 1 – April 30. Our endowment fund is down 25.4%. We were hurt just about as much as anyone else. At one point in time during the past twelve months, we were showing a loss in our investment portfolio of some 71 million dollars. Imagine the stress placed upon Chief Financial Officer Joe Mech as he struggled with providing the necessary funding to the Mooseheart Board of Directors and Moosehaven Board of Directors to pay the bills monthly, realizing that Mooseheart and Moosehaven operate from the income on our investments. What do you do when there is no income? You borrow against the principal. The Nonprofit Finance Fund Survey shows that 43% of the nonprofits either have used or are considering using their reserve funds. The Shrine says they are consuming 1 million dollars a day from their reserve fund to keep operating.

Moose International was no different! We were facing a one to two million dollar per month cash burn, and knew we could not exist for long at that rate. We were showing an increase in expenses and a decrease in revenues. The situation required immediate action on the part of the governing body of the organization, the Supreme Council. And act they did. They rejected last year's proposed budgets, insisting that every department manager put forth a greater effort to cut costs without cutting service. Later, after accepting the Mooseheart and Moosehaven Budgets, they required additional scrutiny be applied to the Moose International Budget and, once again, each department manager reviewed every line item within their budget and cut additional costs wherever possible,

While not finding it an easy task, the Supreme Council, and your leadership team, eliminated numerous positions at Moose International, including that of Chief Operating Officer. Our 2007-2008 Operating Budget had called for 184 positions. The actual positions filled at Moose International at this time are 148, give or take a position. This is a decrease of 36 positions. It may interest you to know that it is fully 77 positions fewer than 15 years ago in 1994. Likewise, positions were eliminated at Mooseheart, Moosehaven and Moose Charities. Moose Charities decreased its staff from 6 positions to 4, and at this time only 3 of these positions are filled. Mooseheart Child City and School decreased staff from 181 positions to 173 positions.

Moosehaven had 158 full time positions at the beginning of fiscal 2008, and today has just 119 – a decrease of 39 positions. You'll find that in a relatively short period of time we have eliminated 86 full time positions from the payroll.

In addition to the cut in staff, other cost saving measures were taken. The salary of the Director General was substantially reduced and frozen at that rate, for the remainder of his term of office – which has been extended by the Supreme Council to July of 2014. In addition to prohibiting any pay increase, all fixed bonuses were removed from the contract. Additionally, salaries have been frozen until further notice for all employees of Moose International, Mooseheart, Moosehaven and Moose Charities for personnel whose base annual salary is \$50,000 or more.

This was not easy for any of the staffs to accept, but our employees realized that, without revenue income being generated by our investment portfolio, drastic measures had to be taken. We were able to communicate to our individual staffs that, in the words of Rob Glenn, founder and President of The Center for Ethics, Governance, and Accountability (CEGA), “this is a time of tremendous challenge; however, it is also a time of exciting opportunities. It's time for non-profits to compete like never before (not in petty terms) but in all things that exude excellence, confidence, and strong business acumen.” And this is exactly what I believe we have done. I ask that you thank Chief Financial Officer Joe Mech for the outstanding job he delivered this past year as you see him in and around our convention activities this coming week.

Let me ask a rhetorical question: With all of these other companies and organizations going under, or cutting service, why are we still here? The answer to this question is the secret as to why we have lived, and have moved and have had our being for 121 years.

Here's part of the answer: One of the monthly books received by our Department of Education and Training recently was a small collection of stories focused upon the power of gratitude. Its opening piece was the story of Patrick Henry Hughes. With this clip from YouTube, let me share Patrick's story with you.

The story of Patrick, as told in the book, includes a quote credited to Vivian Greene, which reads, “Life is not about waiting for the storms to pass. . . it's about learning how to dance

in the rain!" In this book, entitled "Learning to Dance in the Rain", by Mac Anderson and B J Gallagher, "During tough times, do we spend too much time feeling sorry for ourselves, or can we, with gratitude . . . learn how to dance in the rain?" That's exactly what the Moose has done! That's how we've made it through these tough times so far! We learned how to dance in the rain. We did what we have done so many times throughout our history – we depended upon the loyalty and dedication of the men and women of the Moose.

We knew we could count upon the commitment of those members who moved into the higher degrees. Their commitments were no longer just words, but a pledge that had to be carried to fruition. We had a resource that would lead us to the heights – the spirit of the volunteer. To this mix we added the 'do or die' attitude of more than a million men and women who, on a daily basis, give of their substance to protect the children at Mooseheart and the senior members at Moosehaven.

We are blessed with truly fraternal leadership beginning above me, at the very top. I emphasize the word fraternal as that is exactly what it took to make it through this past year. While I do not have the time to introduce to you all of the members of the Grand Council of the Women of the Moose and the Moose Legion Council, the members of the Mooseheart Board, Moosehaven Board and Moose Charities Board, I do want to take a moment to recognize the courage, the dedication and the commitment of the Board of Directors of Moose International – the Supreme Council.

The Supreme Council is the governing body of, not just the men of the Loyal Order of Moose, but the entire fraternity. They must approve all actions of the Grand Council and the Moose Legion Council. They approve the operating budget for Moose International. They approve all policies related to the operation of the fraternity and the operation of Moose International. They approve reports of all committees of Moose International – including the report of the Judiciary Committee. They review and acknowledge all budgets, and all reports from the Mooseheart Board of Directors, the Moosehaven Board of Directors and the Moose Charities Board of Directors. They carry an awesome burden on their shoulders.

This past year, it was the Supreme Council that took the action which returned the full responsibilities of Chief Executive Officer to the Director General. It was the Supreme Council that eliminated the position of Chief Operating Officer. It was the Supreme Council that took action to name a new General Counsel. It was the Supreme Council that increased the ABCD Dollar to \$28.00 a year, to be followed by a minimum increase of \$2.00 each year for five years. These were not easy decisions and took hours, days and even months before action was taken. But they were decisions that had to be made. The future of our Order was at stake.

While I know there are still some of you who do not believe that it was necessary to increase the ABCD Dollar and the Women of the Moose per capita, it is important that you realize that we simply would not have been able to stay above board this past year and fund the expenses of Mooseheart, Moosehaven and Supreme Lodge without this additional revenue. While no one could possibly know what was about to happen with the economy, we can thank our then Chief Operating Officer Leonard Solfa for taking the heat and insisting that the Supreme Council take immediate action.

I am taking the time to introduce them to you this evening because they deserve your recognition, your accolades and your applause. While they may have less hair, or it may have whitened, or there may be a few more stress lines and signs of aging, they are still as dedicated to our cause and loyal to our principles and precepts as ever. As your Director General, from Whitehall, OH Lodge 1245, I am privileged to serve as a voting member of the Supreme Council and take pride in asking my colleagues to stand as their names are called and remain standing until all have been introduced. Please hold your applause until I have completed the introductions.

From Greeley-Evans, Colorado

Supreme Councilman Harry L. Johnston

From Danville, Pennsylvania

Supreme Councilman Joseph R. Koons

From East Mesa, Arizona

Supreme Councilman James F. Henderson

From Mansfield, Ohio

Supreme Councilman Danny R. Albert

From Prattville, Alabama

Supreme Councilman Willard Kitchens

From Bedford, Virginia

Supreme Councilman Wesley I. Crowder

From Tulsa, Oklahoma

Supreme Councilman Terry L. Walls

From Dansville, New York

Supreme Councilman Franz R. Griswold

From Charlotte, North Carolina

Supreme Prelate George W. McCullough III

From St. Petersburg, Florida

Supreme Jr. Governor Liguori V. Saladin

From Batavia, Illinois

Jr. Past Supreme Governor Eugene C. Huggins

From Vallejo, California

Supreme Governor James J. Gallagher

Now, please join me in showing your appreciation to this assembled group of fraternal leaders by giving them a round of applause.

Members of the Supreme Council would be the first to tell you that they, alone, were not responsible for the successful efforts put forth this past year. Both the Grand Council of the Women of the Moose and the Moose Legion Council played a major role. In addition, the officers of 44 Moose Associations were most supportive and extremely cooperative in promoting and coordinating all programs, both short and long-term. Their support is greatly appreciated.

Likewise, we are not going to introduce the staff at Moose International, nor the staff of Mooseheart, Moose Charities or Moosehaven, but I assure you they, together with their respective staffs, have delivered a superb job. At Moose International, employees now

understand that they do not work for a single department; they work for the fraternity. Any job that needs to be done can be assigned to them. Morale, I would submit, is at the highest level in years. Employees feel they are part of a team, and take pride in the fact their effort played a major role in how we successfully made it through this past year. As you meet them during this convention, be it in a meeting room, in the registration or display area, or at an evening function, please take a moment of your time and say thanks. They will appreciate your words of appreciation.

In case you thought I forgot about the fraternal units – I did not. I am so proud of our Lodges, our Chapters and our Moose Legions. What an outstanding job they have delivered since we left Las Vegas! Many of them will receive honors and accolades during this convention, but all deserve our thanks. Their attention to membership and finances, their support of policies – including our new policy regarding the purchase of hall rental insurance – their response to our plea for special donations for either Mooseheart or Moosehaven, their promotion of Gimme Five, the support they have shown with articles in their respective publications, the outstanding job they have done in support of Flight 93 Memorial, Safe Surfin, Special Olympics, Veterans Programs, Youth Awareness, and so much more; their effort to become the friendliest place in town and their determination to receive the Premier Lodge Award or Chapter Award of Achievement, is evidence that they still have the spirit; they still want to achieve; they still want to make a difference in the lives of others. I salute them for all that they do!

While we all agree we have seen sunnier days, we've proven that we can deal with the rain. We all know that the sun will come out tomorrow, but we're determined to make the best of the rainy days while they're still with us. There will be no feeling sorry for ourselves, no sulking, and no whining. We will make the best of what we have, we will celebrate our accomplishments daily, and together, we will enjoy dancing in the rain.

We have cut expenses, we have eliminated positions of employment, we have increased our effort to appeal for member donations, we have looked outside of our membership for donations to Moose Charities, and we have asked our employees to give just a little more – not only at their workplace – but also in monetary donations. The majority of our employees have

given to Gimme Five; over 90% of our Department Heads at Moose International are members of the League of Guardians – earned only by donating at least \$1,000.00 during the fiscal year. Our employees not only give of their substance, but they belong to Chapters and Lodges and they sponsor their friends and associates, thereby strengthening the defending circle. We have made them very aware, as we have you, of our concept of ‘members and money’; our reason for existing; money to care for our children at Mooseheart and our senior members at Moosehaven, and members to ensure the future existence of our Order.

This coming year will tell the story. It will truly be a time of the survival of the fittest, and I assure you that our fraternity is as fit as it has ever been – for all the reasons I have previously stated.

With all of the stumbling blocks that fell in our way during the past year, we still have much to celebrate. Executive Director Scott Hart, and the Mooseheart Board of Directors, will brighten your day Sunday afternoon with their report. Preparations have begun for the Centennial Celebration in 2013 and all is well following the visit from the Swine Flu in our area. Speaking of the Swine Flu, I believe I know how it got to the Mooseheart area. It seems that our Mooseheart employees challenged the Supreme Lodge employees to a weight loss battle that ran for nine weeks. There were 95 participants from the Supreme Lodge and 60 participants from Mooseheart. Each employee was weighed in and out by the Mooseheart nurse. Percent of body weight was calculated for all employees, and the ten biggest losers from the Supreme Lodge went up against the ten biggest losers from Mooseheart. The Captain of the losing team – either Scott Hart for Mooseheart, or myself from the Supreme Lodge had to don a pig outfit and shake hands with the employees of the winning team on a select workday. Since I don't appear to be the one in the pig outfit in the picture you now see on the screen, you can figure out which team won. A total of 1,424.50 pounds were lost during the nine weeks of the challenge. All participants enjoyed the challenge and another, of similar nature, will take place before the end of the year.

Tonight you already were able to experience one of Mooseheart's many success stories. How about Steve Schmidt and the Mooseheart Band? While we will miss all of the students who

graduate tomorrow, things just won't seem the same during band concerts, without Marco Namowicz, the young man playing first-chair clarinet. Marco's story is one for our all-time archive of student accomplishments. He is a very talented musician and an excellent young man. He can't help but do well in the future - thanks to the men and women of the Moose. Make sure you attend the Sunday afternoon joint session to hear the rest of the story.

Likewise, on Monday afternoon, you will have the opportunity to hear the report of the Moosehaven Board of Directors, delivered by Executive Director John Capes. So much happened at Orange Park, Florida during this past year, including a ground-breaking for Brandon Place – a new kind of retirement setting available to any Moose member who meets the minimum requirements. Additionally, Moosehaven weathered a near-hurricane-level storm. Everyone made it through safely, although we can't say the same for the buildings. A few residents commemorated their advancement to Centenarian as they marked their 100th birthdays – Charlotte Krebs being the most recent – celebrated earlier this month. Life as a Moosehaven resident has become so much more relaxing, and if it was even possible – less stressful, thanks to each of you – the men and women of the Moose.

On Tuesday morning, you will hear the report of the Moose Charities Board of Directors – the first to be delivered by their new Executive Director Jan Fregulia. While Jan has been in her new position for less than a year, so much has taken place. There have been revisions to the Gimme Five program, which you will hear about during this convention and conference. Jan and her staff have improved recognition for participating donors in all of the Moose Charities programs, and there has been considerable reduction in expenses, which saves Moose International money – as every cent of actual donations continues to go directly to the program. Rather than spend money on the cost of an outside firm taking on some of our bulk mailings, Jan asked the employees at Moose International to help – and help they did.

Earlier this year, Moose Charities had to mail 84,000 pieces of mail to people who donated to our program during the calendar year 2008. In less than three days, every bit of that mail had been taken to the post office – and no additional expense was incurred. Everyone in the building stopped by the fulfillment room to lend their assistance, including our Jr. Past Supreme

Governor Gene Huggins, as well as Mooseheart employees such as Executive Director Scott Hart and Superintendent of Education Gary Urwiler. This resulted in considerable savings! We extend our sincere appreciation to Jan and the Moose Charities Board of Directors.

Jan will update you on all of the Moose Charities programs during our Tuesday joint session. If you haven't stopped by and seen Moose Charities in the display area, please do so. They are hoping to accept your contributions for the Tuesday morning March of Checks and for Gimme Five, as well as Endowment Fund Club contributions and other monetary gifts for Mooseheart and Moosehaven. If you are an annual contributor to Gimme Five, please take time to make your next contribution of \$36.50. If you donate five years at a time – then our team is ready to gratefully accept your contribution of \$182.50. Additionally, Jan has introduced new higher-level recognition lapel pins you will be proud to wear.

Tomorrow, we will all have the opportunity to spend a day at our Child City – Mooseheart. I am sure many of you will have lumps in your throats and tears in your eyes, as 25 of our young men and women walk across the stage to receive their well-earned diplomas, along with, in many cases, a college scholarship. Remember – their time spent at Mooseheart and their chance for a successful future were all made possible by you. Go home and boast about it. You have every right!

To our Association Presidents and Secretaries I also extend my fraternal thanks for all you have done this past year. Your dedication to our cause and your cooperation in the coordination and promotion of our programs is greatly appreciated. Our state and provincial Associations are a major link in the chain that drives our fraternal engine and keeps us moving forward. Our Associations are so important that our entire fall seminar this year has been set aside for the elected officers of our Associations only. We will spend two days together exploring ways in which we can improve communication, strengthen our fraternal structure, and improve the meetings we conduct twice a year for our membership. If you are an elected officer of your Association, or if you become one during your annual meeting this summer and fall, make sure you register to attend our special seminar October 29 – November 1 in Branson, Missouri. Your Regional Manager will be able to supply you with details.

Would all of our Fellows and Pilgrims please rise? Every fall, we issue two letters of appeal – one to the holders of the Fellowship Degree of Honor, mailed October 27, Mooseheart Founder's Day, and one in December to the members who hold the highest Degree of our Order, the Pilgrim Degree of Merit. This year, in response to those mailings, we received a total of \$83,815.00 in non-deductible contributions from those men who have been elevated to these honorary Degrees. These contributions covered expenses related to the conferral of both Degrees, but also this year were applied toward the purchase of new ceremonial regalia for the Pilgrim Conferral in the House of God, which you will be able to see during the parade of Pilgrims tomorrow morning. The head-gear and robes of the Pilgrim ceremonial regalia were all more than fifty years old and deteriorating badly. The men standing before you right now, along with those not able to be in attendance, deserve your recognition for covering expenses which otherwise would have had to be taken out of Moose International operating revenue. Let's give them a round of applause.

Last year, at the close of my report, I requested that each of you return home and accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. Most of you did, and I certainly appreciate your follow-through. However, we always seem to have those members who, no matter what we do, we cannot please.

Throughout this past year I continue to hear feedback from men who complain that we "eliminated the enrollment ritual" and "did away with ritual competition". Read my lips! We did not eliminate the enrollment ritual. We introduced an alternative method of enrollment that was optional for Lodges to adopt. I repeat – an alternative method of enrollment that was optional for Lodges to adopt. And we did not eliminate ritual competition. We realize the importance of ritual and its place in our Order. What we did, was to move competition to the 2nd Degree of our Order where it would have an even greater impact in spreading fraternalism. Why did we make this move? Simply because, for many years, Lodges were not doing as mandated by the General Laws, in that many enrollment ritual ceremonies were conducted with members – not necessarily even officers – reading the parts from the book – and generally, not even doing a good job of

reading. This situation was an embarrassment to the fraternity. Gentlemen, it's time to quit the whining and sniping and move forward with the program!

We have not eliminated new-member indoctrination; what we have done is to offer additional resources with an extremely informative multi-media New Member Welcome Packet. Now, every new Lodge and Chapter member receives the same information; told in the same manner. This information comes to them with their membership card. And, they can share this DVD and printed material with their friends, neighbors and associates!

Lodges and Chapters need to continue to conduct their orientation programs in order to bring new members together to hear what is happening locally; when are the meetings; what are the family activities; what services are being provided to the community; where is help needed; what role do you want me to play? Don't miss this opportunity to strengthen your fraternal program by involving new members from the get-go. Let them know from the very beginning that they are essential in building membership and in participating in your activities. Nothing has changed regarding indoctrination and orientation. It has simply been improved. Let's get on with it!

We have assembled in this great city to communicate that which has happened since last we met, and to introduce the programs of tomorrow. In addition, voting members of the Supreme Lodge of the Loyal Order of Moose will vote on numerous changes to the General Laws. These changes have been in the hands of the individual Lodges, in accordance with the procedure set forth in the General Laws and have been available online so that all members could have the opportunity to review the proposed changes and voice their opinion. Once again, we have those few members in our Order who choose not to accentuate the positive, but instead promote the negative. Some of them made statements on the Internet that were far from the truth; statements such as "Moose International is encouraging everyone to come to Chicago to vote on the proposed changes to the General Laws, but it's a joke. You know what will happen. The changes will be read on the floor, a motion will be made and seconded, the gavel will fall, and the Supreme Governor will announce that the motion is carried." Wrong!

What happens is that the membership discusses the proposed changes in their Lodge meetings. Their feedback is sent to the General Governor, Director General and other staff at Moose International. The Judiciary Committee holds an open session a day prior to the scheduled vote; all to make sure the Order knows both sides before the call for the vote is taken. With technology today, we are also able to monitor discussion on the Internet. For the second year in a row, I want to express my appreciation to Michael Fagan, Joe Streiff and others who moderate and contribute to the website at loyalorderofmoose@yahoo.com. While not an official site of Moose International, this site affords members of the Order the opportunity to express their opinion regarding the operation of Moose International – our policies and procedures – and receive answers to questions about Lodge, Chapter and Moose Legion operations. It is well maintained and operated most effectively.

Two of the proposed changes to the General Laws received considerable attention on the website. And as can be imagined, these two items produced the most email and snail mail to the General Governor, Director General and others at Moose International. Let me address both of these proposed changes as they have both brought controversy to this convention.

The first change that has brought volumes of correspondence to Moose International is the proposal to lower the qualifying age of membership to eighteen years. Since roughly the mid-nineties, the Supreme Council has been requested by various members – especially in Canada – to change the qualifying age for membership in the Moose to eighteen. More discussions have taken place regarding this subject than I could possibly relate to you. The Judiciary Committee deliberated long and hard before recommending to the Supreme Council that the amendment be included in their report to this convention. Lodges were notified. The Supreme Council believed the move would be healthy for the organization for numerous reasons, including the following:

- 18 year olds are asked to be ready to give their life for their country on the battlefield
- 18 year olds are eligible to vote for the President of the United States
- 18 year olds have proven, in our own Youth Awareness Program, that they have attained a level of mature thinking and are instilled with the appropriate values to desire to be of service to other people less fortunate

- 18 year olds are already a part of our Family Activities Program
- A younger membership is needed in the Order
- 18 year olds could learn how to chair a committee, establish and maintain a budget, set goals and achieve them appropriately
- There are 18 year olds who demonstrate proven leadership abilities
- 18 year olds would be able to work on projects and programs together with their moms and dads, and grandparents
- The Family Fraternity would be strengthened in numbers, in energy, and in creativity.

And the list continues.

Those opposed to this amendment held the position that the only reason that Moose International wanted this change was to add more members and collect additional ABCD and per capita. In addition, those against the change believed that eighteen year olds in our social quarters would heighten the probability of underage drinking.

The Supreme Council considered that possibility and disregarded the validity of the argument because:

- First, all Lodges are required to have bartenders who have been trained in the proper serving of alcohol.
 - Second, members under the age of 21 would have specially colored membership cards to distinguish them from members 21 and older.
 - Third, if our Moose Family Centers were conducting business as suggested by Moose International, young men and women would already be utilizing the social quarters as part of a Teen Club or with their parents at Family Activities sponsored by the Lodge.
- The Grand Council of the Women of the Moose received permission from the Supreme Council to change their General Laws, thereby permitting women to apply for membership at age 18, and that change was scheduled to go into effect on June 1 of this year.

Thanks to the Yahoo website discussions and feedback from members throughout North America, we learned that this change would cause significant problems with local laws in many

states and municipalities. For example, in Pennsylvania you cannot be present in the social quarters if you are under 21, unless you are accompanied by a parent, a guardian or under proper supervision of a person who is at least 25 years of age. In other areas, anyone under 21 would have to leave the premises at 9:00 PM - member or not. And there were other issues.

So the Supreme Council realized that this amendment was going to cause legal problems for various fraternal units, and possible discriminatory issues among members, and earlier this month they requested the Judiciary Committee to rescind the amendment – which they have. The Grand Council of the Women of the Moose then revised their request to the Supreme Council to change their General Laws returning the required age of membership to 21, and the Supreme Council granted approval.

The second issue had to do with officers of the Women of the Moose serving on the House Committee. The House Committee would comprise the elected officers of both the Lodge and the Chapter – meaning that no members would be appointed, but that all would be selected through the election process of their Lodge or Chapter. This would give the members of the Lodge and Chapter a voice in the activities conducted in the social quarters; menu selection; price setting; disciplinary actions; maintaining decorum; maintaining a clean, bright and friendly facility. Sounded like a great idea.

However, some of our more cynical members felt that Moose International was trying to “slip in Joint Management”. This was not another attempt at Joint Management, as it was known before. It was simply joint management of the social quarters. (Perhaps, in some cases, our social quarters would end up making a profit.) Some members complained that women didn’t pay the same amount of dues and therefore shouldn’t have the right to serve on the committee; or they felt that Chapters should pay half of any losses from the social quarters’ operation; they wanted the Jr. Past Governor and the Jr. Graduate Regent to serve on the committee even though those two officers are not elected for the term at hand.

We became so concerned with petty issues such as these, that we overlooked the much more important issues - major issues such as in the State of Michigan, where we have been

warned that if women do not serve on the board that controls the liquor premises that the liquor licenses for all Lodges will be revoked. There are other states where similar issues exist.

However, there are states where women cannot serve on the committee because the license is technically issued to the Lodge only; and there are no women members of the Lodge. Again, we would be putting some Lodges in jeopardy by this change rather than helping them. So at the request of the Supreme Council, the Judiciary Committee has rescinded this amendment.

We would have re-submitted an amendment that any Lodge wishing to have women on the House Committee could request a dispensation from the General Governor and he could grant the permission. In that way, Lodges seeking to comply with state liquor laws could make the change where necessary and Lodges wishing to become better organized and better represented by all their members – men and women – could also make the request. This, however, could not be done because we were within the thirty-day requirement of the General Laws of notifying Lodges; so now we will either have to wait until next July in Nashville, or institute a pilot program.

The bottom line is that the Supreme Council and the Judiciary Committee have listened to your concerns and weighed the issues as to how they affect the entire fraternity – not just a select few – and acted accordingly.

During my report to you last year, I mentioned M&Ms, and two of the Ms were membership and money. I explained to you the great impact these had on the future of our Order. You will hear from Executive Director Jan Fregulia on Tuesday, but I am pleased to tell you that during these difficult times, you have, through your generosity, enabled us to report a net increase in contributions to the Endowment Fund of roughly a quarter million dollars. More and more members are participating in the Gimme Five program – although we have a long way to go. We had more members qualify for the League of Guardians this year by contributing a minimum of one thousand dollars to Moose Charities. Their recognition night is Tuesday. You will see many of them march into the Convention Extravaganza and receive preferred seating. You listened and you acted accordingly. Thank you!

What's our current financial situation? I told you earlier in the report that, at the direction of the Supreme Council, we took a serious look at staffing, budget, etc. and made changes we believed were necessary. Chief Financial Officer Joe Mech just reported to the Supreme Council that, for the first time in more than 20 years, Moose International has experienced an increase in cash flow, and, for the first time in over 15 years, Moose International has put more money into its investment portfolio than it has withdrawn to pay bills; and, this took place in a year when money was scarce. Once again, you are to be commended for your loyalty and dedication to our cause of caring for kids in need and senior members. You are truly beyond belief!

Regarding membership, Grand Chancellor Barb McPherson and Director of Membership Darrell O'Brien have some great accomplishments to share with you. The Women of the Moose broke all records with their accomplishments in membership production. Listen to this. Every single territory of the Women of the Moose achieved its production goal. Yes, EVERY territory. The Loyal Order of Moose had its biggest membership production in April in thirty-two years. And there is so much more. Don't miss the sessions where membership accomplishment will be reported. Given the economic circumstances in which these accomplishments were achieved, you will be amazed.

I am going to ask you to again return to your homes and communities with Membership and Money at the top of your priority list - and to it I am going to ask you to add Marketing. We must boast of our accomplishments and the many good works we do in our communities; we must tell others of the many benefits of membership; we must spread the word of our good deeds to all our members, and to community leaders; we must ask someone to join our program each and every opportunity we get. I'm counting on you.

In today's time it too often appears that people join for the benefit, not the cause. They don't understand, or don't immediately value, what we do at Mooseheart, nor do they understand our program of serving our aged members at Moosehaven. We must have a strong marketing effort at the Lodge level to educate our membership. Members have to be aware of and be loyal to their commitment to 'give of their substance' by donating their time and money and to 'strengthen the defending circle' by sponsoring new members.

You may remember that not too many years ago, membership in the Loyal Order of Moose was in excess of 1,300,000 members. Through reasons we have discussed during our conventions and conferences, and through our fall seminars, we have lost, in our Lodges alone, 600,000 members. Leaving out the Women of the Moose and Moose Legion per capita, if we would simply have each of our Lodge members do nothing more than sponsor one member next year, we would produce 700,000 new members at \$30.00 ABCD we would realize \$21 million annually in ABCD Dollars alone. That would cover the entire Mooseheart budget and nearly half of the Moosehaven Budget.

There are those who would destroy our Order, given the opportunity. They continually tear down our programs; they fail to support membership efforts; they neglect to fulfill their obligation to give of their substance. They would rather spread dissension and negativity, thereby becoming part of the problem we face on a daily basis; a problem that causes us to experience a growth rate slower than we should be experiencing.

My remarks to you this evening have been focused on attempting to show you the solution, and here it is in summary:

- Support our programs designed to increase membership in our Lodges, our Chapters and our Moose Legions. Invite your friends to join!
- Hold fast to the strong principles and precepts of our Order
- Praise the members who are loyal to our cause
- Build upon our supportive fraternal units and Associations
- Continually search for new and dedicated leaders
- Give 'till it hurts

Well, there you have it! I have just shared with you the solution to our problem. You can be part of the problem – or you can choose to be a piece of the solution. Hence, the theme for next year's membership program – “Be A Piece of the Solution”. Details of this brand-new, and innovative sponsor program, will be shared with you by Director of Membership Darrell O'Brien.

Supreme Governor Jim Gallagher and Grand Regent Marion Friend have led us through a very tough year. We have spent much of the time in stormy weather. But you have shown that you were determined to dance in the rain – and dance in the rain we all did.

We never lost sight of the fact that the storms will pass, and fair weather will prevail. Little Orphan Annie said it best when she sang –

Have a great convention!