



“...A SOLEMN CEREMONY, HEAVY WHEN BOURNE WITH SOLITUDE, BECOMES LIGHTER AND HARMONIOUS WHEN GATHERED TOGETHER IN FRATERNAL FAITH.”

I had the privilege of attending the Celebration of Life for Pat Westlake this last 22 May 2022. The Ceremony was held at Victor Valley Lodge 1808, but there were attendees from other Lodges as well, most notably Apple Valley 1810. Our loss of our co-worker and Lodge Member Pat, who was so much a part of our lives, and did so much for our Lodges since 1994, came after her years of struggling and I know I speak for us all when I say she now is in peace. While it is customary that many family members are in attendance, there were but a few. Likewise the Officers of the lodge whose member has passed are normally present, but because of other reasons, once again ...only a few. Those in attendance, were strong in their congregation.

“...AGAIN, WE ARE REMINDED OF THE FRAILTY OF HUMAN LIFE...”

The four Participants in the Funeral Service ,Charlene Mead, Noreen Sprague, Brenda Grani, and Donna Gilmore, gave such presence to the Ritual, one could do nothing but be attentive without holding another thought in one’s mind. As sometimes happens we were delayed, waiting for some to arrive, all of us in anticipation of what was to transpire. Just before the Commencement of the Funeral Ceremony, Noreen Sprague gave a descriptive background of what was to happen and with the announcement that few family members were in attendance. With these opening remarks, Noreen Sprague wasted no time in establishing an easy rapport with those in attendance. The four Participants dressed in their Cap and Gown, Red Stole Regalia placed themselves behind the Podium just aside of the Alter table with appropriate picture and flowers, further creating a scene of reverent intimacy.

“...IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY, THE FRIENDSHIP WE SHARED FILLED OUR HEARTS WITH PRIDE AND JOY...”

How many times in our Fraternal past have we attended these Ceremonies and Rituals that are so much a part of us? But what are our Rituals? Surely we realize Rituals are not habits like the daily routines we provide for in our lives. Many years ago Rituals provided a sort of Mystic Symbolism to illustrate a belief. In our Moose, we know our Rituals are there to prove the reality of our Mission and who we are. A Ritual must have several qualities in it. A Ritual must prove a point through illustration and it must contain in it an activity which provides us with knowledge and inspiration; like a regimen of exercise or mental etude. As to Funeral Ceremonies, do we politely excuse ourselves by claiming we didn't know the member that well? As Officers of a Lodge we took an oath, and this surely should be realized as a moral requirement to attend. We are always stronger together. And what of these Women of the Moose, Chapter Officers, these ladies that with their vast knowledge serve as mentors to men and women of the Moose alike? To Charlene, Noreen, Brenda, and Donna, As International Ambassador, I salute you for giving us the dignity and professional performance of a Ceremony as special as this. For this is not just a ceremony of Passing, it is a Ritual that revitalizes us, reminds us, and encircles us. Charlene Mead with your skill and experience, Noreen with your attention to Pomp and Circumstance-just doing things right, Brenda with your presence and compassion, and Donna with an assurance that comes from your knowledge; I say thank you is not enough. How long will we see the Ritual of the Funeral Service carried out with the knowledge and decorum with these women of the Chapter dressed impeccably in their regalia; Caps and Gowns, Red Stole's with such clear presence and direction in the Service/Ritual? Not just memorized to read, but with meaning. The German language gives us a word "Auswendig", which literally translated means "...by heart, knowing inside out".

"...FLOWERS ARE THE HIGHEST EXPRESSION OF NATURES LOVELINESS. WHITE SYMBOLIZES PURITY. THE MEMBERS OF VICTOR VALLEY CHAPTER PLACE THESE FLOWERS BESIDE PAT WESTLAKE AS AN EXPRESSION OF OUR AFFECTION."



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Pictured above left to right: Charlene Mead, Noreen Sprague, Brenda Grani, Donna Gilmore

The Eulogy was given by Donna Gilmore, and recollections by Noreen Sprague. Many in attendance gave a brief story or reminiscences of the good times they experienced knowing Pat.

Among us at the the Funeral Service/Celebration of Life were Pilgrim Brother Ray Hungate, Fellows Ken Sprague, Mark Lewis, Tom Waller, and myself-Bill Jackson, along with quite a few Lodge Members and a few members of Pat Westlake's family. Pat, a past Sr. Regent and a Collegiate, first joined the Moose in 1994 at the Pomona Lodge, transferred to the Fontana Lodge, and finally to the Victor Valley Lodge where she served over twenty-five years. She was an expert on Taxes and generously helped many Lodges over the years.

“COMFORT US IN OUR LOSS, LOOK WITH COMPASSION AND TENDERNESS UPON HER FAMILY AND SUPPORT THEM BY THE STRENGTH OF FAITH.”

By performing Rituals, such as the Funeral Service, we unlock the doors for renewal, consistency, and mindfulness. Rituals provide a renewal or binding reminder of who we are and why we are here. Our Rituals link us as one, stabilize us and keep us focused. By performing these ceremonies we demonstrate commitment, facilitate cooperation, and increase cohesion. Please give thought to the words and benefits of our Services and Rituals. We as members of our great Fraternal Organization have a moral obligation to attend, and those of us who are Lodge/Chapter Officers, District State or Moose Legion Officers, have a duty to attend. Let's not ever lose sight or let these Rituals go away...especially by finding an excuse not to attend. Find more reasons to not only attend but understand with our participation we are giving back in the easiest way possible, our expression of devotion and faith.

Once again, Charlene Mead, Noreen Sprague, Brenda Grani, Donna Gilmore, we are indebted to you for once again binding us together and by expressing your knowledge, renewing our faith.

Bill Jackson

International Ambassador