

THE YEARS THAT WERE

***Soli Deo Gloria***

by Lorraine Williams Johnson

**Dedicated to Frances “Fay” Miller**

**MRSPA President 2017 - 2019**

Let me tell you a story - it won't take very long  
And when you've heard it - you'll probably sing a song  
About the perseverance and dedication of a lady named Fay  
And a whole bunch of folks who helped her save the day.

Now Fay was elected President of the MRSPA group  
But on the day of her installation, she sat at home drinking soup  
Yes, soup, folk, because you see - Fay's back shot out of place  
And by His goodness and infinite mercy did not fall on her face.

So the commitment was read, and to it she agreed  
And the outgoing officers and members promised to help her succeed  
And although she couldn't step up to the plate, she didn't hesitate  
To take the reins and proceed to become the head of state.

So Fay was installed and the membership relaxed near and far  
As she pledged to lead MRSPA to a higher and brighter star  
And she proudly proclaimed her message would be  
***Your Membership Matters***, to everyone, not just to me.

She followed her doctor's advice and began to heal;  
Her leadership had such a mountain of zeal  
That everyone pitched in to set the boat afloat  
And started MRSPA on a voyage of infinite note.

A new E.D. was chosen; his tenure did not go well  
And before you knew it, things really did not gel  
And another E.D. was needed to set the ship aright  
Lest difficulty and chaos become MRSPA's plight.

But, what about the work that needed to be done?  
What about the business of the office to run?  
The lack of office leadership, at the top, had derailed  
It could cripple MRSPA's desire to sail.

Well, less you cry and lose hope  
Our leadership and office staff did not reach the end of their rope  
But surveyed the situation before a bigger problem arose  
And determined to be successful and hold their course.

In the midst of the darkness and uncertain days  
One almost forgot that a piece was missing.  
Our President, with the help of other leaders, and office staff  
Kept things going and the organization did not miss a beat.

So another Search Committee went to work, very fast.  
Its duty it did not shirk; it advertised via email and blast  
And another Executive Director was secured, at last.  
One that seemed suited to this challenging task.

In the meantime, Fay and Matilda were on the road  
Visiting locals and getting MRSPA's story told.  
They visited the familiar and unfamiliar alike  
And Fay's sense of duty was always in sight.

The Search Committee concluded its search.

It had found a perfect match for the position  
One acquainted with education's issues and transition  
One who had a kinship with MRSPA's goals.

The light beamed steadily and everyone smiled  
We had worked hard but secured a perfect fit  
And the organization was righted anew  
With not a partial, but a full operating crew.

We had obtained a gem with experience galore  
And we knew that our ship would not go ashore  
And with activities working as they should  
The Association would continue to work for the membership's good.

Again, Fay and Matilda visited locals here and there  
And met MRSPA's membership everywhere  
For her work was constant, continuous, too  
And her dedication to the position she did not eschew.

With the help of the Board, Committees and office staff together  
She led the Association through uncertain weather  
And began to organize and rework documents anew  
As they prepared for the incoming newly-elected crew

But adversity reared its ugly head  
And the one who had so beautifully led  
The organization to a much greater height  
Was once again by adversity plagued.

In just one week, falls were taken by key leaders  
Illnesses caused others to side-step and pause  
And our leader once again was sidelined  
By personal illness and tragedy.

And once again, the organization seemed stymied.  
But from her home and her phone  
With the assistance of the E.D., the organization and office staff  
We continued to serve our members.

I told you the story would not take long  
And that we could burst out in a loud and happy song  
About an organization that understood and survived a hard time  
And continues to help its members enjoy retirement, just fine.

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**Mealtime Prayer**