



Franc Roads Radio Talk Show: *The Gifts of a Strong Chapter*

Skit description: Franc Roads and producer Hattie Briggs discuss chapter health with callers in this parody of the popular *Frasier* radio show.

Participants:

- ★ Franc: Can be seated at a skirted table with a sign reading, WSTAR on the skirt at the front of the table with a desk-top microphone and earphones.
 - ★ Hattie: Seated at a skirted table diagonal to Franc's. She needs her own microphone, headphones, and signs to hold up that say, ON AIR and OFF AIR.
 - ★ Callers: Seated behind a podium with microphone and simply go to the podium to speak.
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Hattie: (*Counts down with her fingers 3-2-1 and then holds up the ON AIR sign*).

Franc: Hello Listeners! We are live on Station WSTAR Radio. I am Dr. Franc Roads, here with my producer, Hattie Briggs. Our topic today is chapter health. We all want a healthy chapter! So, what can we do to help make it **strong** and healthy?

Hattie: Dr. Franc, our first caller is Judy, a chapter president, and she is worried about dwindling attendance at her chapter meetings.

Franc: Welcome to the show, Judy. You say you're worried about dwindling attendance? I'm listening.

Judy: Thank you for taking my call, Dr. Franc. I am a new chapter president and I have taken note after roll call at our last few meetings that our attendance count

has dropped. I don't understand it. It isn't winter. Our "snowbirds" are home!
I'm worried it's me!

Franc: Oh my dear Judy, it's not you! You have given yourself and your chapter a gift by saying yes to serving as president and you recognize that strong attendance strengthens your chapter. Here are some ways you can help increase attendance at your chapter meetings. Practice conducting efficient business meetings. Your meetings will be streamlined if you and the other chapter officers are familiar with your duties and your committees are empowered to make decisions outside the meeting to bring back to the chapter for approval. Interesting, concise programs, perhaps from the Monthly Hot Spot sent to you by your state membership committee member, will also help bring interest and leave extra time at your meetings that members wish to have in order to visit with each other.

Judy: Dr. Franc, you are right, I have heard a few members mention while leaving the meeting that they wish they had more time to visit. Since we meet in the evenings do you think carpooling would also help boost attendance?

Franc: Absolutely, Judy. Ask your members to call the transportation chairman if they need a ride to the meeting and she can coordinate transportation. This is essential for Day or Night chapters as some members are no longer comfortable driving.

Judy: I've been thinking of setting an attendance goal from time to time at meetings with prior communication to our members. If we meet the challenge I could think of a special surprise or treat as a reward for my chapter.

Franc: Go for it, Judy!

Judy: I was also wondering if after the meeting our membership chairman could send a summary of the meeting to each member.

Franc: The minutes may NOT be sent to members, but a brief summary-YES, so long as membership issues such as stating a name presented for membership is

excluded from the summary. The summary does help absent members feel they are not out of the loop when they return to the next meeting. Most importantly Judy, appoint a Care Committee. They could contact absent members personally and let them know they were missed and make sure they are o.k. At the first meeting of the even numbered months make new assignments so that all members will have an opportunity to serve on this committee. That way contact will be received from different Sisters not only from the telephone or membership committees appointed for the year.

Judy: Hmmmm, express a loving concern for each Sister. That's your best advice yet, Dr. Franc!

Franc: Thank you Judy. You can't go wrong when you follow the Objects and Aims. Good-bye and good luck, Judy!

Hattie: Dr. Franc, we have another caller on the line. Her name is Susan from Columbus and she sounds a little upset. She says she is considering going inactive.

Franc: I'm so glad you called, Susan. I am listening.

Susan: (*sounding forlorn*) Dr. Franc, I have changed jobs and I rarely get to my P.E.O. meetings. I feel like I don't contribute much to my chapter and I feel like I am just being a bother to them. I guess that means I **have** to go inactive.

Franc: First of all, what you have described to me, Susan, is NEVER a reason to go inactive. Secondly, no sister is ever a bother to her chapter. So let's drop both those thoughts right now.

Susan: Well, Dr. Franc maybe I used the wrong word when I say bother, it's just that the members are all so gung ho about P.E.O. About ten years ago I was a PCE recipient and I was so honored when they asked me to join P.E.O. Now, it seems like I am a disappointment to them.

Franc: No, Susan. I am sure they understand your situation.

Susan: Well, I don't know; the president of my chapter asked me if I would like to join another chapter that meets at a different time. I think she called it a lateral transfer. Does that sound like they are trying to get rid of me?

Franc: Oh, no. They are trying to make sure you are in a chapter where you can be involved because it fits YOUR schedule. They are being kind.

Susan: (*Puzzled*) Well, I didn't know that. Is it really o.k. to transfer to another chapter Dr. Franc?

Franc: Yes, Susan, it is more than o.k. Please do something for me. Take a little time to sit down and really look at your schedule and get an idea of the best time and day of the week for you to attend a P.E.O. meeting. With that in mind, communicate with your chapter president. She has a form in her supplies accessible to her on the International website called, *A Lateral Transfer Introduction*. She or both of you can then access the website under the Directory of President's tab and look for a chapter in your city that coordinates with your schedule. She can send the form to those chapter presidents and the state organizer. If a chapter with your preferred day and time are not available, contact your state organizer, you may want to help organize a new chapter in your section of the city with other P.E.O.s in your same situation and include several other women you know in close proximity that could be prospective members.

Susan: (*Almost in disbelief*) I didn't know we could do that. Oh, Dr. Franc, you have made me so happy. I would love to be in a chapter where I could participate fully. I believe in P.E.O.'s mission and that is why I joined in the first place. I am not going inactive; I am going to transfer.

Franc: Excellent, Susan. Transferring helps strengthen the sisterhood either laterally or by a member moving. For the transferring member, her involvement in P.E.O. doesn't skip a beat and for the chapter, she just may be the shot-in-the-arm they needed. Dare I say, just what the doctor ordered?

Susan: Very clever, Dr. Franc. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Franc: Good- bye and thank you Susan!

Hattie: Dr. Franc, I have a P.E.O. on the line that is a loyal listener on our Sister station in Toronto! Her name is Gwen and she and her chapter would like your advice on attracting and retaining chapter officers.

Franc: Gwen, how good of you to call! I am always delighted to hear from our Canadian listeners.

Gwen: Thank you, Dr. Franc. I've listened to your show for years and much of your advice has helped strengthen our chapter.

Franc: That's wonderful. How can I help you and your chapter?

Gwen: I was on the nominating committee this past year and we had a difficult time filling chapter offices. I know it's only June, but I would like to gain advice to share with my chapter president and the future nominating committee on officer recruitment.

Franc: That's excellent, Gwen. It is never too early to have a plan for officer recruitment to strengthen your chapter. Since your program chairman is probably planning right now for next year's programs, why not suggest to her a short program in early fall titled, "The Duties of the Officers", at a regular meeting? Although it's true that each officer is visible and has a role to play at every meeting, many members may not know what goes on "behind the scenes." Each officer could give a short presentation (about 1-3 minutes) about the duties of her office and the enjoyment of holding that office, to alleviate that "fear of the unknown."

Gwen: That's a great idea. Is there anything else I could suggest doing right now?

Franc: Yes, Gwen. Ask your president if she would consider appointing the nominating committee in late fall so they can start recruiting early. When asking a member to be an officer the nominating chairman should always begin by saying, for example, “We believe you have the qualities and skills to be an excellent treasurer. We would be honored to have you serve as our treasurer.” Not, “We can’t find anyone to take this office and you are our last chance to fill it.”

Gwen: Uh-oh! I think the latter is the way I was asked to serve an office one year.

Franc: Well Gwen, the former statement is better and furthermore if a member responds I’m interested, but I wish I could try it out first, then she could act as the officer pro tem for a couple of meetings, with the current officer in attendance to guide her. I like to call that, “pre-election mentoring”.

Gwen: I think pre-election mentoring could really alleviate some hesitations about taking an office. What else could our chapter do right now?

Franc: You know what Gwen? Your chapter may be very surprised to learn that there are a couple of members who would really like to serve in an entry-level office such as chaplain or guard for the first time, but believe they have to wait to be asked by the nominating committee. By all means ask your president to let the members know that if they are interested in serving they can let her know at any time. If you don’t ask, you won’t know.

Gwen: How important is an officer transition meeting following the election and installation of officers in March?

Franc: Very important, Gwen, in fact it is a constitutional requirement. It could be scheduled in the yearbook nearly a year in advance so all incoming, outgoing and repeating officers are prepared to attend instead of scrambling for a date for the meeting at the last minute. The meeting is also a convenient time to set the chapter goals for adoption at the next regular meeting.

Gwen: I feel that our upcoming nominating committee will be well-prepared for their duties with the advice you have shared, Dr. Franc. I feel very strongly that one of the best ways to feel like you are an active part of an organization is to become involved in the organization.

Franc: Well-said, Gwen!

Hattie: Dr. Franc, we have time for one more caller.

Franc: Excellent, Hattie. Who is our last caller?

Hattie: Dr. Franc, I have Martha on the line with a request for advice on an issue I know you will want to discuss.

Franc: Thank you, Hattie. Go ahead, Martha. I'm listening.

Martha: Dr. Franc, we need younger members in our chapter, but every young woman I would like to introduce to P.E.O. is too busy. I'm sure she would not be interested in another commitment and take on more than she already has.

Franc: Martha, that's where you are hitting a roadblock with that kind of thinking. Don't decide **for** someone that they are too busy. P.E.O.s **are** busy women and we all know that if you want to get a job done – give it to a busy woman. If you feel someone would make a good member, then invite her to learn more about P.E.O. and then let **her** decide if she is interested in accepting your gift of P.E.O. Women make time for what is important to them. I might add that when you are seeking younger members, please remember that young is relative.

Martha: O.K., how can I begin to explain how important P.E.O. is?

Franc: The key to attracting women today is with an emphasis on the projects. Women of all ages are busy women and busy women want to feel that when they give their time, it is for a worthwhile cause. In these tough economic times, P.E.O. more than ever, is providing a solution to the financial concerns for education of so

many women. We need to engage our members so they enthusiastically show Pride in our Projects.

Martha: What about explaining the strong friendships that are a part of P.E.O.?

Franc: Martha, I remember on a recent show that a young member said she did not join P.E.O. for the friendships, but rather the projects. I remember her statement vividly because she said she had plenty of friends, but had made P.E.O. a part of her life because of what we accomplish. Obviously, **we** both know that strong friendships become a wonderful, enriching part of P.E.O. life, but it may not be **today** what draws members in, but rather something that evolves with time.

Martha: I can understand that a new approach in this day and age for recruiting new members may be in order. We initiated a new member who is a high school teacher about two years ago. I think she is in her mid-fifties. Immediately she became very interested in Ohio Scholarships and asked to serve on the committee. Because of her efforts, we are sponsoring an applicant. She is becoming an expert on this project and also seems to come up with some fundraising ideas we have never thought of. She also has a sense of humor that brings a smile to everyone's face.

Franc: Martha, your new member is in the age group I classify as the “worker bees”. In fact every age group possesses valuable assets that strengthen a chapter. A chapter rich in age diversity is blessed with a variety of talents, skills, energy and wisdom. One way to help build an age diverse chapter of an ideal four generations is to initiate members' daughters and granddaughters in your chapter. Even if they do not live in the same area as a member they can still enjoy the gift of P.E.O. membership in your chapter because the residency requirement is waived. This is known as Linear Initiation and it has been extended to daughter-in-laws, sister-in-laws and all other female lineal descendants. Hopefully they will take your gift of membership and transfer to a chapter in their area.

Martha: Oh Dr. Franc, I'm glad you mentioned that, we were thinking about having a potluck social with our daughters instead of our BILs this year.

Franc: That sounds great Martha, but I have another suggestion, how about a potluck with the entire family! Before dinner you could take a few minutes to watch the DVD, "*Women Helping Women Reach for the Stars*". It could start a dialogue about the significance of P.E.O. with your family members. They may have only recognized P.E.O. previously as that secret meeting mom has once a month with her girlfriends. Our spouses, daughters and **sons** need to know how important P.E.O. Membership is **and** to us personally. If we become less communicative and dependent on them some day, they will already know our wish to retain active membership for the rest of our lives.

Martha: *(a little out of breath)* Dr. Franc, my mind is racing with ideas for my chapter right now. I wish I would have had a pen and paper to write this all down. Could you post this advice on your website?

Franc: I certainly will, Martha. Thank you for listening. Well listeners, before we sign off today I would like to extend greetings to the visitors, delegates and members of convention attending the annual Convention of Ohio State Chapter this weekend as they explore the "Gifts of P.E.O." OSC President, Jean Evans, set forth challenges this past year that can strengthen your chapter; setting goals for membership, project giving and project sponsoring. Identifying what your chapter does well and how you can build upon it and doing something individually to advance your chapter's goals. I have a challenge for all of you as well. Exchange contact information with two P.E.O. Sisters you have met for the first time at the convention and network with one another this year. Communicate your personal P.E.O. passion, exchange ideas, share thoughts and information. You will gain inspiration, renewed enthusiasm and knowledge to share with your chapter.

Until next time, this is Dr. Franc Roads and producer, Hattie Briggs, wishing you good day and good chapter health.

Hattie: *(counts down 3-2-1 and holds up Off Air sign)*