



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

October 1, 2011

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Time marches on! Here we are in October already. Below is an October 1 letter from California Grand Warden Rick Boyles for your reading pleasure.

DMC invites you to submit your thoughts for the the future of Odd Fellowship. All "living entities" evolve, and if our Order is to continue as a living entity, we must evolve as well. The focus of DMC is simple: We must attract new members to survive as an Order; and to attract new members we cannot just rely on the status quo - we must evolve.

And a reminder: Our DMC list is growing and expanding! If you have a member of the Order who understands that change and evolution of our fraternity is necessary, who has indicated an interest in being added to our DMC e-mail matrix, please send me their name(s) and e-mail address(es). Thank you.

Fraternally,

Dave Rosenberg

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The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is an admirable group. We carry no preconceived notions. We have no hidden agenda. There are many raucous and abrasive groups in existence. There are some that preach hatred or divisiveness. Our group preaches love and inclusion. All walks of life are welcome. No one may be excluded. This is an admirable trait of which we should all be proud. There are those among us though who seem to be bent upon exclusivity, who would seek to prevent newspeak or new thoughts. Who do our thoughts turn to when we think of newspeak, when we think of fresh thinking? Our founding fathers, of course, those who founded our great nation. A nation which becomes greater by the day and by each action it takes. Our group can learn a lesson from our founding fathers. Because, of all the great things our wonderful nation has learned to do, it has learned enough to evolve. It has promoted inclusiveness. It has stated that all men are created equal, and stands by this very fact. We must evolve as well.

235 years ago, much of our population could not read or write. The most important news was often heard by listening to the town crier, who would announce the news in the town square. Those who learned to read and write became the privileged and often were the highest ranking officials. When the Odd Fellows were founded in America, generally the principal



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members of a lodge were those who could read and write. Other members committed to memory their charges and the unwritten work, which was passed on by word of mouth. Our lodges banded together in order to provide security and sustenance to each member. Not only did the lodge depend upon each member, each member depended upon the lodge. Therefore, the lodge was an integral part of the member's life. The term Odd Fellows was a term of endearment meant to encompass the oddities and traits of friendship, love and truth. Although it was odd, it was also enviable. Each meeting, every member would wear his finest clothes, and go to lodge to listen to the lodge members as they related the news of public events, as they would affect the members, and members individually could express their thoughts or concerns.

Today, it is a much different world. All of us can read and write. No one needs to commit anything to memory as we have the guidebooks to guide our way. Most of us can happily state that our lives are self-sustaining, that whatever we do provides income for ourselves and our families. Therefore, lodges of all types have ceased to have an integral part in our lives. While a dinner out may be a welcome interlude to our home lives, it is no longer the necessity it once was. So then, the question presents itself, how does the lodge retain importance? How can it survive? Seen in this light, it becomes apparent that it needs to reinvigorate its own importance. It needs to announce to the town that surrounds it its meaning for existence, in this time, in this new world.

That is why we have sought to form this committee - Dedicated Members for Change. It is not a committee bent upon hatred or exclusion. It is a committee formed solely to reinvigorate membership. Those who seem to state they don't like one or two members from the committee miss the point. There is no one way to bring in members. They are as varied as each lodge and its members. So if you think your lodge is now viable, then you are in fine shape, and the rest of us envy you. But for many of us, our lodges are shrinking, our membership aging, and our purpose for existence quickly fading away. However we look at it, we must do something. Sheer numbers bear this out. There are states and whole jurisdictions now faced with extinction. Sovereign Grand Lodge now encourages widespread change. Anyone doubting this fact, may question any SGL official, or read any new document being sent by SGL. It is time to wake up! We need to stop bickering between ourselves and stand up and welcome change. Change is coming, whether we on a personal level want it or not.

Last year, the Dedicated Members for Change, held a dinner at Grand Lodge where we attracted 90 members, many of whom paid \$39 each, to attend our inaugural dinner meeting at Grand Lodge. In our first year, we attracted almost 50% of Grand Lodge attendees. This coming year, our goal is 75%. We are going to have the dinner very near, yet away from the Grand Lodge hotel, so that all may attend without censure or embarrassment, as there were some who were specifically told not to attend. Again, we have no purpose other than to share ideas of how to garner members. Holding grudges or encouraging negativity is no longer an option. We



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will be able to offer a better meal to all attendees at a better price. All attendees who have insight as to how to attract new members will be entitled to speak. Some, who have invigorated their own lodges, will be encouraged to speak. We count many prominent members in our group already, and will welcome any and all new members with open arms. In closing, we are all-inclusive, and love every member equally. If you are a member who does not seek change, we envy you, but unfortunately, for many, change is imperative and welcome, and the sooner we initiate change, the more likely we will be able to grow and survive.

In Friendship, Love, and Truth, Rick Boyles