



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

December 20, 2011

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I was delighted to read the message from Sovereign Grand Master Delmar Burns in the November-December IOOF News. Our SGM sent a message to all Odd Fellows and in the strongest possible terms said: "You must come out of your Lodge Room and be known in your community as Odd Fellows and Rebekahs building a better world in your community." I couldn't agree more. To grow and prosper as a fraternal order, we must reach out and be part of our communities, and we must engage in good community works. At the same time, we must bring the community into our Lodges. It is clearly the right thing to do - and it is also a great way to develop new members for our Lodges. However, too many of our Lodges remain isolated, with members operating only within their own four walls. It's no wonder that membership is declining.

One of the best ways to expose ourselves to our communities is to have "social meetings". DSGM Charles Renninger, at our last Grand Lodge, made it very clear that social meetings were perfectly permissible, and were not in any way against our Code. In fact, the Grand Lodge body has strongly supported and encouraged social meetings. At our last gathering in May, the Grand Lodge passed Grand Lodge Resolution #4 (which I had proposed) which encouraged our Lodges to hold social meetings "open to family members, prospective Lodge members, and invited members of the public, to gain a knowledge about the worthwhile programs and activities being presented and sponsored by an Odd Fellows Lodge without revealing any of the ritualistic, unwritten work and passwords of the order." These social meetings - which be held in conjunction with Rebekah Lodges - are a dandy way to expand the universe of Odd Fellowship.

So what are "social meetings"?

In this regard, I had an e-mail dialogue with Brother Renninger, and following is a listing of what one cannot do at a social meeting, and what one can do at a social meeting.

Here are things that are not permitted at a social meeting of an Odd Fellows Lodge:

- * No formal opening or closing of the meeting can be conducted.
- * No ritualistic work, secret work, passwords, grips or signs may be used.
- * No formal reports by officers or committees may be presented.
- * No collars may be worn.
- * No formal votes may be taken.



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Here are things that are permitted to be done at a social meeting of an Odd Fellows Lodge:

- * The social meeting may be open to members, applicants, potential applicants, family members and guests.
- * Officers, members, applicants, and guests may be introduced.
- * Informal discussion of plans for social events (e.g. dinners at the Lodge, bus trips, charitable events, Oktoberfest, etc.) may be had.
- * Participants can be informally polled to determine who may be attending events. Sign up sheets for attendance at future events may be circulated.
- * Joint social meetings with Rebekah Lodges may be held.
- * At a social meeting, informal discussion of members sick and in distress may be presented.
- * Members may wear pins and pocket jewels.

I pass this information on to all of you, and encourage you to schedule social meetings in the future. They are great ways to reach out to your community, encourage family by allowing your members to bring their spouses and children to the Lodge, bring in potential new members and expose them to the Lodge, and generally to increase your exposure to and viability in your communities. The Grand Lodge has already voted in favor of encouraging social meetings, so go for it! We have nothing to lose. And we have a lot to gain - specifically, new members.

And to the growing list of Dedicated Members for Change - may we wish you and your loved ones a happy and healthy holiday season.

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Dave Rosenberg