



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

February 11, 2012

Dear Members of the DMC,

Here is the latest article for our "newsletter", penned by Grand Warden Rick Boyles. I forward it to you for your reading pleasure. It's food for thought!

And allow me to remind you that we have our "Second Annual DMC Dinner" planned for the evening of Thursday, May 17 during Grand Lodge Sessions (no-host cocktails and drinks at 5 p.m. and dinner and brief program at 6 p.m.). We have reserved the entire dining room of El Torito Restaurant (just an easy four-minute walk from the front door of the Grand Lodge hotel) for this event. We're going to have a great time! This dinner promises to be one of the highlights during Grand Lodge and you won't want to miss it. And through the generosity of a number of DMC members and lodges, we are able to subsidize the cost of the dinner for the first 100 who reserve. For those first 100, the cost is a remarkable \$10 per person. So, make sure you get your reservation in early. Simply send your \$10 per person (payable to "Dave Rosenberg") to: Dave Rosenberg, Davis Odd Fellows Lodge, 415 Second St., Davis CA 95616.

Change is on the way!

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Dave Rosenberg

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Recently, I had the pleasure of speaking with the Grand Master from another state. I was shocked to hear from him that his state just had their annual Grand Lodge Sessions, and the attendance amounted to 50 members! We in California are somewhat complacent in our state because we still number in the thousands of members. Many of our functions still draw a hundred or more members. But consider this, just 25 years ago there were a great deal more members and functions held were much better attended. It is time that we put aside our differences and realize that we all face the same core issue. That issue is dwindling membership. Certainly, other groups are faced with this issue as well, but our focus is that of the issues dealing within the IOOF. The Masons, the Elks, the Lions, the Moose, all other groups must grapple with the subject of declining membership, but we should ask ourselves how do we retain relevance within today's world?



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Yet, there are some lodges that are very vibrant. I have had the good fortune to speak with a visiting member from Sweden where he told me they have lodges with hundreds of members. And, we have lodges in California that are making progress to be proud of. One of the traits I see at successful lodges is that they have members who share common interests. Believe it or not, there are some people who disagree with this. They feel that shared common interests make a lodge club-like. But this does not recognize our past. Our past is full of club-like behavior. In fact, during the gold rush, our lodges were formed principally with the ideals of providing shelter, sustenance and security. Was that not a club? During the great depression, our lodges certainly filled a need. Today, there is a need as well. Not for charity from the pocketbook, but rather, a charity of the heart, an openness for all human beings. Even today, and maybe especially today, people feel loneliness and seek the camaraderie of other people who may have a common bond, such as singing, game players, or maybe just a lively non-threatening place to share good friendship and open arms. Perhaps this is something we forget in lodges where only a few now attend, a willingness to open up our heart to strangers. I have spoken to long time members who freely admit that they would not know what to do with a new member. Are we aware that oftentimes a member joins and then leaves because they simply do not feel involved? Do we have the courage to question ourselves as to why people who joined us of their own free will now refuse to attend? In California, we still have thousands of members, but what percentage of these thousands is active?

We are fortunate in California, because we are large enough to still accept change. In some states, the membership has gotten so low, that change is almost impossible. Sovereign Grand Lodge is now announcing sweeping changes, and yet we still have members who feel that change is not necessary, but this almost borders on total blindness. In fact, this just emphasizes the general age of our order, and the fact that the older we all become, the more resistant we become to change. This is something; however, we have to resist - the fear of change. I can tell you that the lodges that I have visited that are growing are growing because they don't fear change, and the people there seem happy. That sounds funny, but perhaps it is the key, happiness. We need to ensure that our lodges are guided out of the absolute yearning for happiness, and not just frightened and tired agendas. It's time for all of us to seek out happiness for ourselves and our lodges, and it almost seems as if the membership may take care of itself. It's not the ritual that is written down that is chasing people away; it is the ritualistic behavior in our brains which is shutting off our oxygen supply.

One of my friends said that we think our committee has all the answers. No, I told him, we just don't ignore the question. Do we want more members? How do we get new members? Please help us find the happy path to the future!

We now number in the hundreds of members on our committee, and we seek nothing more than our order's survival. Even if you think we are stupid or on the wrong path, please help us



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find the right path. No one person has all the answers. Our committee shares no agenda but to strive for more members. On May 17, at Grand Lodge Sessions, we are reserving the entire restaurant at El Torito near Grand Lodge to hold our next annual dinner, for the inexpensive price of \$10 per person. Please join us, and feel free to add your voice to all those who already see the need for change and growth.

In Friendship, Love and Truth, Rick Boyles

We also endorse the following candidates at Grand Lodge, specifically:

Rod Metoyer, for Grand Master

Rick Boyles, for Deputy Grand Master

Dave Rosenberg, for Grand Warden