



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

March 8, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Attached to this DMC Newsletter is an article entitled "Moving Forward as an Order" from California Deputy Grand Master Rod Metoyer and California Deputy Grand Warden Rick Boyles. Please take a moment to read the article, and please consider making the article available to the members of your Lodge. The actions and options spelled out in the article are a major step forward in the evolution and progress of our Order. We are determined to halt the decline in membership of Odd Fellowship in California, and to (finally) start on the road to increasing membership in our Lodges.

The way forward envisions an increased emphasis in local actions which attract and retain new members in their 20's, 30's and 40's in terms of what interests THEM in joining a Lodge. What attracted folks to join Odd Fellowship in 1912 simply is no longer the case in 2012. Today and in the future, we have got to emphasize a 21st Century vision of fraternity, including: local community outreach, social activities within the Lodge, an increased emphasis in social meetings, more joint social meetings with our Rebekah Lodges, participation in the Membership Challenge Grant Program, and "best practices" assistance to those Lodges whose memberships have fallen below 15.

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Dave Rosenberg

Moving Forward as an Order

By DGM Rod Metoyer and GW Rick Boyles

At Grand Lodge sessions in 2011, a number of resolutions were presented by Brother Dave Rosenberg and the Davis Lodge which were adopted by votes of the representatives. These resolutions were discussed by the Grand Lodge Board of Directors, and the next step in this process is this letter. We write to alert you of these important resolutions, and we encourage you and your Lodge to discuss them and, ultimately, to implement them. We feel confident that our California Lodges can stop the decline in membership, and can bring in the new members we need to prosper as an Order.



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The resolutions make reference to the fact that the membership of Odd Fellows in this jurisdiction has shown a steady decline for over sixty-five years, including the loss of 198 Odd Fellows members and 469 Rebekahs in 2009, and that as of December 31, 2009, Odd Fellows had declined to 4,643 dues-paying members and Rebekahs had declined to 2,816 dues-paying members. In 2009 three Odd fellows Lodges and eight Rebekah Lodges lost their charters, were suspended or consolidated. At the end of 2009, there were over 40 Odd Fellows Lodges in California that had 15 or fewer members. And the stark reality is that many of our Lodges are aging – some Lodges show the youngest members in their sixties, having skipped one or two generations of potential members.

Obviously, this trend cannot continue.

The resolutions which were adopted at the 2011 Grand Lodge sessions, we believe, can reverse this trend. We commend them to you, urge you to discuss them in your Lodges, and most importantly, implement them. The intent behind these resolutions is to move our Order into the 21st Century, to make our fraternity relevant to the young men and women we need to bring into our Lodges, and thus to reverse the trend of declining membership. There are six resolutions that we invite you to consider:

Community outreach. Lodges must encourage and emphasize community outreach, community visibility, and good community and charitable works. Successful Lodges reach out into their communities and do projects in their communities. These successful Lodge know that member satisfaction is high when the Lodge does good community works. Further, these good community works allow Lodges to be more visible, thus encouraging interest in the fraternity by members of the community.

Good fellowship. Members and potential members want to be in a Lodge that provides a social network, and frankly, provides for a good time. In this regard, successful Lodges foster lots of good fellowship activities such as Lodge dinners, trips, game nights, movies nights, Lodge socials, and the myriad activities which encourage members to socialize and enjoy each other's company. When members enjoy their Lodge experience, satisfaction is high. This encourages members to bring in friends and acquaintances as potential new members.

Social meetings. Lodges are encouraged to have formal business meetings, but also to have social meetings. These social meetings are open to family members, prospective Lodge members and invited members of the public. This allows folks to get a sense of the worthwhile programs and activities sponsored by the Lodge, without revealing any of the ritualistic work and passwords of the Order. We can't always operate in secret. We have to be open as part of the community.



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Joint meetings. Odd Fellows and Rebekah Lodges are encouraged to hold joint social meetings. We are all part of the same Order, and we may find that working together, we can accomplish much more.

Membership challenge grant. This program was extended, and Lodges can receive up to \$100 for each new member that they bring into the Order. These funds can be used by Lodges to assist in recruitments efforts.

The 21st Century project. Finally, the Grand Lodge is in the process of developing the “21st Century Project” which will assist Lodges with less than 21 members to increase membership to a minimum of 21. We cannot be complacent about the need for new members, and this voluntary program will help. If your Lodge has less than 21 members, and would like to garner assistance to bring membership back up to 21, please contact one of us. We will be glad to put you in touch with members of Lodges which are growing – these members can share “best practices” with you. Who knows? They may suggest an approach that will really work to bring in those new members you want.

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