



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

March 15, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Welcome to March 15 or "the Ides of March". The term "the Ides of March" is viewed as the 15th of March - the day that Caesar was assassinated in the Roman Senate. But the word "ides" actually refers to every month. It comes from the Latin "idus" which means "half division" and was used to describe the approximate middle of each month. In fact, the "ides" of March, May, July and October is the 15th day of those months; and in the other months, the "ides" is the 13th day of the month. OK, so much for today's history and Latin lesson.

I can't tell you how many times I'm asked the question, "How did your Lodge start the process of change?" Members of other Lodges complain that whenever they want to make changes in the way the Lodge does business, they are met with fierce resistance from long-time older members who say things like, "That won't work" or "We can't do it that way." Tough question. No easy answers.

I can tell you that when I joined my Lodge in 2004, my Lodge had less than 40 members on the books, could barely scrape together a dozen members for a meeting, was virtually invisible in the community, and the Lodge Hall hadn't changed or been modernized for 50 years. Today, my Lodge has 171 members (and will be initiating 14 more later this month), has 17 new applicants for membership, brings close to 100 together for meetings, is highly visible and recognized in the community, and has an upgraded and modernized Lodge Hall that is used virtually every day of the month (including the "ides").

How did that all start?

When I reflect back to 2004-2006 (when the "change" all started) I believe that the ingredients of success were the following: (1) We brought in a handful of new, young members; (2) Those new members had ideas for the Lodge that they put on the table, and notwithstanding some push-back from older members, the Lodge moved forward on them; (3) The new members moved rapidly into leadership positions.

I think the single biggest change that was implemented in the early years was the creation of Lodge standing committees. There were no such committees before this time. And, at my suggestion, the Lodge created committees to focus our ideas and energy, and to involve the members. Everything was fair game. We allowed the members to use their creativity. So, over the years, we created a Good Fellowship Committee, a Community Support Committee, a Bingo Committee, a Music & Concerts Committee, a Tree Planting Committee, a Senior Project



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

Committee, a Social Services Committee, and many others. When a member had an idea, we said "go with it" - we weren't afraid to try it. So, for example, a member wanted to go on hikes - so we created a hiking group and every few months, that group would plan a hike. Another member wanted to brew beer - so we created a Zymurgy Committee which engages in the science and art of beer brewing. A member wanted to help frail seniors in their homes - so we have a Senior Project Committee that once each month helps seniors identified by the Senior Center as needing assistance in their home (e.g. prune trees and bushes, build a shed, help understand their computer, etc.). A member wanted to do wine tasting - so we have a wine club that meets monthly in member's homes to socialize and sample varietals. A member wanted to help the environment and plant trees - so the Tree Planting Committee works with Tree Davis to plant trees around town. A member wanted to help folks with mental health issues - and so we created a Social Services Committee where members can work one-on-one with adults with mental illness. A member proposed once-each-month Bingo to assist community groups - so we do that and last year provided \$8,500 to various community organizations. Another member wanted to raise money for our schools - so we organized a Bike Parade and raised \$15,000 for our schools (plus set a Guinness World Record in the process). Members have proposed Bunco Night at the Lodge, Family Movie Night, Dance Lessons at the Lodge, bus trips to the wine country, fundraising dinners for various community groups, an OddtoberFest, a Halloween Dance, a fundraising event for developmentally disabled adults, etc. All these ideas, and more, have been implemented.

Has every idea worked? No. But most have. And our Lodge is willing to take the chance on member's ideas. As a result, we have a Lodge that is highly visible in the community, that involves the members, and that provides significant member satisfaction. When members enjoy the social activities of the Lodge, and enjoy the community support actions of the Lodge, they remain as members, and they bring in new members.

Did this happen overnight? No. It took years to develop and to flourish. But it does work.

F - L - T