



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

April 6, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I'm delighted to include an article for our newsletter from Don Smith, Past Sovereign Grand Master of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and Past Grand Master of the California Jurisdiction, and a founding member of Dedicated Members for Change. Don has been a leading member of this Order since his 20's - and has seen it all. His words should inspire us all.

Fraternally,

Dave

\*\*\*\*\*

Considering the membership problems in Odd Fellowship brought to my mind a statement by Grand Sire James B. Nicholson, serving in 1862-1864, when he stated that outward opposition to the IOOF will not be the cause or the failure of Odd Fellowship. He commented: "None but Odd Fellows can destroy the majestic fabric that Odd Fellows have reared and naught but internal divisions and internecine (mutually destructive; or fatal) strifes can sap our strength or destroy the influence arising out of the example of a united, a grand, a glorious fraternity".

Opposition to several successful lodges like those in Davis, San Francisco, Hayward and elsewhere has been expressed by Grand Lodge officers, past officers and directors with comments like: "They are a social or service club and are not a fraternity." "They don't hold regular lodge meetings." "They don't utilize the IOOF Ritual." "The don't carry out the principles of Friendship, Love and Truth." "They don't support Odd Fellow programs and projects." And many other such negative and divisive comments.

I am sure those making such statements haven't taken the time to visit and investigate these lodges and see that true fraternalism exists while carrying out good deeds for their members and non-members. They are truly helping to make this world a better place in which to live.

**SUPPORTING IOOF PROGRAMS**

Some of these lodges are the largest supporters of Rebekah Children's Service, sending children to the Three Links Camp, benefiting the Odd Fellow Homes, supporting the Scholarship Foundation, planting trees for the SGL program, etc. These lodges also provide monetary donations to our Odd Fellows charities and programs.

**SUPPORTING THEIR COMMUNITY**



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

Many of these lodges have also supported their community with worthwhile programs and projects like supporting school and senior citizen centers, awarding scholarships, concerts, hosting dinners and breakfasts, allowing use of the lodge halls for free, etc. These activities have been responsible for many applications for membership.

#### LIVELY SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Individuals don't want to belong to an organization that holds one or two business meetings each month and does nothing except pay the bills, occasionally play cards or bingo and has a pot luck dinner. Developing a program of social activities will attract new and younger members. Get some ideas from those lodges that are successful and enlist ideas from your new members.

#### ATTRACTIVE IOOF HALL

A clean and attractive IOOF Hall is a reflection on Odd Fellowship, so make sure your lodge hall leaves a good impression on the general public so your members will be proud to claim affiliation with the Order. The successful lodges have clean and attractive halls.

#### UTILIZE THE IOOF RITUAL

The principals of Odd Fellowship are clearly pointed out in the IOOF Rituals and becoming familiar with the rituals can provide a great lesson about our fraternity. But even SGL understands that not every meeting of the lodge has to be a formal, ritual meeting. Social meetings are not only permitted, but encouraged.

#### TRUE FRATERNALISM

Participating in the activities of a lodge enables members to become better acquainted and develop a closeness between Brothers and Sisters. I witnessed a demonstration of true fraternalism when visiting a meeting of Davis Lodge when a young lady expressed her thanks to the members of the lodge for sharing Odd Fellowship with her husband and herself. She had tears in her eyes when saying they were moving from the community due to work opportunities, and will miss Odd Fellowship and the lodge members. I also saw a long-time Rebekah member stand and say how much she appreciated the rejuvenation of the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs in her community - her Rebekah Lodge was dying, and the Odd Fellows re-charged that Lodge when 12 young Odd Fellows became Rebekahs.

#### IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

Odd Fellowship in California has been going down hill for many years, and we need to take to heart the goals of the "Dedicated Members for Change" group which has a single goal of



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

"Increasing Odd Fellow Membership". It is hard to see where any good and dedicated Odd Fellow can oppose such a goal.

You can attend the "Dedicated Members for Change" dinner during Grand Lodge on Thursday, May 17th in Sacramento at the reasonable price of \$10.00 per person. We hope to see you there.

Don R. Smith, PGM and PSGM