



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

April 17, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I recently received the e-mail, below, from one of our DMC members. It is an e-mail written by a Brother from Michigan. I forward it to you for your information. There are many different suggestions being made by Brothers and Sisters around the country on how we can breathe life back into our great Fraternal Order. To be very frank, I am seriously concerned about our branches and their continued viability. Even the Rebekah Lodges are now showing the strain. The California Rebekahs are losing close to 200 members per year, and will soon go under 2,000 dues-paying members. They are considering a budget which shows a substantial deficit, and they are proposing to rectify that with dues increases. Of course, increasing dues may help the budget, but it also results in members leaving the Order. The dilemma can only be solved by one thing: Bringing in new members. And that's what DMC is all about.

And, a reminder: If you want to attend the Second Annual DMC Dinner on Thursday, May 17, please make sure to get your \$10 reservation in ASAP. The seats are going fast, and the dinner is only one month away. We're going to have a festive meal at El Torito - just a 4-minute walk from the Grand Lodge hotel. We'll also hear brief speeches by DGM Rod Metoyer, GW Rick Boyles, PSGM and PGM Don Smith, and yours truly. Send your checks (and the names of the attendees) to: Dave Rosenberg, Davis Odd Fellows Lodge, 415 2nd Street, Davis CA 95616. Thank you!

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Dave Rosenberg

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

These are all great ideas and provide a comprehensive overview of measures which promote for healthy lodges and a robust order.

Another notion, an elementary one, involves modifying the suggested order of the lodge business agenda in our meetings to include a regular report on recruitment efforts, perhaps even appointing an officer or interested members of a subcommittee to provide consistent reporting here. There are several business items in the ritual which revolve around reviewing submitted



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applications, interviewing the candidates, voting, etc., yet with the chain only as strong as the weakest link, how do we get them in to apply in the first place.

When in the community conducting beneficial work, or having "fun" events and interfacing with the public, have a recruitment area, with a poster or two of photos of members enjoying the work, helping others, and making a difference. Have plenty of applications always on hand, with pens to complete them, and have the area or "booth" staffed by energetic members who are knowledgeable about our roots and history, to describe the highlights of our programs and how we have helped average people at risk, and to improve life conditions close to home for nearly two hundred years. Our legacy will continue to attract civic minded individuals, as it is all good and people are basically good; we simply need to be out there, letting folks know who we are, and what we stand for. We have some identity challenges, at least in my community, as many, if not most whom I introduce the order to are ignorant as to our purposes. Have a presence and educate.

Goals pertaining to increasing membership need to be backed up with specific objectives. Two percent increases are good, as is ensuring your replace yourself with another member, but again, how do we go about making this happen? Objectives could revolve around making "X" number of informational presentations at churches or places of worship, or at other community organizations or events, or in putting up a targeted number of signs or literature on a variety of bulletin boards, or through local businesses. Reviewing of applications and providing of degree work opportunities should be time limited and not a prolonged process. As good potential members become interested, seize the moment and bring them into the fold.

One last consideration for the moment, only have summer and/or winter breaks if completely necessary for safety reasons or otherwise lacking in members to maintain a quorum. Of course, not everyone needs to come to all meetings every-time, but we are creatures of habit. Patterns become established and ingrained. With interruptions and distractions, people possibly become side tracked, potentially develop alternative and competing interests, and we lose valuable time bringing in new members, our "life blood", and in promoting all the order does. For example, I am Youth Advisor to Shamrock #4 Junior Odd Fellows. Kids need structure and opportunities in the summer when out of school, especially in a city environment. For four summers now, we haven't had a scheduled break. The Youth are bringing in their friends from the neighborhood, or past school mates. We have a hot meal to finish up every meeting. Continuity is important. Provide quality ways to positively impact the community and for recreation too, and they will come. In fact, some of the newer members in particular are having their acquaintances join. In the past couple months, three new boys became members, additionally one also applied at the last meeting, and a parent just phoned saying her boy will bring an interested friend with



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his application to our next meeting. If on recess, there would have been no means for this growth to happen at this time. Food for thought.

Thanks for your time and attention on these issues, critical to our continued longevity and meaningful future.

F.L.&T.,

BobKowalski, PG

Jurisdiction of Michigan

Eastwood Odd Fellows #496

Shamrock #4 Junior Odd Fellows