



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

May 27, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

It gives me great pleasure to forward on to each of you a message from two of our leading DMC members: Grand Master Rod Metoyer and Deputy Grand Master Rick Boyles. It's an important message leading our California fraternal order into our future.

And if any of you know brothers and sisters who would like to be added to our growing DMC e-mail matrix, please check with them and confirm that they wish to be added, and then send me their name and e-mail address - they will be added. DMC is all about focusing the attention of our members and our leaders on the need to grow our Order. DMC is all about finding methods and ways to increase our membership. DMC understands that we need to evolve as a fraternal order to be relevant to folks in the 21st Century; we need to build on our rich history and heritage while reaching out to our communities in new and exciting ways. DMC does not accept that we continue to decline in membership as we have done for the past 66 years. In this regard, we should all be Dedicated Members for Change.

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Dave Rosenberg

A Message for Every Member

170 years ago, our ancestors began our order in California. Many of our lodges were formed in the gold country of Northern California. Meetings were held by candlelight. Many of our members could not read or write. Often, the third degree members were those who were literate; the mayor, the constable, and other prominent townsmen. Being a member of our order was a source of pride, chairing a position, or holding a title carried with it an implication of duties and responsibilities. Not being a member gave one a source of shame or inadequacy and since your neighbor was probably a member, it also led to a feeling of exclusion and the dangers inherent in such a tough time and environment. The order obviously was a security blanket for those who were members, and it helped to feed, cloth, and even educate, as many of the early lodges were even lending libraries, where the members could take a book out and read it, returning it so another member could learn as well. The order's place in our early California society was assured for several reasons: the order educated, the order nourished, the order entertained, and even at the end of one's life, the order handled one's burial. So then, the order could not fail,



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because it filled basic human needs, and the axioms of friendship, love and truth, were emblems that bore no scars, that carried no personal human baggage.

Today, 170 years later, it is a different world. We live in mainly urban areas; we are all literate we have homes and many methods by which to communicate in our communities. Very few of us spend our days sifting for gold because of the insecurity of it, and also because we need income daily and not simply by good fortune. Many of the goldmines are now closed or infrequently mined. Now, the goldmines we mine are our jobs, our pensions, our social security, our families and our friends. We should alter our mindsets accordingly. No longer do we need a lodge setting to protect us from a harsh external environment, but there are other things a lodge may do. Now, it's more a question of what psychological impetus a lodge may hold. Too many of us sit all alone in an old building waiting for another soul to enter the doorway. Too many of us see the doorway with apprehension or fear. It is time to ask ourselves what are we afraid of, if not simply anything new or different. Let's try and be understanding of every individual in our order, and then perhaps we can see what it is we all have to offer.

There are many of us who desire change, and there are many of us who want to protect our heritage. These do not need to be in conflict. An old rock song goes "Life is change, how it differs from the rocks"; invariably, change happens whether we like it or not. Yet our heritage can be a source of great pride and give us inner strength, so both should be embraced. It's not a question of conflict. If we allow one side of the equation to dominate and the other side to fail, our order will falter and die even quicker. We must see that as our order declines, it becomes more and more imperative for all of us to read the writing on the wall. Either we work together or we will die. A quick Google search can easily point out fraternal groups that have already gone away. Do we want to be part of this ever increasing list? One key to survival is to recognize the fact that all of us deserve respect, all of us want to feel needed and appreciated, all of us are brothers and sisters under the mantle of Odd Fellowship, and together we can succeed if we lose this internal fear we seem to have of our fellow member's new idea or dream for the future.

We are all in this together. Our order is in a downward spiral. It does not matter whether you want change or don't want change; there is no disputing this one important fact. The numbers of our order are steadily decreasing. We must work together to forge a brighter future or we will succumb to our own fears. Let's remember that all of us are brothers and sisters, all of us cherish friendship, love and truth, and if we can just receive new members in this same spirit of openness, perhaps we will live to see a better tomorrow.

In Friendship, Love and Truth,



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Rod Metoyer and Rick Boyles