

Independent Order of Odd Fellows Dedicated Members for Change

August 24, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I am very pleased to attach an excellent article written by Dedicated Members for Change Rod Metoyer, the Grand Master of California, and Rick Boyles, the Deputy Grand Master of California.

This article makes an important point about the future of our Order! I commend it to you and hope you will share it with your Lodge Brothers and Sisters.

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Dave Rosenberg

Dear Odd Fellows,

News Flash: Membership in the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in California increased to nearly 10,000 members, as of June 30, 2012. While many volunteer organizations and fraternal orders report declining membership, the Odd Fellows experienced its fifth straight year of membership increase in California. Grand Master Rod Metoyer commented, "We expect to give charters to 20 new Lodges in 2012-13, bringing the number of Lodges in California to over 150. We've seen a net increase of almost 2,000 new members in the last year alone."

Fiction? Unfortunately, yes. For the Odd Fellows this is indeed, fiction.

BUT, it's a true story for another volunteer organization, the Lions Clubs International. A recent news release about the Lions noted that membership in that organization increased to nearly 1.35 million as of June 30, 2012, the fifth straight year of membership increase. Wayne Madden, the 2012-13 President of Lions Clubs International was quoted as saying: "We chartered more than 1,500 new clubs, bringing our total number of clubs to a record high of more than 46,300 clubs. In the last five years we have increased our membership by nearly 60,000 members."

How did they do it? They did it in a surprisingly simple way. They used a formula that has been proven to work - a formula that others (such as the Davis Odd Fellows Lodge) have used with remarkable success. And what is especially noteworthy is that the Lions did it without two



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of the important assets that Odd Fellows possess – Odd Fellows have a rich history and ritual, and Odd Fellows, for the most part, have Lodge Halls that they own. Using the Lions' formula, and the added assets of Odd Fellowship, we can do the same.

So, what's the formula for success used by the Lions? It encompasses three simple things:

First, quoting the article: "Lions membership has grown as Lions have concentrated on expanding the programs and service they are providing to their communities." Good community outreach and good community works. This is something that ALL of our members and Lodges can do. We simply need to get off our collective derrieres, get outside of the four walls of our Lodges, and reach out to our communities. We have to do so in ways that make a difference. We can plant trees, we can help frail seniors, we can organize bingo for the community, or we can offer music for the community at our Lodges. The possibilities are endless. Good community works not only helps the community, but it exposes the Lodge to the community, and most importantly it is the source of new members. Successful Lodges in California can attest that many of their new members have come to the Lodge as a result of community project initiated by the Lodge. Good community works just makes good sense.

Second, again quoting the article: "The fastest growing demographic group in Lions clubs is women. Also expanding rapidly is the number of members from the same family." Those Lodges that primarily seek out and admit men in their 60's, 70's and 80's, are sowing the seeds of their demise. We simply cannot ignore half the population of women, and we cannot ignore half the population of people under 40. Successful Lodges today are almost 50-50 men and women. Successful Lodge seek out not only mom and dad, but teenage children as well. Bringing the family into the Lodge is just smart.

Third, once again quoting the article: "We are reaching out to younger people by increasing our efforts in social networking." It's the young people who are the future of Odd Fellowship. In some of our Lodges, everyone is connected by e-mail and newsletters are electronic. In other Lodges, virtually no one has e-mail and virtually everything is done with paper. That's not the world of the 21st Century. Successful Lodges focus on activities within the Lodge and community service that appeal to folks in their 20's and 30's. These potential members aren't interested in potluck dinners. They are interested in music, and movies, and wine tasting, and beer making, and hiking, and Facebook. This is the future of our Order. We have looked at the Lodge books of successful Lodges in the 1850's and 1860's. It's interesting to note that the members who joined Lodges in those days were primarily in their 20's and 30's. Let's go back in time to discover the secrets of success to the future.

As a great sage once said: "The journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step." So, we ask YOU and your Lodge to start using the formula for success. But don't try to do everything at



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once. Take that single step, then take another, then another. Develop that one community project that your Lodge can handle, that will do a good turn for the community, that will raise the visibility of Odd Fellows, and that can expose your Lodge to potential applicants for membership. Seek out that one dynamic community leader (city council member, county supervisor, school board member, bank president, lawyer, judge, physician, teacher, etc.) who could become a Lodge member and who has the potential to bring in more new members. Talk to husbands and wives as potential members of your Lodge. Take that single step.

In Friendship, Love, & Truth, Rod Metoyer & Rick Boyles