



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

April 1, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Many of you may have heard the story of the "canary in the coal mine." It's actually a true story. And it's worth repeating. Early coal mines had no ventilation systems, and coal miners, among other hazards, had to be concerned with methane and carbon monoxide escaping from fissures into the mine shafts. Well, in those early days, the miners would bring canaries in cages into the mines with them. Turns out that canaries are highly sensitive to these gasses which made them invaluable as early warning systems for the miners. The gasses were toxic to the miners. As long as the canaries were chirping and singing, all was OK in the mines. But if the canaries stopped their tunes, or worse, keeled over dead in their cages, the miners were warned and could take appropriate action. This ancient coal mining lore has left an expression to us to this day: "a canary in a coal mine" which means to serve as a warning to others.

I recently received a letter, dated March 18, from the Grand Patriarch of California - a good, hard-working man whom I greatly respect - directed to Encampments in California. His letter reminded me of the canary in a coal mine. Here's what he said, in part: "Patriarchs, we are down to a handful of encampments in this state. Most of our encampments do not have quorums, nor have many held meetings for quite a while. I have not picked up any charters, as I feel this is extremely important that I include all of you in this decision. I am afraid that should I chose to pick up these charters, we will have only 4 encampments. This would effectively and immediately dissolve our Grand Encampment. My report would be forwarded to the Sovereign Grand Lodge. Patriarchs, I am asking you to assist me in this decision process. If we no longer have encampments because Patriarchs will not attend their encampment meetings, then how will this affect the Patriarch's Militant Branch?"

What does the Grand Patriarchs letter tell us? Well it tells us a shocking story. In the Jurisdiction of California, we appear to have only four Encampments that are still functional. And in the Jurisdiction encompassing California and Nevada, we may have only five, or at most, six functional Cantons. These Encampments and Cantons are the canaries in the coal mine. They are on the brink. And they serve as an early warning to Rebekah Lodges and Odd Fellows Lodges. What is happening to the Encampments and Cantons will happen to the Lodges. It is only a matter of time.

Should we ignore this early warning? Sadly, some in this Order would do just that. But that would be wrong, and would risk the demise of an Order that tens of thousands of brothers and sisters built up over centuries. I, for one, am not willing to watch the slow death of this great Order.



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Does it have to be this way? Absolutely not. My own Davis Odd Fellows Lodge and my own Davis Rebekah Lodge are growing and healthy, in members, activities and funds. Three years ago my Davis Encampment was down to less than five members and was, essentially, defunct. I, and a number of Odd Fellows, joined that Encampment, I became the Chief Patriarch, and the new Patriarchs and Matriarchs reinvented and recharged it. Now, the Davis Encampment has 35 members and is the largest in this Jurisdiction. In fact, 14 of our Patriarchs and Matriarchs asked to form a Canton, and a few days ago we were given authorization to do so - Canton Davis #7. We are growing this Order. It can be done.

The secret of success is centered around being active in our communities. Successful Encampments and Cantons determine missions and causes which are relevant to the members and their respective communities. We can't sit behind our doors and windows and expect to thrive. We need air and sunlight.

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Dave Rosenberg

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The Doubletree Hotel has just confirmed that the annual DMC Dinner will be held in Salon 2 and Salon 3 of the California Ballroom. The dinner will be on Thursday, May 16, with no-host cocktails beginning at 5 p.m., the sumptuous buffet dinner from 6 to 7 p.m., a few short speeches, and then entertainment from "Frankie and the Fabletones". This dinner and entertainment costs over \$60, but we are able to reserve for the first 100 at a remarkable \$25 per person as a result of subsidies by some generous members and Lodges. But seats are going fast - we already have 60 reserved seats taken!

Please send your check for \$25 per person, payable to Dave Rosenberg, to the following address:

Dave Rosenberg  
Odd Fellows Lodge  
415 Second Street  
Davis CA 95616

Make sure you include a note indicating the names of all attendees covered by the check(s). And thank you.



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