



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

April 27, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Like many of you, I am not only a member of my Odd Fellows Lodge - I am also a member of my Rebekah Lodge. In fact, I serve as Secretary of my Rebekah Lodge and so I get all sorts of interesting mailings and communications. Last week I received a letter from the Finance Committee of the Rebekah Assembly, which also included a proposed budget for the RA. The information contained therein is very revealing. Allow me to share some of the facts contained in this communication:

- * The 2013-14 RA Budget is based on 1,700 "contributing members" (that's dues-paying members).
- * The statewide Rebekah membership continues to decline - last year it was 1,900 contributing members. They project a continued decline.
- * Actual figures for 2012 reflect that income was slightly more than expenses - but this was only due to the fact that "several lodges" surrendered their charters. And when a lodge surrenders its charter much of its money goes into the RA General Fund and is, apparently, treated as "income".
- * Because of the serious decline in membership (affecting dues) at the last Rebekah Assembly session, dues were to be increased by \$5 per member this year.
- * The proposed 2013-14 RA Budget shows an unbalanced budget with expenses exceeding income by a substantial amount - leading to a deficit of over \$10,000.

The above facts are shocking, but they don't surprise me.

Years ago, I predicted that our Branches would slowly wither unless we changed the course of this great ship we call "Odd Fellowship." And we are certainly seeing that in our Cantons and Encampments throughout the State. We are now beginning to see it in our Rebekah Assembly. Clearly, losing 200-400 Rebekahs each year is not sustainable. Clearly, running deficits in the RA Budget is not sustainable. Clearly, having lodges surrender their charters as a way to increase income is not sustainable. And the coup de grace is the notion that balancing the budget can be accomplished by actually RAISING dues by \$5 per person.

THE PROBLEM IS OBVIOUS. The Rebekah Lodges are losing far more members than they



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are adding. That is, of course, not sustainable.

We have actually hit the wall, brothers and sisters. We are showing expenses exceeding income. That is a death rattle for an organization.

And the distressing fact is that there are only 1,700 dues paying members in California. And we all know what that means - just because someone pays dues doesn't mean they attend meetings or participate in lodge activities. So, with 1,700 dues-paying members, we are probably talking about 800-900 who are "active" members.

The solution devised by the RA? Well, let's raise dues. That is not a solution. Frankly, it just adds to the problem. Raising dues will do nothing to add members - in fact, if anything, it will discourage memberships. The only thing that will save a Rebekah Lodge is to add new members and new blood. And we can't add new members if the only thing that a lodge offers is an opportunity to sit in a formal meeting once or twice a month. Prospective members in the 21st Century want to be involved in their communities and want to engage in social and fraternal activities within the lodge. Those Rebekah Lodges that expand their horizons into the community and into social activities will thrive.

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Dave Rosenberg

ALERT! ALERT! ALERT! Because of a great response to the DMC Dinner at Grand Lodge (Thursday, May 16, a no-host cocktail reception at 5 p.m. and a buffet dinner at 6 p.m.) the DoubleTree Hotel (the venue for the Grand Lodge Sessions and rebekah Assembly Sessions) has moved the location. We will still be in the California Ballroom at the DoubleTree Hotel BUT we are being moved to Salon 3 and Salon 4 for the 6 p.m. dinner, and the 5 p.m. cocktail reception will be on the Patio directly outside the California Ballroom.

Subsidized dinner seats are going fast. There are still a few left at \$25 per person. Please send your check payable to "Dave Rosenberg" at the following address;

Dave Rosenberg
Odd Fellows Lodge
415 Second Street
Davis CA 95616



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Note: After dinner "Frankie and the Fabletones" will be performing LIVE at this event. You won't want to miss this show. And it's all included in the price of the dinner.