



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

May 9, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Please click on the link below, which continues a series of articles about the rapid decline in membership facing fraternal orders around the country. This particular article comes from the state of Ohio - but the stories and the issues are similar in every state, including California.

Why do Lodges and fraternal Orders find themselves with declining numbers? The primary reason, in my opinion, is that they have been locked in a time warp, unwilling or unable to evolve to fit their time. They continue to believe that men and women of the 21st Century have the same needs and interests as men and women of the 20th Century, or even the 19th Century. We may have the same values, but in the age of television, the Internet, iPhones, etc. we certainly don't have the same needs and interests. These Lodges continue to believe that people want to join a fraternal order because of nifty slogans, and ritual, regalia, costumes, secret grips, signs and passwords. While those things are historically important, are part of our rich past, and must always remain as part of our heritage and unique character, they simply do not attract new members. If anyone doubts that is true - just examine the precipitous decline in our membership over the past three generations.

To attract the new members we need today, a Lodge must supplement the ritual, and must offer community activities outside the Lodge and vibrant good fellowship activities within the Lodge. This is not rocket science. In fact, in 2010, at the 158th Annual Grand Lodge Session, I proposed two resolutions which stressed those very two things. Both resolutions were adopted at sessions, with overwhelming "aye" votes. In short, we know what we need to do to turn the tide.

Now, let's just do it.

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Dave Rosenberg

<http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2013/03/03/Like-neglected-castle-group-fights-to-survive.html>