



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

September 28, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I recently received an e-mail from the Vice Grand of a Lodge from out of California. This member asks what I consider to be a very important and cogent question. Here is his e-mail (with certain personal identifying information deleted):

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My name is \*\*\*\*\* and I am the Vice Grand of \*\*\*\*\*. I really enjoy the blogs you post on the Davis Lodge website about how your lodge is growing and dealing with some of the changes that occur when an organization is growing.

I'm fortunate to say that our Lodge is also growing. We are initiating 6 new members on Wednesday night, and we welcomed 9 new members last year. For a town of 2000 people I think that's pretty good. We are more visible in the community now and we give 100% of our donations back to the community instead of \$20 here or there to a national association in the past. For us increasing our visibility and hosting an annual open meeting has been a great way to attract new members.

I do have a question because I know as your membership demographic has gotten younger, and there is more of a work/family obligation outside of the Lodge. We had a discussion before one of our meetings about how we could make our meetings more time-effective. One suggestion was to not to spend 45mins going through the "what is your duty in the Lodge" portion of the Ritual and only do that monthly or quarterly, which would give us more time to plan community fundraisers and activities. To me Odd Fellows is about keeping the traditional aspect of the meetings, and increasing our goal of being there for our community.

I know if the Lodge decides this is something we should explore further it's a discussion we'll have to ask our DDGM and Grand Lodge about, but I was just wondering if your Lodge has ever had a similar discussion and how you maybe got through it.



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Keep up the great job on the website!

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Reading about this growing Lodge is very encouraging. And you will note that one of the secrets of his Lodge's success is contained in his e-mail. That secret is reaching out into the community and being part of the community. For too long, too many of our Lodges have operated in secret, separate and apart from the community. That is ultimately a recipe for disaster, as it discourages new memberships. So I encourage his Lodge - and all Lodges - to open the windows and the doors of our Lodge Halls and reach out to the city, town, or village. Be involved in community activities, initiate your own community support activities, and reach out.

I replied to this Vice Grand and encouraged him to tell his Lodge about "social meetings." Such social meetings are perfectly permissible pursuant to our Code and are, in fact, encouraged by Sovereign Grand Lodge. I encourage them as well because they allow the Lodge to be opened, they demystify Odd Fellowship, they allow family members to attend, and they permit potential members from the community to attend. Lodges can have these social meetings at any time. The social meetings can be dinners, musical events, lectures, or simply meetings without the ritual opening and closing and without revealing the unwritten work. A Lodge can plan a social event at such a social meeting, subject to ratification at a later business meeting. Lots can be accomplished at these social meetings. Plus, they are relaxed, informal and fun.

But the significant part of a social meeting is the opportunity to expose the Lodge, the fraternal order, the members and their good works to the community at large. There is hardly a better recruiting tool, as we seek to grow the membership of our Lodges and of this Order.

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Dave Rosenberg, GW