



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

November 9, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I learned, this afternoon, of the passing, after a lengthy illness, of a notable member of our Order and a good friend of mine - our Brother Don Smith. Our hearts go out to his wife, Darlene, and his family in this difficult time.

Don Smith was a true Odd Fellow in every sense of the word. He was compassionate, honest, ethical, hard-working, and active till almost the end. He achieved high positions and honors in our Order. In his 20's he was elected Grand Master of California - a remarkable achievement. And soon thereafter, he was elected Sovereign Grand Master in his 30's - even more remarkable. He was a giant in his Lodge and in this Order. Don was always open to new ideas. He was a progressive in our Order. And Don, Rick Boyles and I founded DMC in 2010.

Don was an inspiration and a mentor to me.

I first met Don in 2008. Don had heard about the Davis Lodge, our approach to meetings, and our remarkable growth. He and a group of his Lodge mates traveled up the valley to Davis on November 8, 2008, to attend one of our Saturday morning breakfast meetings, and he was amazed at the energy and activity in our Lodge. He became an instant supporter of our Lodge, and followed our progress until his recent illness. Under the subject line "From your long-winded friend" Don wrote the following e-mail to me on November 8, 2008 - five years ago almost to the day. I have saved it all these years

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg
Grand Warden

Dave,

We really enjoyed attending your meeting, and the breakfast was excellent. The meeting reminded me of Scio Lodge #102 about 12 to 15 years ago. I understand that there were many public officials and several office holders present for the meeting. Back in the 1990s we had plenty of activities and included in our active membership were our County Supervisor, six of the seven town council members, half a dozen of our Chamber of Commerce Directors, and



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others. Other members of Scio Lodge at that time were our District Attorney, County Sheriff, superintendent of schools, etc. During this period Scio Lodge was the largest lodge in the county and the tenth largest lodge in California. Today we are the second largest lodge in the county (more than 50 members) with the Lodi lodge taking over the number one spot in San Joaquin County. Back then we also gave the Lions Club a run for its money as far as activities and membership, but now the Lions have more than 200 members and it is the 10th largest Lions Club in the United States. Linden has a population of about 2,000, so many of the Odd Fellows and Lions came from the greater Stockton area. During this period Scio Lodge sponsored a Crab Feed for upto 1,000 persons with nearly every judge in the county attending along with most public officials in the county. One of our members, Andy Guy, was chairman of the California Judicial Review Board (I believe that is what it was called). Andy has since passed away as has the brother that owned the barn where we held the crab feed. One year the governor of California attended one of our crab feeds, which was a complete sell out every year with several hundred on a waiting list to obtain tickets that seldom were available. We charged between \$32 and \$40 for tickets over the years, and we were able to sponsor many community service projects in our area including the purchase of a car for the County Sheriff's STAR program.

I had hoped to discuss some other things with you this morning, so I will touch base on these topics at this time.

ODD FELLOWS HOME DIRECTOR AT-LARGE = I need to know if you wish to be considered for appointment as an At-Large Director. I am chairman of the Interviewing Committee for the Home Board and as of this date we only have one application for filling the position unless some additional applications are received in the next ten days. Already applying is a CPA from San Francisco. Our next Board Meeting will be held on Saturday morning, Nov. 22nd in Napa. The Interviewing session will be held that afternoon starting with lunch, between 12 and 1:30 p.m.

CONCERN ABOUT REQUIREMENTS IN BEING A BOARD MEMBER = The actual time required to be a board member is six meetings during the year all falling on the 4th Saturday of the odd months, except for the May meeting which falls on a Wednesday prior to Grand Lodge session, held in Modesto. There might be a couple of special board meetings during the year, and the annual BBQ held in August. Serving on a committee can entail some additional time, but some of the committee work is usually done via e-mails.

YOUR FUTURE IN ODD FELLOWSHIP = You can no doubt be as active on a statewide or Sovereign Grand Lodge basis as you wish. Many years ago Randolph Collier, Dean of the California State Senate, was a candidate for the office of Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge. At



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one time he was probably one of the most powerful office holders in the state, but he was defeated as our Grand Warden by the "good old brothers" who said he wanted the office to only advance his personal ambitions. That was before my time, but I eventually became good friends with Randy, and he arranged for me to speak during a joint session of the State Assembly and the State Senate when I was Sovereign Grand Master in the early 1970's. In your position as a Superior Court Judge, you no doubt would be elected considering that you are a judge and the fact that you have been successful in building the Davis Lodge. Having you appointed as a Home Director would be an asset.

ESTABLISHING DAVIS ENCAMPMENT = I have never been a strong Encampment member, despite the fact that my father was very active in both the Encampment and Canton. In those days there were several thousand Patriarchs in the Encampment and several thousand Chevaliers in the Cantons in California. At that time in California there were more Patriarchs than we have as Odd Fellows today. The Encampment membership in California is down to a few hundred, and there are very few active Encampments in the state. I have always felt in the past 20 or 30 years the Encampments were a distraction for the Odd Fellow lodges. I have never been real active in the Encampments, because I didn't have time with my activities in my Odd Fellows Lodge along with my activities in other organizations and serving on various boards.

DAVIS PROPOSAL FOR COMBINING ODD FELLOW & REBEKAH LODGES = I will wholeheartedly support such a resolution, but I am sure it will take time for such a proposal to be approved by The Sovereign Grand Lodge. There is a good chance that the proposal will be approved at the California Grand Lodge session next May if enough members speak in support of the proposal. It will probably take two or three sessions before Sovereign Grand Lodge will approve it. I might be surprised considering the rapid decline of membership and lodges in North America, and the representatives to SGL realize that something must be done if we are going to survive.

NEW DIRECTION FOR NORTH AMERICAN ODD FELLOWSHIP = Any one being realistic understands that Odd Fellowship needs to make some major changes if the Order is going to survive. You have demonstrated this fact in Davis, and the fraternity needs to wake up and be willing to make these changes or we will be out of existence except for a small number of lodges that have a lot of assets. The traditional Odd Fellows Lodge, following the ritualistic ceremonies, is a thing of the past. Very few lodges exist that can conduct the degree and ritualistic ceremonies as they were performed years ago. A few lodges exist that take great pride in conferring degrees, but that is the exception.

FUTURE SOVEREIGN GRAND LODGE SESSION = The next sessions of The Sovereign



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Grand Lodge will be held in Santa Clara, CA, and it might be a good opportunity to do some ground work for your proposal. I am serving on the Executive Committee for the convention, and I might be in a position to work up something.

INTERNATIONAL ODD FELLOWSHIP = It is interesting to realize that Odd Fellowship in Europe is very successful as a truly ritualistic - fraternal organization, and they are not in favor of becoming a service organization. A large percentage of their members participate in their lodge meetings. I have been told that 60% to 80% of their members attend their regular meetings. The country of Iceland claims roughly 2% of the population holds membership in the Odd Fellows. The country of Sweden is the largest Grand Lodge in the world with eight or nine times as many members as we have in California. When they expand Odd Fellowship into a new country like has been done in the past few years in Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic and Spain you will find a thriving organization under the Grand Lodge of Europe. They do not establish a new lodge until high standards are met with an adequate number of members. This is completely different as far as the lodges established by The Sovereign Grand Lodge in Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela where there are 25 or less members in each country. This is an indication that The Sovereign Grand Lodge is not qualified to expand the Order in additional countries at the present time.

CALIFORNIA AND NORTH AMERICAN ODD FELLOWSHIP = I feel there is a lack of leadership in The Sovereign Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge of California accounts for approximately 10% of the Odd Fellow and Rebekah membership in North America, and California is probably the most successful Jurisdiction in North America, but we certainly have many problems concerning membership and activities. The two California Retirement Homes far exceeds in value and in size any thing in any other Jurisdiction. In both Saratoga and Napa our two homes are highly regarded by the local government, and both of our facilities are well managed and profitable. Each year our Home Board gives our Grand Lodge more than \$150,000 for operation of the Grand Lodge.

LIVING LEGACY PROGRAM = During your Joint Meeting it was interesting to hear David Reed speak about the Tree Planting Program, with information from a past issue of the "California Odd Fellow & Rebekah" magazine. I wrote the article he quoted from and at that time I was Editor-Publisher of the Odd Fellow magazine. I retired from that position in 2003 after more than 50 years of publishing the magazine.

CONCLUSION = You are going to really put me in the category of being long winded, and I hope to make my messages much shorter in the future.



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Fraternally yours,

Don