



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

February 12, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

What is the secret of success for Lodge growth?

That's the ultimate question facing Odd Fellowship in California today. I can't give you a simple and ready answer. However, I can give you the experience of one Lodge that has grown - dramatically - over the last few years, and I can identify for you the reason that I believe that Lodge has grown. I am referring to my own Lodge - the Davis Lodge. Ten years ago, the Davis Lodge - in membership - was much like any other Lodge in California. About 30 members on its books, around a dozen of whom might come to meetings, and only 2 or 3 who were really "active". Today, the Lodge has over 200 members, is scheduled to initiate another 11 new members later this month, and has several applications for membership pending.

What did this Lodge do that has allowed it to grow so dramatically, year after year?

There are, of course, many factors. Certainly, the Lodge changed its focus. The focus of the Lodge has expanded into doing good works in the community and hosting fun social activities for the members. But if I had to point to the one single factor that made the difference for this Lodge it would be the following - Committees.

Let me explain.

I have been to Lodge meetings in other Lodges where meetings last 20 minutes, with no old business, no new business, and no committee reports. Those Lodges are, essentially, just going through the motions of being a Lodge. Those Lodges are boring. And they have a history of saying "no" or "that won't work" or "we tried that before" when a member suggests or proposes an idea.

The Davis Lodge is just the opposite. When a member suggests an idea that interests him or her, the Davis Lodge welcomes the idea and is ready to try it. Three years ago, for example, a member suggested that the Lodge organize a Bicycle Parade and try to break a Guinness World Record. The Lodge members said "yes". It took a lot of planning and work, but the Lodge did organize such an effort, drew thousands of interested people, donated a lot of money to the schools from the effort, obtained high visibility and publicity for the Lodge, and broke a Guinness World Record. On top of that, several people applied to join the Lodge. On yet another occasion, the Davis Police Department needed to pay for a new K-9 officer, but didn't have the funds. So, Davis Lodge members organized a committee and hosted a "DogtoberFest" which energized the community, brought lots of people to the Lodge for the Fest, and raised most of the money to purchase a K-9. The DogtoberFest was the talk of the town for weeks. Recently, a proposal was made to start a Classic Film Festival at the Lodge. The proposal was embraced and the Film Festival was launched. Lots of community interest, lots of publicity, and



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lots of people attending the Fest. It brought people into the Lodge who otherwise would never have seen it.

The Davis Lodge has over 25 Committees. Some (like Finance, Visiting and Bylaws) are required by our Bylaws and Code. Others (like Good Fellowship, Take a Hike and OddtoberFest) are focused on the members of the Lodge - providing fun social activities for the Lodge members and potential members. Still others (like Community Support, Senior Project, Bingo) reach out into the community to provide an outlet for Lodge members to do good works in town and the county.

I am not suggesting that every Lodge have 25 committees. But every Lodge can have (over and above the committees required by your Bylaws) some! Start with 2 or 3, and go from there. Find out what your Lodge members really want to do and form a committee to do it! Monthly spaghetti feeds? Downtown clean-up? Taking hikes every few months? Lodge renovation and maintenance? Planting trees in the community? The only limit is your imagination and energy! Bottom line: Your Lodge members will find the Lodge experience more rewarding if you have an active social life in the Lodge and an active effort to support the community. And your Lodge will encourage potential new members to apply. To give you some ideas for the future - perhaps in your own Lodge - here is a listing of the current Davis Lodge Committees:

- Finance
- Bylaws
- Visiting
- Bingo
- Membership & Initiation
- Good Fellowship
- Music and Concerts
- Community Support
- Take a Hike
- Senior Project
- OddtoberFest
- St. Patrick's Day Dinner
- Halloween Party
- Historical
- Pedometer Project
- Picnic Day Pancake Breakfast
- Legacy Tree
- Social Services
- Farm to Fork
- Classic Film Festival
- Wine Club
- Breakfast with the Bunny
- Breakfast with Santa
- Taste of Davis



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Photography
Saturday Breakfast Crew
Odd Poetry
DogtoberFest
Zymurgy

And here's a reminder for your Lodge. The Grand Lodge Membership Committee, chaired by Peter Sellars, is making available MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GRANTS to Lodges of up to \$1,000. To submit your Lodge proposal, simply send an e-mail to Peter at ioofsf@earthlink.net to indicate how much in funds you are requesting, detail the program or proposal you wish to fund (for the purpose of encouraging applications for new members), and state your best guess of how many new applications you believe this will generate. I encourage you and your Lodge to submit a proposal right away.

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Dave Rosenberg
Grand Warden