



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

May 19, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

You haven't received a DMC Newsletter since May 14, because I have been otherwise engaged, attending the 162nd Grand Lodge Session of the Jurisdiction at the convention center in Modesto. The sessions ended yesterday, I'm back in the world, and I'd like to report on some of the highlights.

1. First and foremost, I want to say how pleased I was to hear the "C" word throughout the sessions. Once upon a time not too long ago, most folks avoided using the "C" word, but now I hear it said and I see it printed often. It's the word which will ultimately transform our Order, and I am delighted to hear how mainstream this word has become. The "C" word? Why, it's "change", of course. Odd Fellowship needs to evolve, and ultimately, change to become more relevant to the 21st Century women and men we need to join us and restore, reform, revive, replenish and rejuvenate our Order.

2. Rick Boyles has now joined the elite ranks of Past Grand Masters. Rick, as you know, was one of the founding members of DMC. Rick, Past Grand Master and Past Sovereign Grand Master Don Smith and I formed DMC in December of 2010 as a vehicle to refocus Odd Fellowship on our membership losses and to suggest ways to reverse that trend and bring in new members. After 66 years of virtually unchecked net losses of 100-200 members per year, it was in 2013 (under Rick's watch) that California Odd Fellowship finally bottomed out showing a "net loss" of only 3 members. Congratulations, Rick, on a job well done. I am very hopeful that in the next year - under the watch of new Grand Master Tim Brown - we will see that flat line evolve into a small net gain. This will be the start of a new trend and a new direction: Years of growth in the California Order.

3. DMC can be rightfully proud that progressives were elected to high offices at sessions. By acclamation, I was elected Deputy Grand Master of California. Peter Sellars, one of the charter members of DMC, was elected to the position of Grand Warden. John Morgan, also a charter DMC member and Chairman of the Grand Lodge Board of Directors, was re-elected to a new term on that important Board. Other DMC members were elected to positions on Boards of our Order.

4. I met the Deputy Sovereign Grand Master (the second-highest ranking office in North American Odd Fellowship) who was visiting from Georgia. His name is Jimmy Humphrey and he is a progressive - his talk during Installation of officers focused on "change". Jimmy told me that there are 22 states where the number of Odd Fellows in the state is less than 200 (e.g. we



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have Lodges in California that have more members than each of these 22 states). Jimmy and I spoke the same language, and we have exchanged e-mails.

5. The DMC has suddenly become respectable. Our annual dinner at the sessions was well attended with over 100 persons - and many of the leadership (including Jimmy Humphrey) were there. A couple of years ago DMC was shunned. In fact, in a growing sign of acceptance, a proposal to commend DMC and its work received an affirmative vote of the Grand Lodge 114 "yes" and only 26 "no". Just two years ago, the vote probably would have been 26 "yes" and 114 "no." We have come a long way in a short time.

6. At my suggestion, the Grand Lodge Board of Directors approved and Grand Lodge Sessions used electronic voting - for the first time. This is an important step forward in the modernization of this Order. Electronic voting was a smashing success, and saved us hours of delays and tedious vote counting. We got results a split second after voting closed. The electronic voting system was operated by Davis Lodge member Stewart Savage - who even received a medal in commemoration given by the Deputy Sovereign Grand Master - and Stewart got a standing ovation from the group. Well deserved. I am confident that electronic voting will continue, and it wouldn't surprise me to see it expand to other states and the Sovereign Grand Lodge Sessions.

7. A very important piece of legislation - brought to Sessions by me and the Davis Lodge - passed with overwhelming support. The legislation changes the Code in support of "social meetings" - a progressive and modern approach to meetings - allowing us to focus more on social activities and community outreach. The Code prior to the change permitted one and only one social meeting per month, and the definition of social meeting was severely limited. The change we proposed (and which was adopted) now has the Code read as follows:

"This Lodge is authorized to hold Social Meetings each month in accordance with the provisions state herein. Said Social Meetings shall be at the discretion and call of the Noble Grand. No Social Meeting shall be held on the evening of an Official Visitation by the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Warden, or District Deputy Grand Master unless that officer has specifically approved the same. During a Social Meeting all Ritualistic Work is suspended and the meeting may be opened to the Public. Social Meetings may include, but are not limited to, Dinners; Forums; Invited Guests, Invited Speaker; Prospective Members, Family Members; Entertainment; Educational Presentations and/or Recreational Activities. Lodge members at said Social Meeting may also discuss and vote on planned Social Events and Community Projects and other routine Lodge matters, so long as each such vote is recorded in Minutes and subsequently ratified at the next business meeting of the Lodge."



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8. A number of recommendations in my Grand Warden's Report were accepted and adopted by the body. Among the recommendations is the launch of a "mentor program" where successful Lodges could help struggling Lodges, and a recommendation to continue the popular and successful membership grant program, started by Peter Sellars.

9. I learned that we have dropped to only 14 Encampments and only 7 Cantons in California, with increasingly aging members. Obviously, these Branches are hurting. This, and the decline in membership and revenue in the Rebekahs, are concerns for our Order going forward.

10. And we still have a long way to go. While progressive suggestions to modernize were on the ascendancy, one of the voting delegates at sessions approached me and said the following words to me: "I view you as the enemy." Obviously, this member is part of a strong conservative element in the Order who resists change and supports the status quo. I appreciate this member's candor, as it reminded me of how far we still have to go.

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Dave Rosenberg  
Deputy Grand Master