



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

August 20, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

One of the most eloquent and prolific writers we have in this Order is our very own Peter Sellars, Grand Warden of California. He has done the research and has written excellent and informative full-length books on the history of Odd Fellowship, and he has also penned numerous articles for the DMC Newsletter and otherwise. Peter has achieved high station in this fraternity, having served (among other things) as Chief Patriarch, as Grand Instructor, and as a very successful chair of the Grand Lodge Membership Committee. He remains a recognized and respected leader in his own Lodge and in his Hall Board Association.

And it is Peter Sellars who has over the years developed the San Francisco Odd Fellows Museum to its premier status. If you have not yet visited this remarkable museum, you should plan to do so - this San Francisco collection of all things IOOF is a paean to the great heritage of this Order. Peter not only talks the talk of "heritage", but he walks the walk.

I am delighted to attach to this DMC Newsletter, the latest article by Grand Warden Peter Sellars. It contains - as usual - darn good advice, particularly for newer members of this Order.

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Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master

ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO CLIMB THE FRATERNAL LADDER

How many times have you heard a longtime member or someone in the lodge tell you or the lodge, "You can't do that?" And, because you trust this member or just don't want to have a confrontation, you go along with such a statement?



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Trust me, this happens all of the time inside many of our lodges. It is extremely important that if we are to grow, we need to know the rules—often referred to as the “codé”—and whether or not such defeatist statements are correct or incorrect.

Fortunately for me, I had very good friends in this Order who took the time to encourage me and to share ideas with me. Self-motivation caused me to learn all that I could about this organization, its codes, rules, Ritual, tradition, and history. I knew if I was going to try new things inside my lodge, I needed to have a good grasp on everything.

Once I had the knowledge, I was able to confidently move ahead and tell my fellow lodge members what we could and could not do in order to try new things within my lodge.

Even after many years of pushing forward and celebrating the successes of numerous events, sponsoring hundreds of members, holding seminars, serving as the Grand Instructor, Grand Lodge Director, Grand Patriarch, amongst other things, and strengthen my own lodge, I still get challenged.

I would never state that I know everything or am better versed in a certain subject than someone else, but I won't take a backseat to someone who questions progressive ideas that have served this Order well.

In previous years, I have written articles encouraging ALL MEMBERS to climb the ladder and come to the Annual Grand Lodge sessions held each May. All Third Degree members are welcome to come and observe what we do at Grand Lodge. Come and listen to legislation that is brought to our Grand Body. See how we elect new officers and how we conduct meetings. Ask some of your leaders questions of you do not understand something or if you are interested in getting more involved.

This is one place where you shall gain knowledge. Having access to journals (a yearly record of the Grand Lodge session filled with information) and reading them, which are sent you your lodge secretary every year, is helpful too.



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Members who have achieved their Third Degree normally receive a 'Red' Charge Book for their personal use. They may take this book home and read it until their hearts are content. It is my advice to read the small print and learn some facts you may not have known.

The message is to grow and become knowledgeable. Frankly, we need more members learning all they can about the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

You may want move up from our own Grand Lodge sessions and sit in on a Sovereign Grand Lodge session. You may attend these sessions as well. Here, you learn how are Order evolves and how our Ritual is updated, or our code book is changed. On the SGL level, we see our national leaders and we see the overall attitudes of these leaders. Here, you shall get the best observation of where the Odd Fellows are headed and perhaps how we are to get to that point.

Recently, I was asked why I attended SGL. I attend SGL because I can. I attend SGL session because I want to lead the way for all of our members to attend—and to make them aware they can attend. No member is better than the other. If you pay dues and carry your dues card, in most cases, you have the same rights as the 'highest' office in this Order.

Brothers and sisters, you are allowed to ask questions and make suggestions without the fear of being chastised or shut down by someone who thinks he or she is controlling the lodge. Learn and be stronger and become active. I hope you will step up and join me. If you have a question, I will give you the best answer possible or refer you to someone else who may have an answer.

Peter V. Sellars

Grand Warden