



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

December 26, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I'm pleased to send you an essay from Grand Warden Peter Sellars. It's hard-hitting, but right on point. Our choice of path for the future of IOOF is clear: We can stay the course and continue to wither away as an Order. Or we can change the way we do business, grow and prosper.

I choose the second path.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master

THE WRITING IS ON THE WALL, BUT IT DOES NOT
HAVE TO CONTINUE

Peter V. Sellars, Grand Warden

For a few years now, I have shared ideas, taught classes, written articles and books about this wonderful Order we call the "Odd Fellows." On occasion, I have found myself needing to repeat certain topics that I may have addressed 15 or 10 or 5 years ago, because of membership turnover or the relevance of a topic.

Today, the topic is membership, but not necessarily quantity, but quality. It is a given the organization has been in a steep decline for 80 years. It is a given, each Grand Master has touched upon the subject of "Rebuilding Lodges" for those 80 years.

The Dedicated Members For Change, or I should say, "The sharing of facts and ideas collective," has brought us numbers, statistics, encouraging and discouraging messages, all designed to get the attention of the condition of OUR ORDER. Even the messages I have written for the California Odd Fellows & Rebekah Magazine point out facts some enjoy and others do not enjoy



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hearing. The bottom-line, is that there are members who care about the organization in which they belong.

Let me repeat the message of what the DMC and others, who have been pointing out the following: In California, alone, our membership in 1927 stood at nearly sixty thousand members. Today, we stand at slightly above four thousand members!

Now, to be frank, I have heard die hard members, say they would, “Rather die, than change.” Yes, that is true! Just six years ago, I heard a member say this at a Grand Lodge session, along with some others from the peanut gallery, who were echoing his statement. I mean “peanut gallery” in the most derogatory and disrespectful terms.

For me, the aforementioned statement by this member and those others, exemplified the very worse we have in this Order. It is the disheartened spirit, the broken person, who would rather bring the rest of us down, then change. I did not join an organization to see it die. What an incredible waste of time it would have been for so many who have worked hard to maintain the Order.

Brothers and sisters, my perspective on this Order is a little different than those you have read by others. In my opinion, the historical value of this organization in American history is as important and as beneficial as any else we boast of in terms of what we have to offer. Uncovering our history is a treasure hunt. It is as exciting.

Our infrastructure is already in place for our lodges to try many new ideas; so why do so many squander opportunities? There are communities outside your lodges’ doors to receive what you can offer. Why do so many communities not know the Odd Fellows? When I say, “change,” I mean open your doors to your communities. Go out into your communities and do something beneficial for your fellow human beings. This is the first lesson of Odd Fellowship! What have you actually done for other people on this earth, recently? You have a heart, which throbs; so use it. This is the “change” in which I am speaking. The change is for you to do something beneficial for someone else in the NAME OF THE INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS – and then share these good works with the rest of your members.



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Most of our lodges have an income. What is the use of your lodge's, if all it does is save money, invest money, and make money? Spend some of that money for the good of your community and this Order. Think about it. What is the purpose of your business, if you are unwilling to give to your community? There is so much to do. Just make the change.

A Note:

If you are unsure of activities within your community, the Revitalization Committee of the Sovereign Grand Lodge drafted a list of "100 IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT."