



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

December 29, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

How about a good news story?

I was recently sent a copy of an e-mail from an Odd Fellows Lodge near Seattle -from Orcas Island - by the name of Mt. Constitution Lodge #88. The e-mail brought a smile to my face, because it validated my philosophy for the future of our Order: Odd Fellows Lodges can thrive and grow, and be places of joy and fulfillment for members, if they involve themselves in their communities and let themselves have some fun in the Lodge. Lodge members need to open the doors and windows of their Lodges to their communities, and be part of their communities.

What is particularly significant is that this Lodge happens to be located in a very small, very isolated community. The entire population of Orcas Island is about 4,500 people. Why is this important? Because I have heard over and over again from some of our more "conservative" members that my philosophy for Odd Fellowship may work just fine in a large city like San Francisco or in a university town like Davis, but it would never work in their small community. Nonsense. Orcas Island Odd Fellows Lodge completely debunks that assertion. This is a Lodge that doesn't just tread water to survive - this is a Lodge that is active, vibrant, and thrives.

The Orcas Island Lodge is active and completely engaged in the community. In fact, the Lodge has become the center of the community. I invite you to visit their main website at www.oiof.org as well as their hall rental website at www.oddshall.org. These websites reveal a Lodge where things are happening in the fraternity and at the Hall all the time. The Lodge Hall is the place not only for Lodge meetings, but also for birthday parties, wedding receptions, art fairs, karate for the kids, yoga, jazzercise, fusion dancing, tonga dancing, zumba, playing the Native American flute, and classes and community events of all kinds.

I hope you enjoy the letter from our brothers and sisters from Orcas Island as much as I did. This Lodge exemplifies what can be done, even in the smallest of communities. This Lodge is a three-dimensional Lodge: (1) Running smooth and respectful meetings, proud of the rich history and ritual of the Odd Fellows; (2) Recognizing that it is a fraternity with a social component, and so willing to have some fun in the Lodge; and (3) Opening the doors and windows of the Lodge to the community, involving the members in good community works.

Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master



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To Whom It May Concern,

We have a thriving lodge on Orcas Island, 100 miles north of Seattle. We have fantastic weekly meetings that concentrate on community service, camaraderie, inner works, and making sure that each meeting runs smoothly and that our members speak respectfully for the good of the order and listen while softening the need to be right and have things go a certain way. The communication is excellent and the brotherhood is close. We help each other in so many ways: with projects, helping grow food or with building projects, burying each other with dignity when the time comes. We participate in our local parade with a lot of zest and enthusiasm. We deliver firewood to people in need. We help people move who can't afford to hire help. The community knows us well and loves the spirit that we offer. We have a thriving building where people have weddings, dances, community classes, and gatherings of all kinds. We are here to do what we can to elevate the character of human kind.

We are happy to reach out to any lodge to share what is working, why we're not just surviving, but thriving. Reach out to us and send out our communication to lodges that are also thriving and those that are struggling with meaning and fun.

In Friendship, Love, and Truth,

Didier Gincig, Orcas Island, Mt. Constitution Lodge #88