



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

January 10, 2011

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

We can all agree, I think, that this Order cannot continue business as usual - we've lost too many members for two many years with "business as usual". The world has changed dramatically since the 1940's yet Odd Fellows in America has not adjusted. We can all also agree that our Order has a rich history, inspiring goals, and substantial assets. We can build on that.

Change can mean not only looking to the future, but also can mean looking to the past. In this e-mail dialog, there have been at least two schools of thought developing on what "change" really means. One school looks to the past and says we should try to recapture the beneficial spirit that this Order used to possess. I believe that this is an avenue worth pursuing, although I don't believe we can ever recreate a society where fraternal orders provided the benefits that government and private insurance now provides. On the other hand, a number of you have pointed out things we can and should be doing in our Lodges which cost little or no money, e.g. attending to members who are sick or in distress, finding member discounts, etc. . Another school of thought (one which I espouse) is that our fraternity can grow, prosper and add members if we are much more involved in our communities and if we put more emphasis on good fellowship activities within our Lodges. I suggest that these two schools of thought are not inconsistent.

On another subject, I appreciate all the constructive criticism many of you provided on my proposed resolution #8 (not sending our two representatives to SGL in 2011). One of my goals was to generate discussion on a number of topics. This resolution certainly has started to do that. When we have our DMC meeting at GL in May, we can discuss #8 further. Frankly, if the members in DMC are substantially opposed to it, I may very well pull #8 from consideration. (By the way, a number of you have written to me asking me to stand for election as Grand Representative. Thank you for the expressions of support. But I will pass on that. I am focused on making substantial changes here in the jurisdiction of California. I think change here come first. If we can show a change in the dramatic slide of membership, and a movement upwards here in California, that will go a long way toward taking the next steps at SGL.)

Finally, I am pleased to report that our Brother Don Smith is making progress. He was moved to a hospital in Stockton because there was some indication that he would need surgery, but that doesn't appear to be the case now. Looks like the antibiotics are doing the job. He will be moved to a nursing facility to continue with the antibiotics and to start some walking and physical therapy - he's been flat on his back for two weeks. Let's continue to keep Don in our thoughts and prayers. He's a strong man and a fighter, but this infection really knocked him for a



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loop.

Fraternally,

Dave