



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

May 8, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

The link, below, is another in a series of articles concerning the struggles of fraternal orders facing membership declines. These struggles are by no means limited to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. On the contrary, each and every fraternal order in this nation has seen its membership rolls decline over the past decades.

There was a time when one out of every eight adult Americans belonged to a fraternal order. The three largest fraternities in the United States - in order - were the Odd Fellows, the Masons and the Knights of Pythias. Each of them once had a membership close to 1 million. Today, the membership of each is in the thousands, and declining every year. Below is an article from the State of Wisconsin about the decline in membership in the Masons. When you read the article, you will find much that is familiar.

And yet, it doesn't have to be this way going forward into the future. In the midst of all this decline, year after year, there are a handful of Lodges that are growing and thriving. If we just take the time to study their formulas for success, we may just learn the path to the future for IOOF. Remember, Odd Fellowship has NOT been a static organization - it has evolved over the years to meet changing times. For example, Odd Fellowship was the first fraternal order to open to women when the Rebekah Degree was created. The degrees of Odd Fellowship today are quite different than the degrees of the past. Less than a generation ago, Odd Fellows Lodges opened to women. Sovereign Grand Lodge recently announced that they would begin the process of consolidating branches of this Order. Evolution and change is inherent in this Order.

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[http://host.madison.com/news/local/masons-grappling-with-aging-and-declining-membership/article\\_caf49c0a-e8a3-11de-bdfd-001cc4c03286.html](http://host.madison.com/news/local/masons-grappling-with-aging-and-declining-membership/article_caf49c0a-e8a3-11de-bdfd-001cc4c03286.html)