



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

June 5, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Here are some thoughts on the future from one of our DMC Members - Joa Schwinn, Santa Rosa Lodge #53 - which provides us further food for thought. Brother Joa ties our "ancient admonitions" to the present date.

The focus - as it must be - is on membership, and how to increase it.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg

---

For general distribution to the DMC membership... and any Odd Fellow for that matter!

Dear Dave and DMC Members,

It is always the first step to identify the problem. Our membership is declining. Yet, the underlying reason for this has not received a consensus agreement, much less a unified approach to the challenges. I agree with Dave that the lodge must be a place of fraternity, camaraderie, and active social involvement that is both aware of the traditions of Odd Fellows, but takes on new and vibrant approaches to bringing and keeping members. I love the simple guide star of "Membership, Membership, Membership". From there... where do we go?

I offer the following thoughts and I will be making efforts to bring these changes to bear in my own lodge. I am very open to comments and critic (positive please).

**1) EDUCATED THE ORPHAN (CHILDREN):**

Develop new and dynamic plans for community involvement with leaders for each plan. Things like providing scholarship programs for kids who have struggled in school because of difficult home lives (foster homes, single working moms, homelessness, abusive homes, etc). Idea: Get local business to have a member join the lodge and mentor a vocational student through an Odd Fellow scholarship. This would both involve at least one Odd Fellow with at least a couple local youths on an ongoing basis. Sending forth members to bring in new members from the business community works in all directions



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

## **2) BURY THE DEAD:**

Provide a higher level of service to the community in dealing with the death of people without family, the indigent, and the care of the cemeteries. We have a "Rural Cemetery" dating back to the mid 1800"s that had fallen victim to vandalism, over growth, and lack of care and maintenance. There were old local families who did not even know they had relatives buried there. A local effort brought a huge community response that cleaned the cemetery up, repaired graves and head stones, and started a recapture of burial data that is still going on. Local families are now aware that there are plots, crypts, and the like that may have an affect on where people choose to be interred. Additionally, the "Potter's Field" could have improvements and burial / cremation cost could be assisted with. Memorial pages could be set up on the internet, etc.

## **3) VISIT THE SICK:**

My wife and I used to take our Golden Retriever, Kona, to visit the bed ridden and oft terminal patients at the hospital. People eyes would light up when he walked in! This works for the homes where the elderly live, assisted living communities, and children services. Kona was our martial arts school (dojo) mascot and all the kids loved him. This is one example of how people can take a little time out of their day to make another person's life so much better. It takes someone with the leadership skills to engender the volunteers and relationships to make this work. Could a members, old or new, be made the champion of the noble cause?

## **4) RELIEVE THE DISTRESSED:**

There are so many opportunities here that the list should not be one where we would need to try and come up with ideas, but to have to limit our efforts. The social needs here are tremendous. The return to the Odd Fellow membership is immeasurable. One example: At our dojo, we hold an event every year that is solely for a charitable cause. This often is the biggest event of the year. People WANT to help. This year we are holding an international level event where the charitable recipients are a summer camp program for abused kids, and our local YWCA home for women and kids (usually victims of domestic violence).

Membership drive ideas to upgrade and make dynamic the following:

### **The Initiation & Degree Ceremonies**

Both video and live events should be made to create a fresh new face with the new Odd Fellows approaches. I have ideas, as I am sure many do. This should be a collective work to take into consideration old traditions, but the need for new energy. Creative minds can make this work. I want to talk with my crew first before offering ideas. Could be a sensitive area... ???



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

### **The Membership Meetings**

General meetings where there is activity decided upon by the membership rather than the "bore me to snore-dom" that has chased away the younger candidates. This may take a little doing but I know it can be done by some simple protocol changes and a little guidance.

### **Internet Presence and Social Networking**

Facebook, individual website upgrades, email newsletter, etc

### **Community event involvement**

Annual BBQ at the Odd Fellows Park (park clean up, improvement projects, etc). This could be both a great event for any lodge to bring other lodges together too!

... but most important... Lodge activity that builds connection and friendship among the members social nights (later event 7-10 pm) where movies, poker / darts / pool, bingo... and yes, membership drives are held). This is the bread and butter of this whole idea. If we lose the aspect of having fun with people we like, or at least get along with, because of a common purpose, then the mission will fail. Get involved and make it happen.

IMHO and two cents....

All the best,

Joa