



## **Davis Odd Fellows Pledge Book**

Davis Lodge Number 169 Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
(Updated May 2023)

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## Welcome to Davis Lodge Number 169 Independent Order of Odd Fellows

Welcome to the Lodge of the Davis Odd Fellows, known officially as Davis Lodge Number 169, Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Did you know that the Davis Odd Fellows is the oldest organization in the City of Davis? Yes, it's true. Odd Fellows was established in Davis in 1870—just five years after the end of the Civil War—and has been here longer than the City of Davis or the University of California at Davis. The original Odd Fellows Lodge Hall was located on G Street in Downtown Davis and was established in 1875. This first Lodge was sold to the Masons many years ago and is presently occupied by offices and retail. The current Lodge at 415 Second Street, was constructed in 1955. In 2006-16 the Lodge underwent a major million-dollar renovation and refurbishing. The Hall is available for members and their families, many community events take place in the Lodge Hall, and we are very proud of its new look.

Davis Odd Fellows are part of a national and worldwide organization. Our focus is community support and charitable giving. We have provided significant financial support over the years to dozens and dozens of local community and charitable organizations.

Many great men and women have served as Odd Fellows. Did you know that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was an Odd Fellow? Other notable Odd Fellows include Earl Warren and Leland Stanford, several Presidents of the United States and Governors of California, and Charlie Chaplin and Wyatt Earp.

Over 360 members make Davis Odd Fellows the vibrant, exciting organization that it is. With our newly remodeled Lodge Hall right in the heart of Davis, we intend to continue to enjoy each other's company, and to be active and involved in our community.

**Dave Rosenberg**  
**Independent Order of Odd Fellows**

## History and Facts About the Odd Fellows

### History

The Odd Fellows is one of the oldest world-wide fraternal orders. Some books actually claim to trace Odd Fellowship back to Roman times when members of the Roman Legions in England were called “Fellow Citizens”, but that sort of claim is speculation, at best. What is said to be the earliest printed record of an Odd Fellows Lodge appears in a reference to a Lodge meeting at a Globe Tavern in England in 1748. The Lodge number was nine, so apparently there were at least nine associated Odd Fellows Lodges at that time.

How did “Odd Fellows” get its name? The generally accepted belief is that it stemmed from 18th Century England where lodges and fraternal orders were founded to foster and advance a particular profession, and it was “odd” to find people of various professions organized for the purpose of giving aid to those in need and pursuing projects for the benefit of mankind. Those who belonged to such an organization were called “Odd Fellows.” Odd Fellows are also known as “The Three Link Fraternity” which stands for Friendship, Love and Truth.

Odd Fellowship started in England and it is still active there. Odd Fellows came to the United States through the work of an Englishman who came to this country. Thomas Wildey, founder of Odd Fellowship in North America, was a man of immense vitality, humor, and warmth. He was born in London, England, in 1772. He was left an orphan five years later—and the Odd Fellow pledge to “Educate the Orphan” sprang from his personal childhood experiences. At the age of 14, Wildey went to live with an uncle. After he had 9 years of schooling, he became an apprentice to a maker of coach springs. He joined the Odd Fellows in England in 1804. Restlessness brought Thomas Wildey to America in 1817. The British, however, were still unpopular in the States because of the War of 1812. In 1817, Baltimore, where Wildey settled, was suffering both a yellow fever epidemic and mass unemployment. Wildey missed companionship so he advertised in the newspaper to determine if there were any other Odd Fellows in Baltimore. He requested that they meet him at the Seven Stars Inn. On April 26, 1819, Wildey and the four men who responded to the advertisement met and began a process that would lead to the formation of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in North America, dedicating the Order to achieve philanthropic goals. Other Englishmen who were Odd Fellows had grouped in the States along the Eastern Seaboard, and Wildey gathered them all into the newly formed fraternity. He traveled widely to set up Lodges in the most recently settled parts of the country. At the time of his death in 1861, there were more than 200,000 members of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows all across North America.

The Odd Fellows were the first organization that organized Lodges for women through the Rebekah Order way back in 1851. Schuyler Colfax, Vice President of the United States under Ulysses S. Grant, was the force behind the movement. Odd Fellows were also the first group to form Homes for their aged members and the first such home was in Pennsylvania. Odd Fellows also have Lodges for boys and girls, Junior Odd Fellows and Theta Rho, as well as youth camps—including summer camps in California.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows has been active in California since September 9, 1849, one year before California Statehood and eleven years before the start of the Civil War. At that time, California Lodge Number 1 was established in San Francisco. There are over 300 Lodges in California today, under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California, and (nationally) the Sovereign Grand Lodge located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Yolo Lodge Number 169 (now called the "Davis Lodge") was chartered in 1870, well before there was a City of Davis and a University of California at Davis. The Davis Lodge is the oldest, continuously operated organization in Davis. The first IOOF Lodge Hall in Davis was constructed in 1875 and was located on G Street. The second IOOF Lodge Hall is the current Hall at 415 Second Street, and was constructed in 1955. The Lodge Hall and surrounding buildings is jointly owned by the Davis Odd Fellows Lodge and the Davis Rebekah Lodge.

## Activities

Any person over 16 years of age is eligible to be an Odd Fellow. That person must be sponsored by a Lodge member and be of good character, be loyal to their country, and believe in a Supreme Being. There are two levels of membership: regular and associate. A regular member may possess all three degrees and then may vote and hold office. A regular member may become an associate member in another Lodge. In addition to the Initiatory Degree, there is the First Degree (the Degree of Friendship), the Second Degree (the Degree of Love), and the Third Degree (the Degree of Truth). An Odd Fellow who possesses all three degrees may also join the Rebekah Order. There are affiliated degrees such as the Order known as the Encampment. This is open to any Third Degree member and confers three additional degrees: The Patriarchal, Golden Rule, and Royal Purple Degree. An Encampment member who has attained the Royal Purple Degree may join a semi-military organization known as the Patriarchs Militant Degree. This degree is based upon the principle of Universal Justice and is intended to be purely military and for the purposes of display.

Internationally, Odd Fellows is a worldwide fraternal order with over 10,000 Lodges in 25 countries, actively involved in civic and philanthropic efforts. Odd Fellows and Rebekahs spend over \$775 million in relief projects annually. The Educational Foundation provides substantial loans and grants to students. SOS Village provides a caring home for orphaned children in Cambodia. Living Legacy focuses on planting trees and enhancing our environment. The Odd Fellows and Rebekahs also support the Arthritis Foundation, the Visual Research Foundation, and the United Nations Pilgrimage for Youth.

In California, the Order operates the Saratoga Retirement Community and the Meadows of Napa Valley which include large independent and assisted living centers, as well as skilled nursing facilities and memory care, Fellowship Plaza which provides senior housing facilities for those with limited income, and the California Odd Fellows and Rebekah Children's Home serving as a home for abused and/or severely disturbed children. The Grand Lodge of California also operates a youth summer camp available to children and grandchildren of members.

Locally, over 280 current members of the Davis Lodge, provide substantial donations to civic and charitable groups (such as Pine Tree Gardens, Hospice, the Yolo County Mexican-American Concilio, the Martin Luther King Jr. dinner, YCCC, foster children and families, and others), and sponsors community events (like Breakfast with Santa, Taste of Davis, the Davis Chocolate Festival, the Davis Classic Film Fest, and the Annual Picnic Day Parade Breakfast) that benefit the citizens of Davis and Yolo County.

## **Historical Information on “Yolo Lodge #169” (now known as “Davis Lodge #169”) Independent Order of Odd Fellows**

### **From California Odd Fellowship—Early History 1849-1988**

YOLO LODGE #169, instituted April 12, 1870, at Davisville (Davis), Yolo County, by Grand Master, John Brown Harmon, of Apollo Lodge #123, San Francisco. He was accompanied by Elias Driggs Farnsworth, Most Worthy Grand Sire, who was visiting California at the time; (This was the first time a California Lodge had the distinction of having a Grand Sire in attendance, when instituted.); P.G.P., Lewis Soher, Mokelumne Lodge #44, P.G.M., John A. McClelland, San Francisco #3; Grand Secretary, T. Rodgers Johnson, also of San Francisco Lodge; Daniel Webster Welty, Sacramento Lodge #2, Sacramento. (He would be elected Grand Master in 1875.) John P. Davis, P.G., from Victoria B.C., and Henry K. Snow, D.D.G.M. from Capitol Lodge #87, Sacramento. A large delegation from Eureka Lodge #4 and El Dorado Lodge #8, were also in attendance.

CHARTER MEMBERS: NOBLE GRAND, Jacob Horning, the first representative to Grand Lodge in 1871, in the City of Sacramento. VICE GRAND, Frantz Multner; RECORDING SECRETARY, Charles Hartman; TREASURER, Markus Weinberger. Others were, James D. Ford, H. Bunkattar, A.B. Bonhan, James H. Clark, John L. Morgan, F.E. Fliggles, and George Pierce.

On August 21, 1876, the brothers dedicated their new building. Grand Master, Harmon J. Tilden, a member of Parker Lodge #124, San Francisco, granted a dispensation to the lodge, permitting them to wear their regalia in public, during the downtown parade, and dedication program. The ceremony was under the supervision of D.D.G.M., Julius Amos Kinsman, a member of the Yolo Lodge. At the time their membership was 53, and six of them Past Grands. The brethren remained at this location until their new Temple at 415 Second Street was dedicated in 1956. On Saturday, April 11, 1970, Yolo Lodge celebrated their 100th anniversary. Guests during the centennial observance were two granddaughters of the lodge's first Noble Grand, Jacob Horning, Mrs. John Rogers, age 84, and Mrs. George Washington Swenson, age 81, both residents of Davis. Others taking part in this once in a lifetime event were: Noble Grand, Karl Wuest, who acted as Master of Ceremonies. (He passed away, September 15, 1983.) Vice Grand, Alvin Stone; Recording Secretary, John Dunlap, died January 24, 1979; Treasurer, Robert Ring, died May 20, 1976; Inside Guardian, James Blades, died April 12, 1985; Outside Guardian, Norton Honeyfield, died March 1986; and Financial Secretary, Samuel Weis, whom I'm indebted to for his assistance in gathering information on his lodge.

Visiting dignitaries included Joseph Mayes, D.D.G.M.; William Hooper, D.D.G.M.; Margaret Hooper, D.D.P.; Charles Alvin Beach, P.G.M., a member of El Dorado Lodge #8, Sacramento; Ralph Aronson, Mayor of Davis; William Duncan, Chm. Yolo County Board of Supervisors from Winters, and Raymond Smith Gilpatrick, Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of California, and a member of Morning Light Lodge #42 at Campbell. Davisville (Davis) Rebekah Lodge #253, instituted April 15, 1901, served refreshments following the program.

# The ABC's of Odd Fellowship

By Dave Rosenberg, PG, and Don Smith, PSGM

## A

### Anniversary

Organized Odd Fellowship emerged from Eighteenth Century England, and traveled to the United States in the early Nineteenth Century. On April 2, 1819, Thomas Wildey, John R.B. Welch, Richard Rushworthy, John Duncan and John Cheatham met at the Seven Stars Inn in Baltimore, Maryland, and Odd Fellowship in America was born. On April 2, 2019, Odd Fellowship in the United States will celebrate its 200th birthday.

### Admonishments

Founded in the Eighteenth Century as a “friendly society” (a group formed for the mutual self-help of its members), Odd Fellowship developed ancient admonishments including: “visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead and educate the orphan.”

## B

### Bylaws

Every Odd Fellows Lodge has a set of Bylaws, approved by the Grand Lodge of the jurisdiction. The Bylaws govern the conduct and proceedings of the Lodge, but must conform to the rules and regulations of the Odd Fellows Ritual, Code of General Laws and the Roberts Code of California Odd Fellows Laws.

## C

### Creed

Odd Fellows believe in the universal brotherhood of Man and the fatherhood of God. Odd Fellowship is non-partisan, non-sectarian, and welcoming of all people without regard to religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, and national origin.

### Committees

Many Lodges conduct much of their work through Lodge Committees such as the Finance Committee, By-laws Committee, Good Fellowship Committee, Community Support Committee, and others.

### Character

A goal of Odd Fellowship is to “elevate the character of Man.” In the daily exercise of friendship, love and truth, Odd Fellows strive to make a better world.

### Conductor

The conductor is an officer of the Lodge, appointed by the noble grand. The main charge of the conductor is to receive candidates for initiation when they enter the Lodge room, and to perform all duties assigned in conferring degrees.

## California

Along with the Gold Rush, Odd Fellowship came to California. On September 9, 1849, one year to the day before California became the 31st State of the United States, California Lodge #1 was chartered in San Francisco.

## D

### Degrees

Once a member is initiated into the Lodge, he/she is said to hold the Initiatory Degree. As an initiated member, he/she has all rights and privileges of the Lodge, including the right to vote. The initiated member cannot hold office in the Lodge until he/she holds the other three degrees of the Lodge. The three degrees are the Degrees of Friendship, Love and Truth.

### Dues

Dues are collected annually from each regular member of the Lodge. A portion may be retained by the Lodge, and portions of the dues are shared with the Grand Lodge of the jurisdiction as well as the Sovereign Grand Lodge.

## E

### Encampment

Odd Fellow Lodge members who have earned all three degrees in their Lodge may seek to join an Encampment. Members of the Encampment are known as Patriarchs. Each Encampment also confers three degrees – the degrees of Faith, Hope and Charity—and has a full slate of officers, just like the Odd Fellows Lodge. The highest office in the State is the Grand Patriarch. Only one member of our Davis Lodge has ever been elected Grand Patriarch: Dave Rosenberg.

## F

### Financial Secretary

The financial secretary is an elected officer of the Lodge charged with correctly keeping the accounts between the Lodge and members, receiving all monies due to the Lodge and working with the secretary and treasurer to properly maintain the books.

### Flag

The United States flag is honored in every Lodge and is an important part of the Lodge ceremony and ritual.

### Friendship

The first degree of Odd Fellowship is known as the Degree of Friendship. It is represented by one of the three links—the link on the left.

## G

### Grand Lodge

The Lodges in a jurisdiction are part of a “Grand Lodge”. In California, the Grand Lodge convenes once each year for four or five days and governs Odd Fellowship in the jurisdiction, with a Board of Directors conducting the affairs of the Grand Lodge in the interim. Delegates at Grand Lodge elect that Board, as well as the Officers of the Grand Lodge: the Grand Master, the Deputy Grand Master, the Grand Warden, the Grand Secretary and the Grand Treasurer.

#### Guardians

The Lodge has an inside guardian and an outside guardian, appointed by the noble grand, to guard the doors leading into the Lodge meetings, to ensure that only qualified Lodge members enter.

#### Good Fellowship

Part of the joy and reward of belonging to a fraternal order is the good fellowship that comes with membership in the Lodge. Different Lodges engage in a wide variety of social and fellowship activities for the members including dinners, trips, wine tasting, and more.

#### Grand Master

The highest elected office in the State of California is the “Grand Master”. Representatives of all California Lodges vote for and elect a Grand Master every year to serve a one-year term. Only two Davis Odd Fellows have ever served as Grand Master: Dave Rosenberg and Dave Reed.

### H

#### Homes

The California Grand Lodge opened a home for aging members in Thermalito, Butte County, in 1895. Today, the Odd Fellows Home of California Board of Directors operates two outstanding retirement communities: The Saratoga Retirement Community and The Meadows of Napa Valley, serving Odd Fellows, Rebekahs, and members of the general public. Odd Fellowship was the first organization to establish homes for senior members and for children in 1771 in Pennsylvania.

#### Hall

Many Odd Fellows Lodges own and operate their own Lodge Halls (sometimes also called Temples). Often, these Halls are owned in conjunction with a local Rebekah Lodge. Typically, the Lodge Hall is managed and maintained by a Hall Board, composed of Lodge members. Small towns throughout Northern California contain historic Odd Fellows Lodge Halls.

### I

#### Independent Order of Odd Fellows

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) is a fraternal order with a long history. At a time when other fraternal orders were forming in England to help themselves, the Odd Fellows formed in part to help others who were less fortunate. They were called “odd fellows” because they helped members of society who needed their help. Community service is part of the history of this Order.

#### Initiation



An applicant for membership to a Lodge must be voted on by the existing members in a secret ballot. If the applicant receives an affirmative vote, and pays dues and the initiation fee, the Lodge will initiate the applicant in a secret ceremony and the applicant will be a member of the Lodge holding the Initiatory Degree.

#### Initials

The Order uses initials to designate offices and past offices. For example, the Noble Grand is identified as NG, the Vice Grand as VG, the Right Supporter of the Noble Grand is RSNG. A Past Grand of a Lodge is identified as PG, the Past Grand Master is PGM, and the Past Sovereign Grand Master is PSGM.

#### Installation

Once each year, the Lodge will install its newly elected officers. Typically, officers are nominated in October, elected in November, and installed in January. Elected Lodge officers are the Noble Grand, Vice Grand, Secretary, Treasurer and Financial Secretary.

#### J

##### Jewels

Odd Fellowship provides a plethora of “jewels” which are badges reflecting service and achievement in the Order.

#### K

##### Knowledge

Every member of the Order is expected to gain knowledge from participation in the Initiation. Further, by attaining the First, Second and Third Degrees, members increase their knowledge about their fraternity and about themselves.

#### L

##### Love

The second degree of Odd Fellowship is the Degree of Love. This degree is represented by the link in the center of the three links symbol of the Order.

#### Links

Odd Fellowship is often called “the three-links fraternity” based on the symbol of the order – the three intertwined links standing for “friendship, love and truth”.

#### M

##### Membership

Membership in a Lodge can be either regular or associate. Every member must be a regular member of one Lodge, but may be an associate member of more than one Lodge. To survive and flourish in the 21st Century, every member of Odd Fellows must seek out and bring new members to the Order.

## N

### Noble Grand

The “president” of each Odd Fellows Lodge is called “Noble Grand”. Other elected officers are Vice Grand, Secretary, Treasurer and Financial Secretary. Each Lodge also has a number of appointed officers, including Warden, Conductor, Chaplain, Inside Guardian, Outside Guardian, Supporters of the Noble Grand and Vice Grand, Scene Supporters, Musician and Color Bearer.

## O

### Odd Fellowship

A member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows is referred to as an Odd Fellow. Because this is a fraternal order, members may refer to each other as Brothers and Sisters.

### Odd Fellows

No one knows, for sure, how the name “Odd Fellows” came into being. Some have speculated that it was due to the fact that the original members spent a fair amount of time helping others, which was an odd thing to do in early fraternities, hence they were called “those odd fellows”.

## P

### Past Grand

After a Noble Grand has served his/her term, that officer is known as “Past Grand”. Past Grands can be appointed to the position of District Deputy Grand Master, and can be delegates to the Grand Lodge.

### Patriarchs Militant

Those Odd Fellows who have earned all three degrees in their lodges, and who joined an Encampment and earned all three degrees in that encampment, are eligible to join the Patriarchs Militant. This is the uniformed branch of Odd Fellowship. The P.M. offers one degree, the highest in Odd Fellowship: The Degree of Universal Justice. The highest statewide office of the P.M. is the Commander of the Department Council of the Patriarchs Militant. Only one Davis Odd Fellow has ever been elected to this office: Brigadier General Dave Rosenberg.

## Q

### Quorum

The traditional number of Odd Fellows required to conduct business at a meeting is five.

### Quality

More than the quantity of our members, it’s the quality of our members and the good works that are done by Odd Fellows Lodges that distinguish this Order.

## R

### Rebekah

Odd Fellows were the first fraternal order to admit women. Schuyler Colfax, Vice President of the United States and an Odd Fellow, is credited with the proposal to create the Rebekahs. In the middle of the 1800's, Rebekah Lodges were formed to be "sister" lodges to Odd Fellows Lodges. The distinctions have lessened since Odd Fellows Lodge membership has long been open to women, and Rebekah Lodge membership has long been open to men. The Odd Fellows Grand Lodge of California and the Rebekah Assembly of California jointly operate a Children's Home in Gilroy, California. Only one Davis Rebekah has ever been elected to the highest statewide office as President of the Rebekah Assembly: Diana Schmiegel.

#### Ritual and Regalia

Harkening back almost 200 years, Odd Fellowship has developed a ritual including rites of initiation, a secret grip and secret passwords. The officers and members of the Lodge wear regalia during closed, ritual meetings. It's part of what makes Odd Fellows a fraternal order.

### S

#### Sovereign Grand Lodge

The Sovereign Grand Lodge is made up of Grand Lodges throughout the world, including Independent Grand Lodges in Europe and Australasia. The officers are the Sovereign Grand Master, the Sovereign Deputy Grand Master, the Sovereign Grand Warden, the Sovereign Grand Secretary and the Sovereign Grand Treasurer.

#### Secretary

The secretary is an elected officer of the Lodge, charged with keeping accurate records of the transactions of the Lodge.

#### Service

Service to the community is an important part of the work done by Odd Fellows Lodges. Different Lodges have undertaken support functions of varying kinds—helping senior citizens, hosting fundraising dinners for charitable groups, bingo for the community, mentoring children, and the like.

### T

#### Treasurer

The treasurer is an elected officer of the Lodge, in charge of all the funds of the Lodge. The treasurer pays on all orders drawn by the noble grand, attested by the secretary, and keeps accurate accounts of the Lodge finances.

#### Truth

The Degree of Truth is the third degree of Odd Fellowship. It is represented in the three links symbol of the Order as the link on the right.

### U

#### Universal Justice

Odd Fellows believe in universal precepts such as friendship, love and truth, and working to elevate the character of Man. The motto of the Patriarchs Militant, a uniformed unit of Odd Fellowship, is Universal Justice. At the height of its popularity before World War I, it was common to see hundreds of Chevaliers in uniform participating in community parades. During the 1915 session of the Sovereign Grand Lodge meeting in California that year, over 10,000 Chevaliers marched in a parade observing the session in California.

#### United Nations Pilgrimage for Youth

Under the auspices of Odd Fellowship, the Order arranges for interested young people to travel to the UN each year.

#### United Kingdom

This is the place where Odd Fellowship began. Odd Fellows Lodges started as “friendly societies” in the 1700’s.

#### V

##### Veterans

The Odd Fellows and Rebekahs of California, desiring to honor veterans, donated a quarter million dollars to the State of California to construct an Occupational Therapy Building at the Veteran’s Home in Yountville.

#### Vice Grand

The number two elected officer in the Lodge is the Vice Grand. The main job of the Vice Grand is to support the Noble Grand, and fill in when the Noble Grand is absent. Often the Vice Grand is next in line to serve as Noble Grand of a Lodge, so service as Vice Grand is an important training period.

#### W

##### Wildey

Thomas Wildey is recognized as the person who brought Odd Fellowship from England to the United States. The very first Lodge was established in Baltimore in 1819, and then Odd Fellows Lodges spread like wildfire across the United States, particularly in the 1800’s.

#### Warden

One of the key appointed offices in the Lodge is the Warden. This officer is charged to ensure that all persons attending closed, ritual meetings of the Lodge are members of the Lodge holding the appropriate degree. The Warden is also charged with the care and safekeeping of the regalia.

#### Websites

Many Lodges have individual websites such as [www.davisoddfellows.com](http://www.davisoddfellows.com). The Grand Lodge of California website can be found at [www.caioof.org](http://www.caioof.org). The Sovereign Grand Lodge website is [www.ioof.org](http://www.ioof.org).

## X

### Excellence

Odd Fellowship provides a number of checks and balances within the rules of the Order to ensure excellence in record-keeping of minutes and bookkeeping of funds. Each Lodge has a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Financial Secretary and a Finance Committee to ensure that the rules are followed.

## Y

### Youth Camp

The California Odd Fellows and Rebekahs own and operate a Youth Camp near Yosemite. Children and grandchildren of members and the general public can participate in a week-long summer camp, and greatly reduced rates.

## You

An organization is only as good as its members. Every member—and that means YOU—has got to find his or her niche in the Order. Every member has got to find his or her way to contribute to the improvement of the Lodge and the fraternity.

## Z

### Zest

With sufficient “zeal” and “zest” there is nothing that Odd Fellows can’t achieve.

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Davis Odd Fellows

What, exactly, is the Odd Fellows Lodge?

The Odd Fellows Lodge is a fraternal order, so the members have secret passwords, signs and handshakes. It's also a social organization and the members have fun together with movie nights, trips, game nights, breakfasts and dinners. But primarily, the Lodge focuses on good community works, providing support to many charitable organizations. Over the past few years, the Davis Odd Fellows have provided hundreds of thousands of dollars and other support to community groups.

How did you get the name "Odd Fellows"?

When it was first formed in England in the 1700's, the membership was focused on supporting people who were in need. Other fraternal orders at the time were formed to boost the professions and trades of their members. Accordingly, the members of our order were considered "odd fellows". And the name stuck.

Where is the Davis Odd Fellows Lodge located?

The Davis Odd Fellows Lodge is the oldest organization in the area, having been chartered in 1870, well before there was a city of Davis and before there was a UCD. Its first Lodge Hall was located on G Street and was constructed in 1875. The Davis Odd Fellows moved into its present Lodge Hall on 415 Second Street in Downtown Davis in 1955.

Who can join Odd Fellows?

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) is non-religious, non-political, and non-discriminatory. Men and women over 16 can join. If you are interested in learning more about the Davis Odd Fellows please visit our web site at [www.davislodge.org](http://www.davislodge.org). If you want information about possible membership in the Lodge please contact our Membership Chair at [daverose@jps.net](mailto:daverose@jps.net).

Who are the members of the Davis Odd Fellows?

Currently, over 360 men and women are members of the Davis Odd Fellows. The members include or have included county supervisors, city council members, newspaper editors, judges, police chiefs, the district attorney and the public defender, homemakers, retired persons, students, physicians, lawyers, computer specialists, government workers, teachers, fire-fighters, and many more. Members range in age from 19 to 91.

What do the three links signify?

The symbol of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows is the three intertwined links, one of white, one of blue and one of red. They symbolize the three degrees of Odd Fellowship: Friendship, Love and Truth. The three links are displayed on the outside of the Davis Odd Fellows Lodge Hall at 415 Second Street in downtown Davis.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the Davis Rebekah Lodge**

What, exactly, is the Davis Rebekah Lodge?

The Davis Rebekah lodge is part of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows -a fraternal order. So, the members have secret passwords, signs and handshakes. It's also a social organization and the members have fun together and try to do good works in the community. The Davis Rebekah Lodge, along with the Davis Odd Fellows Lodge, owns the Odd Fellows Lodge Hall building and the surrounding property currently rented to Hunan Restaurant and Coldwell-Banker Doug Arnold Real Estate.

What is the history of the Rebekah Lodge?

The first Rebekah Lodge was founded in the 1850's by Schuyler Colfax, an Odd Fellow and Vice President of the United States to U.S. Grant. The Rebekah Lodge was meant to be the "women's Lodge" in conjunction with the Odd Fellows Lodge which was meant to be the "men's lodge". These distinctions have diminished when membership was opened to both sexes in both Lodges.

Where is the Davis Rebekah Lodge located?

The Davis Odd Fellows Lodge is the oldest organization in the area, having been chartered in 1870, well before there was a city of Davis and before there was a UCD. The Davis Rebekah Lodge was chartered in 1901. Both Lodges use the Odd Fellows Hall. The first Lodge Hall was located on G Street and was constructed in 1875. Both Lodges moved into their present Lodge Hall on 415 Second Street in Downtown Davis in 1955.

Who can join the Davis Rebekah Lodge?

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) is non-religious, non-political, and non-discriminatory. Men and women over 18 can join. Currently the Davis Rebekah Lodge has 40 members. For more information, contact Lea Rosenberg, Past Noble Grand of the Rebekah Lodge, at [learose@jps.net](mailto:learose@jps.net).

## **Davis Lodge Number 169 Independent Order of Odd Fellows Trustees and Officers of the Lodge**

Trustees.

The By-laws of the Lodge establish the positions for Three Trustees of the Lodge, all of whom are elected. The Trustees shall have general supervision and management of all properties and funds of the Lodge, acting as a Board. The Trustees serve as the Lodge representatives on the Hall Board, which along with three Rebekah representatives, manages the Lodge's real property, coordinates use of the Lodge

Hall, and accounts for and distributes rental revenue from the Lodge's real property and from the Lodge Hall. This revenue is distributed equally to the Odd Fellows Lodge and to the Rebekah Lodge.

#### Elected Officers.

The By-laws of the Lodge establish the positions and duties of five elected officers: Noble Grand, Vice Grand, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary and Treasurer, who serve as Officers of the Lodge. The duties of each office are spelled out in the By-laws.

The Noble Grand presides at all meetings of the Lodge. By virtue of his/her office, the Noble Grand is also a Trustee and a Hall Board member, and serves as Chair of the Trustees. The Noble Grand appoints all officers and committees not otherwise designated. The Noble Grand ensures that all Officers, Committees and members of the Lodge perform their duties.

The Vice Grand assumes the duties of the Noble Grand in his/her absence. The Vice Grand examines and reports the results of all ballots. The Vice Grand, in conjunction with the Noble Grand, develops a program of an educational and social nature for the members of the Lodge.

The Recording Secretary keeps a record of the transactions of the Lodge, endorses and files all papers and documents pertaining to Lodge transactions, and has numerous other duties spelled out in the By-laws.

The Financial Secretary keeps accounts in a regular set of books, including the ledger, journal, receipt and cash books, promptly credits the accounts of each member, issues receipts for all monies due the Lodge, and performs numerous other duties spelled out in the By-laws.

The Treasurer receives from the Financial Secretary each Lodge night all Lodge monies in his/her hands, reports on the receipts and expenditures of the preceding months and the balance on hand, and performs numerous other duties spelled out in the By-laws.

#### Appointed Officers.

The Noble Grand appoints a number of officers to perform functions during the IOOF rituals. These officers are: Warden, Conductor, Right and Left Supporters for the Noble Grand, Chaplain, Inside and Outside Guardians, and Right and Left Scene Supporters. The Vice Grand appoints a Right and a Left Supporter for the Vice Grand. The duties of these appointed officers are delineated in the rituals of the Order.

The Warden shall, while in the Lodge, make the members comfortable. The Warden is to examine every person present, in the passwords, when the Lodge is about to be opened, and perform all duties required of the Warden in conferring the degrees. The Warden takes charge of the regalia of the Lodge, and conveys all summonses that may be issued.

The Conductor shall receive the candidates for initiation when they enter the Lodge room, and perform all duties assigned to him/her in conferring the degrees. The Conductor shall also assist the Warden while in the Lodge.



The Right Supporter of the Noble Grand shall assist the Noble Grand, when requested, to take the Noble Grand's seat during a temporary absence, and perform all duties that may be assigned.

The Left Supporter of the Noble Grand shall officiate for the Right Supporter during his/her absence and perform all duties that may be assigned.

The Chaplain shall conduct the devotional exercises of the Lodge and shall perform all ritualistic work as pertains to the Office of Chaplain. The Chaplain shall also perform all duties the Order may enjoin.

The Inside Guardian shall prove all members, before he/she admits them; see that they are in proper regalia; report their names to the Vice Grand, or to the Noble Grand, when so directed. During a temporary absence of the Outside Guardian, the Inside Guardian shall officiate in that office, and at all times obey the commands of the Noble Grand.

The Outside Guardian shall have charge of the anteroom. The Outside Guardian shall see that all persons who enter prove themselves according to the regulations of the Order. The Outside Guardian will secure the outer door against improper intrusion, and submit all cases of doubt to the Noble Grand for decision.

The Right and Left Supporters of the Vice Grand shall assist the Vice Grand in the duties of his/her office. The Right Supporter will take the seat of the Vice Grand during a temporary absence.

Right and Left Scene Supporters shall assist at initiations and otherwise, according to their offices.

The Color Bearer shall present and retire the flag of our country, escorted by the Warden and Conductor, and shall see that it is properly cared for.

The Musician shall provide all required music or accompaniment during the meetings and ceremonies, to the end that the Lodge may be enriched and inspired by the Musician's artistry.

## **Odd Fellows: Membership Degrees**

In 1880 the Sovereign Grand Lodge established the degrees in their current form, which conform to the motto of Odd Fellows: "Friendship, Love and Truth."

### **The Initiatory Degree**

The Initiatory Degree is intended to make a lasting impression on the individuals receiving it. Its mission is to remind the initiates of the vanity of earthly things; the frailty and inevitable decay of human life; and the fact that wealth has no power to stop the sureness of eventual death. The new member is urged to dedicate his life to works of charity and good will, and to govern his relations by the principles of Friendship, Love and Truth. The new member is pledged to make the obligations and duties of Odd Fellowship a part of him or herself every day. Symbols for the Initiatory Degree: The All-Seeing Eye represents the eternal presence of the eye of God upon all of us, night and day. The Three Links represent the principles of Friendship, Love and Truth, binding our members in an enduring union. The Skull and Crossbones remind us of mortality and warn us to so conduct ourselves on earth that Heaven

may be our reward hereafter. The Scythe reminds us that as the grass falls before the mower's scythe, so we all fall before the touch of time. The symbolic color of the Initiatory Degree is White.

### **The First Degree**

The First Degree or The Degree of Friendship recognizes that mankind is a part of the universal brotherhood. An Odd Fellow is entitled, as a right, to receive the aid and council and protection of his or her fellow members, when in distress or in difficult situations. He or she is also obliged to give aid, counsel and protection when the situation is reversed. The first principle of Odd Fellowship is thus termed Fraternity, the universal fraternity of all mankind. The teachings of this degree are founded upon the Friendship of Jonathan and David, as related in the Old Testament Book of First Samuel, and reminds us of the use of the bow and arrow by Jonathan to warn David of great danger. Symbols for the First Degree: The Bow, Arrows and Quiver remind us of Jonathan and David and the covenant made between them. They also remind members to make all laudable efforts to aid a brother or sister when he or she is in distress. The Bundle of Sticks symbolizes the strength of union. While one stick is easily broken, a bundle of sticks cannot be easily broken – thus the members of the Order unite to form an unbreakable force to genuine brotherhood. The symbolic color for this degree is Pink.

### **The Second Degree**

The Second Degree is the degree of Brotherly Love and the second link in the chain of Odd Fellowship is Love, without which neither the first link—Friendship—nor the last link— Truth—is of real value. This degree exemplifies the story of the Good Samaritan and teaches that brotherly love extends its helping hand to those who suffer, regardless of race, creed or nationality. The symbols for the Second degree: The Ax is the emblem of progress, reminding members that, in the hands of the woodsman, it is used to feel the trees of the forest and make way for progress. The Heart and Hand refer to the help which an Odd Fellow should give to a brother or sister who is in need, and the spirit in which help is to be given. The hand of a true Odd Fellow should always be open to the needs of other members of the Order. The heart should always go with the hand. The Globe reminds us that we are citizens of the world and suggests that Odd Fellows reach out their helping hands throughout the world whenever and wherever possible. The Ark replicates the Ark of the Covenant, made under direction of Moses, following instructions from God. The Ark was the receptacle of the stone tablets on which were inscribed the Ten Commandments. The Serpent teaches us that without wisdom to control our actions we would be like a rudderless ship. The symbolic color for this degree is Blue.

### **The Third Degree**

The Third Degree is the Scarlet Degree or the Degree of Truth and the Priestly Order. It represents Truth as the basic principle of sentiment and action, and signifies Truth as the basic foundation of our principles. The voice of truth speaks through forms and symbols as well as words. In fact, truth is sometimes more effectively taught by emblems than by words. Symbols for the Third degree: The Scales and Sword are an emblem representing Justice executed, and emphasize the importance we place on justice, which must prevail for all without distinctions between rich and poor, high and low, or learned and unlearned. The Holy Bible is the source of the doctrine of faith, and provides rules for the proper conduct of life. The Hour Glass reminds us of the passing of time, and shortness of human life on earth. We are admonished to do good for our fellow man. The Coffin is the final symbol, another reminder of

the mortality of man's body and the certainty of death. We are admonished to live life in righteous ways. The symbolic color of this degree is Scarlet.

### **The Rebekah Degree**

The Rebekah Degree was established in 1851 as the basic unit for women in the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Schuyler Colfax (who later became a US Senator and Vice President of the United States) was instrumental in its establishment. It was only created after much debate and it was groundbreaking at the time. Odd Fellows were the only fraternal order to develop a degree and a unit for women. While the majority of Rebekah degree holders today are still women, any Odd Fellow may join a Rebekah Lodge after they have received the Third Degree. The general duties of the members of this unit are: "To live peaceably, do good unto all, as we have opportunity and especially to obey the Golden Rule, Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." The emblems employed in the work this the Rebekah degree are: The Beehive, a representation of cooperative industry teaching the advantages of united efforts in all the noble ministries of the Order; The Moon and Seven Stars represents the never failing order which pervades the universe of God and all of nature, and suggest to the members the value of system, regularity and precision in all worthy undertakings; The Dove, a universally recognized emblem of peace, has this same significance in the Rebekah degree. Through the mission of love and charity, of tolerance and forbearance, Rebekahs are to strive to bring happiness to others and to promote: "Peace on earth and good will to men." The Lily, regarded for untold ages as the emblem of purity, is a fitting symbol of the purity of character, of thought, of work, and of action, which should always be found and manifested in the heart and life of the Rebekah Lodge. The colors of the Rebekah Degree are Green and Pink.

## **Davis Lodge Number 169 Independent Order of Odd Fellows**

### **Motto**

“Friendship, Love and Truth.”

### **Objective**

“To Improve and Elevate the Character of Man.”

### **The Three Links**

The emblem of Odd Fellowship is the Three Links with the letters “F, L & T.” The three links symbolize the chain that binds our members together and illustrates that a fraternity is strongest when joined together. The “F” in the first link represents “friendship,” the strongest bond of fraternity that teaches goodwill and harmony. The “L” represents “love,” the basis for all life’s ambitions, service to others and family. The “T” represents “truth,” the standard by which we value people and the foundation of our society. The Three Links Fraternity: Striving to make the world a better place in which to live.

### **Odd Fellows Valediction**

I AM AN ODD FELLOW

I believe in the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of man;

I believe in Friendship, Love and Truth as basic guides to the ultimate destiny of all mankind;

I believe my home, my church or temple, my lodge, and my community deserve my best work, my modest pride, my earnest faith, and my deepest loyalty, as I perform my duty “to visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead, and educate the orphan” and as I work with others to build a better world because, in spirit and in truth, I am, and must always be, grateful to my Creator, faithful to my Country and fraternal to my fellow man;

I AM AN ODD FELLOW!

## **Davis Lodge Number 169 Independent Order of Odd Fellows Committees**

The Davis Lodge has over 70 committees. Here is a listing of some of them.

Visiting Committee. This is a standing committee required by our By-laws and has a set membership of the Noble Grand, Vice Grand and Treasurer. This committee shall visit all sick or disabled members within 24 hours after being reported to the Lodge to see that they are properly cared for, and report at the next regular meeting.

Finance Committee. This is a standing committee required by our By-laws. The Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Finance Committee shall examine and report on the bills presented, inspect and audit the books and accounts of the Secretary and Treasurer and other officers and committees charged with the receipts and expenditures of money, and are authorized to examine the books or accounts of any officer or committee at any time.

By-laws Committee. This is a standing committee required by our By-laws. The Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The committee consists of three members in good standing and must be appointed by the Noble Grand at the first regular meeting after his/her installation. The By-laws Committee shall review the proceedings of the Grand Lodge of California, and the Sovereign Grand Lodge, and propose any resolutions that might be required in order to keep the By-laws of the Lodge current.

Community Support Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Community Support Committee is the active charitable and social arm of the Lodge. The Committee reviews applications for scholarship funds and approves expenditures from the scholarship account subject to protocols established by the Lodge. The Committee reviews and approves requests for charitable giving and purchases of tickets to charitable and community events subject to protocols established by the Lodge. The Committee coordinates joint fundraisers with community groups, social events for the Lodge, and special events for the Lodge. The Committee reports its actions to the Lodge.

Membership and Initiation Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Membership Committee is charged with coordinating the recruitment and interviewing of potential new members of the Lodge. The Committee will prepare a handbook, pamphlets and papers explaining IOOF to potential new members and initiates. The Committee recommends potential members for initiation. The Committee coordinates the initiatory degree and other degree days.

Good Fellowship Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Committee will plan and implement programs and activities to promote friendship and good fellowship among members of the Lodge. The Committee will also reach

out to members, particularly the newer members, to engage them in the Order and to fully explain the tenets, the ritual, the degrees and other aspects of Odd Fellowship.

Communication and Web Site Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Committee shall be responsible for communicating IOOF activities to the community at large and increasing the visibility of IOOF and its good works in the community. The committee shall also have oversight of the Lodge web site and ensure that the site is a useful communication tool for members.

Bingo Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Committee is charged with the task of exploring the feasibility of establishing a Bingo Night at the IOOF Lodge as a potential fundraiser for the Lodge. The committee shall coordinate once-a-month Bingo nights at the Lodge.

Music Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Committee is charged with bringing musical entertainment to the Lodge Hall for the public.

Taste of Davis Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. This Committee is charged with organizing the annual "Taste of Davis" featuring restaurants, breweries and wineries, open to the public.

Wine Tour Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. This Committee is charged with organizing the second annual Odd Fellows Wine Tour.

Senior Project Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Committee is charged with organizing the second annual Odd Fellows helping seniors project.

Picnic Day Pancake Breakfast Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Committee is charged with organizing the annual picnic day pancake breakfast at the Lodge Hall.

Installation Dinner Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. The Committee is charged with organizing the annual Installation of elected and appointed officers of this Lodge. The Installation Dinner and Ceremony occur in January of each year.

Social Services Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members of this committee. This is a new committee of the Lodge, hoping to help those in need – such as persons with mental illness.

Hiking Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members. This committee represents a group of Odd Fellows and friends who like to take hikes – some are easy and some are moderate.

Classic Film Fest Committee. This is a special committee and the Noble Grand appoints the Chair and members. This committee organizes classic film fests for the benefit of the community.

## **Membership and Initiation Committee Davis Odd Fellows Lodge Protocol for Processing of Applications for Initiation**

To assure a reasonable period of time for members of the Lodge and applicants for membership to the Lodge to get to know one another, the Membership and Initiation Committee (“the Committee”) shall follow this Protocol for the processing of applications for a vote by the membership and initiation:

1. Applications for membership shall be submitted to the Chair of the Committee only on the form prescribed for that purpose. If properly executed, the application shall be read at the next Lodge meeting after submission. Once read at a meeting, the applicant shall be considered a pledge of this lodge.
2. All applicants must have a sponsor. A member of the Lodge shall not sponsor more than four (4) pledges at one time.
3. At the time an application is submitted, the Committee shall assure that every pledge be assigned to a mentor, who shall be a member of the Lodge in good standing who shall have been a member for at least one year. The mentor shall guide the pledge in an understanding of Odd Fellowship and shall actively introduce the pledge to members of the Lodge.
4. The minimum pledge period between the reading of the application and initiation shall be three (3) months.
5. Each pledge during the pledge period should attend a minimum of five (5) meetings and events of the Lodge.
6. Each pledge during the pledge period should volunteer to serve on at least one Lodge committee.
7. Each pledge during the pledge period shall meet and get to know at least eleven (11) members of the Lodge. Each pledge shall be given a “pledge book” by the Chair of the Committee at the time the application is submitted.
8. The Committee shall interview each pledge and make a recommendation of membership to the Lodge. The Committee shall provide to each Lodge member an information sheet on each recommended pledge.
9. If the Committee makes an affirmative recommendation of a pledge, Lodge members shall vote on the admission of that pledge to membership in the Lodge. Any pledge who receives an affirmative majority vote of the members of the Lodge is entitled to be initiated upon the payment of dues and initiation fee.
10. Initiations shall be scheduled on dates that the Lodge directs based on the number of pledges ready for initiation.

## Re-opening of the Odd Fellows Hall

A long-time fixture in Downtown Davis has undergone a major remodel and face-lift. The Odd Fellows Hall, located at 415 Second Street, reopened its doors for a Gala Grand Opening in 2016. The public was cordially invited to see the “new” Hall.

The Hall was closed for over one year during a major remodeling project. The new Hall is completely ADA compliant and features a newly installed elevator. The kitchen has been rebuilt and upgraded with the latest in stainless steel technology. New bathrooms have been installed. But the centerpiece of the project is the basement lodge hall, which is now styled in an art deco look with wood-paneling, acoustic ceiling, 1930–style lighting fixtures, and lush carpeting.

The Hall jointly houses and is jointly owned by Davis Lodge Number 169 Independent Order of Odd Fellows (the Davis Odd Fellows) and Davis Rebekah Lodge Number 253. The Lodge Hall, and all Odd Fellows and Rebekahs property is jointly managed by the Hall Board composed of three Odd Fellows Lodge members and three Rebekahs. Also housed at the Hall is the Davis Encampment and Canton Davis.

The Grand Opening featured wine tasting by local winery Rominger West, finger food supplied by Nugget Markets, pizza from Woodstocks, and ice cream from Schwann’s Creamery. Members of the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs were available to give quick tours of the newly remodeled facility.

The Odd Fellows trace their history back to 1748 in England and 1819 in the United States. The first California Odd Fellows Lodge (Lodge Number 1) opened in San Francisco in 1849. Yolo Lodge Number 169 (now Davis Lodge) was chartered in 1870 (five years after the end of the Civil War) and is the oldest continuously operating organization in Davis, pre-dating the City of Davis and UCD. Odd Fellows are called the “three-link fraternity” based on the logo featuring three interlocking links, which stand for friendship, love and truth. The Davis Odd Fellows are very active in support of charitable and community causes in Yolo County supporting groups such as Pine Tree Gardens, Hospice, the Mexican-American Concilio, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and others. The Davis Odd Fellows put on the Picnic Day Pancake Breakfast in April and the Breakfast with Santa in December.

The Rebekah Order was founded back in 1851. At the time, Odd Fellows was the first organization that founded Lodges for women when it established the Rebekah Order. Schuyler Colfax—Vice President to U.S. Grant and a member of the Odd Fellows—was the driving force behind the founding of the Rebekah Order. Davis Rebekah Lodge Number 253 was instituted on April 5, 1901. The Davis Rebekahs provide scholarships to college students, support the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs float in the annual Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, and are supportive of the Odd Fellows youth camp, among other community activities. The Davis Rebekahs also provide support to two Rebekah and Odd Fellows retirement homes in Napa and Saratoga, and support the heart fund, the arthritis fund, and visual research.

## The Odd Fellows Home of California

By Dave Rosenberg



Did you know that the California Odd Fellows own two remarkable retirement communities? Yes, it's true. IOOF owns The Saratoga Retirement Community ("SRC") in the town of Saratoga as well as The Meadows in Napa. Both are absolutely first-class operations and among the finest retirement communities in the country.

The two communities are operated by The Odd Fellows Home of California ("OFHC") Board of Directors, composed of 13 Directors elected by the Grand Lodge of California and the Rebekah Assembly of California. I am pleased to serve on that Board of Directors. I was appointed to the Board by the Grand Master of California, and confirmed by the Grand Lodge Board of Directors in December 2008. At the May 2009 Grand Lodge in Modesto, I was unanimously elected by the Grand Lodge. At the July 2009 meeting of the Board of Directors, even though I am the newest Board member, my colleagues on the Board elected me to serve as Vice Chairman.

In my opinion, the operation of these two retirement communities is one of the finest things this Order does. I am proud to serve as a member of the OFHC Board of Directors.

The Saratoga Retirement Community is placed on 37 wooded acres and provides 143 independent living apartments and cottages, 105 assisted living apartments, 11 special care units for memory impaired clients, and 94 long and short term skilled nursing beds. Over 200 staff serves the residents of SRA.

The Meadows is set on over 20 acres at the very edge of town with magnificent views of open space. There are 200 independent living apartments, 63 assisted living units, 69 health care beds, and a recently-opened 20 room memory care unit. Over 175 staff serves the residents of The Meadows.

Both SRA and The Meadows are open to adults who are at least 55 years old. The facilities are both open to the general public, and are not limited only to members of the Order.

## **The Three-Legged Stool**

By Dave Rosenberg

Since the end of World War II in 1945, this great Order of Odd Fellows has lost 90% of its membership. If you aren't shocked by that fact, let me put it another way: For the past 65 years, the Order has without fail, lost members, year after year. The California jurisdiction had 50,000 members in 1946 – it now has (at best) 5,000. And, as we all know, 5,000 members really means 2,500 "active" members. Further, many of our Lodges can barely muster a quorum, and some Lodges have members no younger than their 60's, having effectively skipped a generation or two of new members.

Anyone who doesn't believe that Odd Fellowship is at the very brink today ignores history and is doomed to watch the continuation of that decline. This Order will not long survive, I'm afraid, without some fundamental revitalization and change. The irony of all this is that we don't have to do anything radical to save this Order. Instead, we only have to look at our own history and revisit the things that once made this Order great in the 1800's and 1900's. In those days, people sought out membership in the Odd Fellows. It was the place to be in the community. Why is that?

Odd Fellowship was strong (and can be strong again) by viewing the fraternity as having three great pillars of support, or to put it in more mundane terms, as a three-legged stool. If all legs are strong, the stool will support the body. If one of the legs is weak, the stool will totter and fall. If two legs are weak, the stool will certainly collapse. Odd Fellowship was strong in the past because Lodges were supported by three strong legs of the stool. Odd Fellowship is weak today because most Lodges simply rely on one leg and have de-emphasized, ignored or forgotten the other two legs of the stool. So, what are these three legs which should support and can transform our Order?

#### Fraternity

We begin with the great fraternal history and substantial assets of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. We have, indeed, a distinguished past on which we can build. We have fine and dedicated members. We have Lodge Halls that stand in the heart of many communities. We have a tradition and rituals which (while needing modernization and revision in some instances) have served us well for over two hundred years.

This leg is quite strong throughout the Order. The other two legs, however, are in need of strengthening in virtually every Lodge.

#### Community

We have to re-connect with our communities. Once, long ago, the IOOF Lodge was the very center of the town. It can be again. But too many of our Lodges have withdrawn into their four walls and have become virtually invisible in their towns. That has to change. Lodges need to open themselves up to the community. This can be done in many ways. Lodges should have open meetings from time to time – a great way to invite prospective members to see what the Lodge does as well as get to know the Lodge members, and for Lodge members to get to know prospective members. Lodges should sponsor events on behalf of charitable and community groups. Two or three such annual events can go a long way to establish a Lodge's reputation as a leading community organization. Those Lodges that own Lodge Halls should make those Halls available for the community for appropriate events.

#### Fellowship

We are members of a fraternal order and that involves much more than passwords, signs and grips. A fraternal order is a fellowship. And that means that the Lodge must foster events and functions that bring members together to enjoy each other's company and socially interact: breakfasts, lunches, dinners, hikes, trips, movie nights, game or card nights, wine tasting, beer brewing, dances, whatever the members feel will encourage good fellowship.

Ultimately, we have to ask ourselves: Why does anyone wish to become an Odd Fellow in the 21st Century? If we are brutally honest with ourselves, we would have to conclude that very few people join because of the ritual. Realistically, people join because of two reasons: (1) IOOF does good works in the community, and (2) IOOF provides a social network where members can enjoy each other's company and have a little fun.

In my Davis Lodge we have not just talked the talk, but we have walked the walk. So I know it can be done. When I first joined the Davis Lodge in 2004, our membership was under 40, and we could barely scrape together 12 members for a meeting – a situation in which many Lodges currently find themselves. Today, the Davis Lodge has 132 members, 10 applicants for membership for our Spring Initiation, and 35 others who are actively considering applying for the Spring Initiation. We have tripled our membership in 5 years and are about to quadruple it.

How is this possible? It's possible because we have focused on all three legs of the stool: fraternity, community and fellowship. We can stop the slow diminution of our membership. We can grow this Order. I know, from personal experience, that it can be done.

