



Celebrating Brotherhood and Basketball!

SAN FERNANDO - The San Fernando Odd Fellows Lodge #365 recently marked a memorable occasion by taking Jim Miles, a revered member with over 60 years of service, to his first professional basketball game. The event was a Lakers showdown against the Detroit Pistons, culminating in a thrilling 125 to 111 victory, a win many attributed to Jim's lucky presence.

With 18 members in attendance, the group prioritized safety and camaraderie by renting a private van for the journey. This gesture not only underscored the lodge's commitment to fellowship but also highlighted the special place Jim holds within their ranks.

Jesus Ochoa a member of the San Fernamdo Board stated: "The outing was more than just a game; it was a celebration of Jim's significant contributions to the lodge and a testament to the strong bonds among its members. As the San Fernando Odd Fellows continue to forge ahead, they carry with them the spirit of unity and the anticipation of more collective adventures, honoring the legacy of their cherished members."



Morse Lodge 2024 Officers Installed

San Francisco – Congratulations and good wishes were bestowed upon the Elected and Appointed officers along with the degree team of Morse #257.

Officers were installed, followed by a dinner at lodge. Congratulation to: Orion Brown, NG; Christina Mosham, VG; Nancy Schlessinger, Secretary; and Brain Schlessinger, Treasurer.



Davis Lodge Installation



DAVIS - Past Grand Masters Dave Reed and Dave Rosenberg, assisted by District Deputy Grand master Stewart Savage installed the 2024 elected and appointed officers of Davis Lodge #169 at a gala dinner attended by 80 members.

Congratulations to: Charlene Sailer 2024 Noble Grand, Marcus Marino, Vice Grand, Sheryl Cambron , Secretary, Beth Dovi , Financial Secretary and Kathryn Hemness Treasurer.

Joint Public Installation and Dinner

FRESNO - A Joint Public Dinner Installation of the Officers of the following lodges: Fresno Odd Fellows Lodge #186, Fresno Rebekah Lodge #158, Madeira Odd Fellows Lodge #327, Lemoore Odd Fellows Lodge #280 and Four Creeks Lodge #94 from Visalia was held on Sunday, January 28, 2024 at the Fresno Odd Fellows Lodge in Clovis, California.

The Installing Officers were District Deputy Grand Master of District #62, John Eddie and Special District Deputy President of District #56, Karolinne Livingston.



Each of the newly installed Noble Grands shared their programs and activities for each of their individual lodges for the coming year. A catered lunch prior to the installation was provided by Fresno Odd Fellows Lodge #186 and dessert & coffee after the installation was provided by Fresno Rebekah Lodge #158.

Davis Encampment

DAVIS – With over 30 Patriarchs and Matriarchs in attendance, Past Grand Patriarch Dave Rosenberg officiated and installed the 2024 officers of the Davis Encampment last evening.

Congratulations to Matthew Elliott who was installed as Chief Patriarch for the 2024 term.



Officers Retreat

SAN FERNANDO – This past January San Fernando Lodge #365 had its 2024 Elected Officers Retreat.

The Retreat was hosted by Ventura Lodge, and the training was conducted by brothers from Ventura #201, Santa Paula #314 and San Fernando #365.

Some of the topics included Per Capita report, Annual Budget, and succession of officers.

A special “Thank You” to these brothers for their assistance and help as we kick off the new lodge year!



Jane Austen Dance Held

SAN JOSE - There's something magical about a roomful of people dancing in carefully synchronized and choreographed harmony. And there are few venues better suited for it than an Odd Fellows lodge. The beautiful hardwood floor, the overhead lighting dimmed to better evoke a sensation of candlelit chandeliers, high ceilings presenting a spacious room filled with possibilities – all these elements

combined for a truly marvelous and romantic evening. On February 10th, the True Fellowship Lodge #52 was



transported back in time, becoming an 18th century English country manor filled with brilliantly dressed lords and ladies out for an elegant evening of music and movement.

The Bay Area English Regency Society (BAERS) and the Odd Fellows of True Fellowship #52 in San Jose partnered for their first joint Regency ball – also called the Jane Austen Dance. The partnership came about thanks to Brother Alan Winston, a recent addition to the True Fellowship members roster, who is also one of the directors for BAERS and himself an internationally known caller for English and contra dancing.

The style of dance is one that would have been familiar to guests at English country estates in the late 18th and early 19th century, and that you may have seen in movies like “Pride and Prejudice” or “Emma”. This dancing style combines simple moves in synchronized sequence paired with a repeating melody. Dancers move through rounds that could be a dozen or so movements each, changing positions and dancing with a continually rotating cast of fellow couples. With Brother Alan's patient and expert instruction, even a complete newcomer could learn the dances.

The costumes were dazzling, the band skillful, and the refreshments delicious. By any possible measure, the event was a smashing triumph. And for the first time in the lodge's history, all tickets were sold online before the doors even opened. There will definitely be similar events in the future, so watch the calendar at true52.org or join the mailing list, to find out when they'll return. To learn about other dances organized by BAERS, you can find them at baers.org.

April, May, June 2024

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Mail News-Pictures to:

Member
IOOF
International Press
Association

Carol A. Fraher
1365 Desoto Ave
Burlingame, CA 94010-5633
Phone: (650)342-7188
Email - carolfraher@aol.com

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Proofing Editors for this edition of the COF&R: John Fraher and Grand Lodge Officers. Pictures are desired of all fraternal activities about Odd Fellow and Rebekah Lodges and other units of the Order. In most cases, it is not possible to return pictures. We cannot reproduce pictures from a newspaper clipping or from faxes.

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Mail Address Changes & Subscriptions To:
Grand Lodge of California, IOOF
122 Race Street
San Jose, CA 95126
Phone: (408) 753-9663 Fax: (408) 899-4921
Email: gs@caioof.org / www.caioof.org

Making Christmas a Reality

COSTA MESA - On Saturday morning December 16, 2023, Costa Mesa Odd Fellows #29 and Mesa Rebekahs #402 again came together to celebrate our 3rd annual “Make Christmas a Reality” event. 60 local families, with over 180 children, were identified as families-in-need from 3 elementary schools from working closely with Community Facilitators in the school district. Our families had as few as one child, and as many as 6, aged from infant to teenager.

As in the past, Debbie and Tim Krohnfeldt shopped “Black Friday” toy sales and selected age and gender appropriate gifts. We held a joint Odd Fellows-Rebekahs meeting in early December and wrapped 180 toys and gift cards in fun, colorful paper. This year, we wanted to help out our parents too so each family received an unexpected \$25 local grocery store gift card.

Under the leadership of Eugene Levert, we purchased and transported 60 6-foot Noble Fir trees from Home Depot to our Lodge parking lot. AGAIN, Home Depot generously donated 60 full sized tree stands, and we were grateful for their donation. Each family also received 2 boxes of colorful, unique ornaments to help create a festive mood.

The morning of December 16, we all gathered early to assemble tree stands, set up the trees, organize gifts by family in preparation for our families arriving. Families were given a scheduled pick-up time over a 4-hour period. Kids were able to visit with Santa and his elf, take home a small gift and a candy cane. With the help of our members and a few potential members, we were able to spread the spirit of the season with our community and are already looking towards next year!



Three Links Camp News

Mi-WUk Village - 2024 has come roaring in with lots of snow. The Three Links Camp is looking forward to a busy year. There are many opportunities for Odd Fellows and Rebekahs to visit and enjoy the wonderful Sierra Nevada setting. Also, there are opportunities to help out at the Three Links Camp (TLC).



The Youth Camp is planned for one session from Friday June 28th through Wednesday July 3rd. We are hopeful that lodges will sponsor children ages 7-14 to attend the Youth Camp. In the past, members have sent their children, grandchildren and other relatives for a great nature experience. Youth Camp activities will include: crafts, swimming, nature learning and other outdoor activities.

Registration information is available on the Grand Lodge website at https://www.caioof.org/three_links_camp. The charge this year is \$350. The registration deadline is April 1, 2024. For more information, contact Camp Manager Michelle Rosano at (209)591-0195.

Before the Youth Camp, the TLC will host a "Work Week" starting Wednesday June 19th through Friday June 21st. All are welcome to come up to the camp to help with routine maintenance and repairs.

Following Work Week is the Camp Festival on Saturday June 22nd. The theme this year is "Gold Rush." Everyone is invited to dress for the era. The festival will offer music, and food for purchase during the day. There will be games, a bounce house for the kids and a raffle. A dinner option will be available with more music afterward at the Amphitheater.

On Sunday, there will be a non-denominational church service in the Chapel followed by an optional breakfast.

In September, the TLC will once again host a Corn Hole Tournament on September 21st.

Many groups have started using the Three Links Camp for events and retreats, including weddings and disc golf tournaments. Come visit the TLC and see what a great resource we have!

Dave Reed
Three Links Camp Committee

California #1 Celebrating Good Fellowship

SAN FRANCISCO – This past January, California Lodge #1 celebrated their 135th Installation Dinner.

There were 78 members in attendance that night, and it was a lovely dinner event presided over by John Fraher, NG



We were happy to present special 25-year jewels to members Keith Fitzpatrick and Dave Damarco!



Dave was pleased to receive his pin and was "speechless" which normally does not happen! Keith was not able to be there, and Terry Giannini, PNG was able to present him with his pin at his home.

Special Thanks to Frank Lagomarsino, PNG for taking the initiative to order us some new "swag" to represent our lodge, and to Terry for modeling it!

The True Meaning Of Membership

VAN NUYS - Wow! Talk about longevity in this lodge.... Van Nuys Rebekahs #239 is proud to celebrate two special memberships in their lodge. These are both non-contributing members now, as these ladies are now in their late 90's; but in their day, they were very involved in every aspect of the lodge!

The first one we would like to honor is Phyllis Tallerday. Phyllis joined the lodge in July 1958, which makes her a 65-year member of the Van Nuys Rebekahs #239. She has held every position in the lodge, including District Deputy President. She's had several family members active as well, such as her husband, Jack, Sister, Judy Wingo, brother-in-law, Jack Wingo, and 2 nieces that are currently active members in that lodge: Donna Miller and Michele Marshall. Phyllis has not been very active these past 2 years due to health reasons. After all, she will be 100 years old in March.

Their other member we would like to honor is, Lila Mae Edwards. Lila Mae will be an 80-year member, yes, you read that right, an 80-years as a MEMBER of the Rebekahs in June this year. She joined the Rebekahs on June 24, 1944. Sister Lila was in another lodge that merged with Van Nuys and has been communicating with them for years. Letters are sent back and forth telling her lodge members of her travels and adventures. Several members have taken a few trips down to her home in Oceanside to visit and bring her items.

We are so proud to have them as members of our Order!

Looking Forward to the State Fair!

Peter V. Sellars, PGM

Once again, the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs are going forward to have a booth at the California State Fair in Sacramento. Six years ago, Yerba Buena Lodge No. 15 signed up to have the booth. This first booth was outdoors in over 100 degree weather. For many of the volunteers, sitting in the heat was unbearable. Thus, the following year, we were approved by the Cal Expo staff to move indoors, where the cost increased by \$1,000.00. This change was well received by all of the volunteers.

The theme of the booth changes each year. One year may be a presentation of historical and Order related items and brochures covering everything we do. Two years ago, we displayed all of the scholarships and grants available to the public and the members. Last year, we concentrated on the environment as this is an important topic with most young people and concerned citizens. We wanted the public to be aware that the Independent Order of Odd Fellows are environmentally focused, by having the Living Legacy Program. This program was appealing to all those who stopped at the booth to make inquiries.

Establishing a relationship with the arborists and the forestry groups at the State Fair, the coordinators, Past Grand Master Peter Sellars and the Department Quartermaster Bonnie Sellars were able to obtain the use of these groups' brochures. The I.O.O.F. had the program which encouraged people to plant trees and other plants, but did not tell people how to plant trees or where to plant trees and when to plant trees. The arborists had those brochures and made them available to us. The forestry people gave our booth over 500 pine and redwood trees to give away. This year, we are expanding this presentation to include local Sacramento tree planting programs available to the local residents.

Many thanks to the lodges who have stepped up to turn this into a "California I.O.O.F. Event" not a single lodge event. The donations from those lodges made this possible for yet another year. This means for 18 days we get to share our Order and the Living Legacy Program with nearly a million people!

We also have approximately 40 volunteers during those 18 days who graciously volunteer their time to make this event a success. They have fun, too. Before or after their shift, they can enjoy the State Fair exhibits and rides and shows, at no cost to them.

Brother Peter and Sister Bonnie enjoy everyday at the fair and sharing our programs each year with all of the guests. Surprisingly, some of the members first learn of our programs, like the Living Legacy Program, when they come to volunteer. Without them, and without the donors who care, we could not make this happen. But, everyone joins in on the fun and makes it happen.

If you cannot donate or volunteer your time, come out and say, "hi". You'll have a place to sit down and get a bottle of water. Let's have some fun at the California State Fair!

The sign-up forms for the volunteers will be mailed out in late March. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to participate!

Save the Date for Upcoming RCS Events



Exciting times lie ahead! Rebekah Children's Services (RCS) have upcoming fundraising events that promise not only to be enjoyable but will also make a significant impact on our programs. Mark your calendars, invite friends, and join us in making a difference!

Reflecting on a Remarkable Year: Our Successful Fundraising Journey

The past year has been filled with meaningful milestones and accomplishments, thanks to the unwavering support from our community and the agency. From expanding our reach to implementing innovative programs, we are proud of the positive impact we've made on the lives of those we serve.

Last year's 7th annual **Pop A Cork** was held at MOHI Wines. It was truly an amazing event! Over 300 community members and supporters enjoyed creative delectable delights and fine wines, all while raising funds for the Kneaded Academy at Rebekah Children's Services.

This event benefits the Kneaded Culinary Academy which provides students in our community with no-cost, hands-on culinary training under the supervision of a credentialed, professional chef.

The Squeeze - The beats of rock and roll echoed through the warm summer night at Fortino Winery, setting the stage for a celebration filled with music, dancing, and a shared spirit of community. Thanks to your enthusiastic participation, our fundraising event exceeded all expectations!

The Sixth District City Council Candidate Forum *A Smashing Triumph of Healthy Civic Engagement!*

Recently, an interesting question was asked at True Fellowship #52: "Can an Odd Fellows lodge host a political forum, while avoiding political, sectarian, or other improper debate?" The answer was a resounding yes!

On January 24th, the candidates for the San José District #6 open seat race to replace outgoing council member Dev Davis met together at True Fellowship #52, along with several dozen uncommitted voters, to discuss their policy ideas and qualifications addressing the most pressing issues for district and city residents. The evening began with light refreshments and animated conversation in the dining room, where candidates and voters engaged one another face-to-face at what was surely the wonkiest party most people could imagine.

At 7PM the Pledge of Allegiance ushered in the action in the main hall, where Dev Davis herself proceeded to introduce each of the candidates and explained the purpose of the evening's Civic Forum. From there our Brother, Chair of the Lodge Civics Committee Andrew Crockett took the reins as moderator, and laid down the rules - each candidate would give an opening statement, then answer a series of questions touching on the concerns of ordinary voters we had gathered through our website, and wrap up with a closing statement. There was to be no attacking the other candidates, and no uttering falsehoods. To maintain this order, at a nearby table there was a timekeeper (Brother Mason Wolf), a fact checker (Brother Scott Spence), and a friendliness checker (Brother John Jensen). While no one would be interrupted during their speech, the two checkers would take notes to prepare a report to be released at a later date, shared online and with any attendees or members of the media who wished to read it.

The result of this format was the friendliest candidate forum you could ask for, and every voter we spoke with left with excitement for whichever candidate they may have chosen to support, rather than that all-too-familiar distaste and resignation to support the least odious one. The questions themselves touched on affordable housing, public safety, budgets, small businesses, what to do about Google, building sustainable, housing the unhoused, and (very dear to our hearts) how to support non-profit community centers. The candidates were so good at staying within their time limits that they even reached a bonus question - how should we celebrate America's and San José's upcoming 250th anniversaries? I highly recommend watching their answer, as incredibly, none of them seemed to have prepared for that question before!

The opening and closing statements, along with all but one of the questions, are available to watch on our lodge website - true52.org/d6-forum. Unfortunately, there was a network outage during the public safety question and the zoom recording was interrupted

— **Mason Wolf and Andrew Crockett**

Odd Fellows Merit Award

By *Andrew M. Crockett*

On the night of Wednesday, November 15, 2023 I was ambushed with surprise and delight by my Brothers and Sisters in True Fellowship Lodge #52 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, who bestowed upon me one of the highest honors in Odd Fellowship: the Merit Jewel. My Odd Fellows lodge, which operates the San José Odd Fellows Community Center Hall in service of our local public good, faced a dire future coming out of the pandemic. It was at real risk of complete collapse after serving the South Bay since January 1856.



Think about that: January 1856 - A time so remote to memory that few now know Santa Clara Valley was filled with golden fields of wheat back in those times. Wheat grown for the bread that fed the gold miners in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Bread made from the flour shipped to them on steamboats disembarking the deepwater port of Alviso, years before that same port transformed into mud flats from placer mine waste silt. Since those early pioneer days, my lodge facilitated the growth of friendship between neighbors in this county: friendship between people who had been born worlds apart both figuratively and literally. Through the use of community theater designed to convey a wholesome ethos of caring for those anguished by the grief of life, this democratically operated civic community transformed strangers into eclectic friends, manifesting the spirit of E Pluribus Unum in this corner of the world. This goal of caring for the common good beyond any selfish or sectarian interest was what made them Odd Fellows.

And last year we were on track to lose San José's last refuge of Odd Fellowship. At least, that was the case until the future shifted on June 29, 2022 when my wife Jane Beckman and I entered the Community Center for the first time, fresh from the fight of my life running for elected office. And as hokey as it may seem, I ran for office because I genuinely desire to serve the greater good: and despite losing my election, my commitment to serving that greater good remained undefeated. And in the brave skeleton crew of members Debbie Shuler, Ben Shuler, Mason Wolf, & Debbie Wolf, I found partners in this mission to reactivate this catalyst of South Bay civic life. Indeed, it seemed like I was the right person at the right time to take up this challenge, delivering an understanding of practical organizational operations along with the historical and philosophical underpinnings on which healthy fraternal organizations are built.

Which was what we focused on: using the community center as an events space where the careful balance of playfulness and works of service allow friendships to emerge that are unrestricted by the limitations of cultural, racial, religious, and partisan prejudices. While it seems mundane, creating a home for the pluralist community that is the hallmark of thriving civic life is an urgent need in our times. And through this Lodge we are seeking to build the social capital that money can't buy: a third place away from home and work where members will find friends they can count on. We achieved this by letting people know that in Odd Fellowship we use cosplay and theater in our rituals to build community, and that our Lodges exist to serve the needs of our community. The way we know what our community needs is by listening to our members: and if a non-member wants to have a say in what we do, one merely needs to submit an application with a willingness to make friends with Odd Fellows.

Which brings us back to the Merit Jewel – an award typically reserved for members who have performed 20+ years of service in Odd Fellowship. And at not even 15 months of membership, I received this honor to recognize that our mission has not only been a success with bringing in 24 new members in just over a year (with more eagerly awaiting their initiatory theater experience), it has exceeded expectations by such wide margins that our lodge has entered a league of its own. As one member told me after the meeting: “we didn't have a future to look forward to before you and Jane showed up: now we do.”

When ambushed by this honor, in the speechless surprise that followed, I found my thoughts cycled back to my Grandfather Windell Manley Parker (affectionately called “Wimpy” by his friends, reflecting his initials “WMP”). He was a life-long Odd Fellow, and had served in Modesto, California as Noble Grand of Wildey Lodge No.149 – which was named after the founder of North American Odd Fellowship Thomas Wildey. I felt, more than anything, at the moment I received my Merit Jewel, that I had done my Grandpa proud.

With that, I conclude with gratitude and a prayer: that what I and my Odd Fellow friends continue to do here in San José continues to bestow honor to the memory of Brother Windell Manley Parker for decades to come.

It's Not To LateJoin Us at this year's 2024 Grand Lodge and Rebekah Assembly Convention

Dear Members,

The annual convention will convene in Reno, Nevada on Wednesday, May 15th and the Peppermill Resort, 2707 South Virginia St. Reno, NV 89502 (866)821-9996.


The joint formal opening and banquet is included in the price of your registration. Members have been working hard to provide an excellent program for your enjoyment. Sessions will end with the installation of officers on Saturday, May 18th.

Please consider attending as there is always many important decisions that are made during sessions and your voice/vote counts for your lodge!

Please check with your Lodge Secretary or call Grand Lodge 408-753-9663 for a registration form. Hope to see you there supporting your Lodge!

For those of you attending, who are registered Odd Fellows and Rebekahs, don't miss the Dedicated Members for Change (DMC) Reception on Thursday night at The Edge Nightclub at the Peppermill from 5:00 - 7:00 PM.

If your lodge would like to consider being a sponsor for this event, please contact Dave Rosenberg at daverose@jps.net for more information!



DEDICATED MEMBERS FOR CHANGE
(DMC) RECEPTION *During Grand Lodge Sessions*

Thursday, May 16th, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Location: The EDGE Nightclub, Peppermill, Reno
Exclusive Event: Open only to registered Odd Fellows and Rebekahs
Admission: Free of charge (Show registration credentials)
Attire: Comfortable and casual (Lodge logo shirts welcome) **RSVP:** Not required

Features:

- ☞ Heavy hors d'oeuvres available at 4 stations ☞
- ☞ Musical entertainment with members playing guitars ☞
- ☞ Brief comments by outgoing Grand Master Fred Dolling, incoming Grand Master Dave Reed, and incoming Deputy Grand Master Rita Cooper ☞
- ☞ No-host bar exclusively for attendees ☞

Sponsors:

Alameda Lodge #3	Franco-American Lodge #207	Scio Lodge #102
Davis Lodge #169	Mountain View Lodge #244	Stanislaus Lodge #170
Emerald Bay Lodge #50	Oceanside Lodge #346	Yerba-Buena Lodge #15

partial list

"Join us for a memorable evening of fraternity, fun, and fellowship!"

Hope to see you at sessions this May.

To All My Fraternal Brothers and Sisters Of All Units of California Odd Fellowship

My year as your Grand Master is coming to a close, and there is still so much to accomplish but not enough hours in the day. I have truly enjoyed my time traveling the state to visit the lodges and meeting all the wonderful Brothers and Sisters involved in Odd Fellowship. Your dedication, enthusiasm, community involvement, service to one another and others in your community has encouraged me to be a better person, a better Oddfellow and to stay committed to the principals of our beloved Order.



Even when there are concerns and disagreements, we have learned to compromise and work for the good of the Order, our lodges, and our communities. More than ever before, I've realize that there really are no problems that can't be overcome if we practice Friendship, Love, and Truth. Solutions are easier to achieve when we as Brothers and Sisters take ourselves out of the equation and want what's best for our Lodges. When we decide not to be part of the problem, only part of the solution everyone wins.

I would like to thank all of you for the many courtesies extended to myself and my staff as we have traveled this past year making visitations. I hope we have encouraged you to keep working towards membership, and also working on ways to improve communications with your members. It is so important to spend time training yourselves as well as your lodge members, in proper use of your rituals, using them to run efficient meetings, studying the degree work to learn about Odd Fellowship, and giving all members the opportunity to participate in meetings.

It has truly been a privilege to work with Sister Sue Michener, President of Rebekah Assembly of California, Major General Dave Rosenberg, Department Commander Patriarchs Militant of CA and Grand Patriarch Debbie Shuler, Grand Encampment of CA. Your respective units of the order can be proud of the job you have done this past year. I want to thank the executive committee, appointed officers and past Grand Masters for their continued support, encouragement, and hard work this past year. It took us working as a team to accomplish many difficult task. I have been truly blessed to have worked with all of you. For our incoming Grand Master Brother Dave Reed I pledge my support and wish for you to have a harmonious and productive year. As Grand Master you are always concerned that you are making the best decisions you can for the Order and its members, knowing full well that someone will not be happy with some of those decisions that are made. I sincerely hope that I have represented all of you with integrity, dignity, honor, and fairness. I want to thank the membership for giving me the opportunity to represent you as your Grand Master and for trusting in me to uphold the principals of our order. I also want to thank you for your encouragement, support, and for all of your hard work in keeping Odd Fellowship alive. You are the foundation that keeps us strong.

Thank you for believing this order makes a difference in the world. I want to thank my home lodge Stanislaus Lodge #170 and all of the other lodges in my District for your support and encouragement with my journey. To my wife and my family, thank you for allowing me to travel these past years and for taking care of things at home and for supporting this adventure. You are the Wind Beneath My Wings." I wish for all of you a safe, healthy and enjoyable year. Hope to see many of you at our sessions in May at the Pepper Mill in Reno NV. Remember, working together to speak wisely may not always be easy, but not speaking ill, requires only silence.

In Friendship, Love, and Truth
Fred L Dolling
Grand Master Of California

Let's Keep Lit the Flame of Odd Fellowship

Two Centuries ago, Thomas Wildey lit a fire that swept across the North American continent.

It was a benevolent fire that gave life and form to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. And by the middle of the Nineteenth Century, Odd Fellows Lodges were popping up in every state and province. It's important to remember that those early Odd Fellows started their Lodges, virtually from scratch. Merchants, farmers, bankers, butchers, ranchers, newspaper editors, restaurant owners, accountants, lawyers, doctors, teachers, handymen, came together to create Lodges from the ground up. They contributed time, land, materials, money, skills and their talents to build Lodge Halls. They brought in lumber, sawed, hammered, nailed, painted, tiled, roofed. They arranged and guaranteed loans. The early Odd Fellows maintained those Lodges on their own time. They swept, cleaned, mopped, and repaired the buildings, found tenants, paid the bills and property taxes, and constantly upgraded and improved the infrastructure of their Lodge Halls. Lodge members took great pride in their halls, and the buildings reflected well on the burgeoning Order.

Community members wanted to be part of IOOF and the fraternity's membership boomed - at one time becoming the largest fraternal order in the United States with over one million members.

Now, in the 2020's how disappointed Brother Wildey and those early Odd Fellows would be to see the lethargy that has befallen some Lodge Halls and the ennui that has infected some Lodge members. Complacency has replaced energy, and many Lodge Halls have fallen onto hard times. This is nothing new. Decade after decade, Lodge buildings have slowly deteriorated, repairs have not kept pace, roofs have not been repaired or replaced, walls have not been repainted. In some of our Lodge Halls, the energy and commitment of the early Odd Fellows has waned. They have taken the gift of a building - typically in the heart of town - and have frittered it away by not just failing to maintain or improve the asset. What used to be show-pieces have become run-down structures. How does a Lodge attract new members to a shabby building? Where is the pride?

An analogy might be a person receiving a gift or bequest of a beautiful home from a grandparent. That person then performing no upkeep, and then passing it along to their children who again do virtually nothing to keep that home in good condition - ignoring the peeling paint, the plumbing problems, the crack in the wall, the missing tiles on the roof.

But as they say, "it's never too late". If you and your Lodge mates are housed in such a neglected building, it's time to turn your focus on your Lodge Hall. You certainly can't fix decades of neglect in a month or a year. But every project requires that first step. As Brother Wildey, himself, might say: It all starts with a vision, then commitment, then energy.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg
Past Grand Master

Official Visit by The Grand Master

Van Nuys – On January 9, 2024, Van Nuys Lodge #442 was honored to have an official visit from Grand Master, Fred Dolling.

The evening began with a social hour and catered dinner followed by our regular meeting. We were pleased to welcome visitors from Ventura Lodge, Santa Paula Lodge, Oxnard Lodge and San Fernando Lodge to the event.



After offering our Grand Master honors of the order, Grand Master Dolling spoke of his visions for the future of the order and current Grand Lodge information. Grand Master Dolling also updated us on the Three Links Camp and his other personal charities including the culinary program at the Rebekah Children's Home. He also congratulated our Lodge on our community involvement.

Our thanks to Grand Master Dolling for taking time in his busy schedule to make the visit. It is always important for the membership of the lodges to feel connected to our Grand Lodge officers.

Rebekah Past President's Called Home



Sadly it is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the passing of two prominent Rebekah Past Presidents.

We are sorry to report that **Betty Jean Reasoner, Past President of the Rebekah Assembly** and also a Past Matriarch of the Encampment and Past President of the LAPM was called home.

Shortly after receiving this news, we were also informed that **Rowena Whitney, Past President of the Rebekah Assembly** was in the hospital, only to find out later that she too was called home.

Both of these women had such an influence on the Order during their terms of office. They held many positions in the Order over the years and were very well thought of throughout the State. They will be missed, and we keep their families in our prayers as they move forward without these amazing women.

The Emblems Of Odd Fellowship reintroduces classic symbols of Odd Fellowship

Tuscola, Illinois - Noted author and scholar John Michael Greer's new book *The Emblems Of Odd Fellowship* draws on two hundred-plus years of symbolism to explain and illustrate the concepts and beliefs of Odd Fellowship. The book is the third title published by the Heart In Hand Institute, publishers of the widely-acclaimed *Odd Fellows' Primer* and *DDGM Guide*.

Originally written in 1998, *The Emblems Of Odd Fellowship* is a book intended to bring the rich history of instructional symbolism in Odd Fellowship into a new era to be appreciated by contemporary members and non-members alike. From its roots in the 17th Century, Odd Fellowship has used symbols to teach the important concepts of the Order. *The Emblems Of Odd Fellowship* brings that tradition forward to the 21st Century with dazzling new illustrations of the emblems by well-known Odd Fellows artist Ainslie Heilich who provided artwork for the acclaimed *Odd Fellows' Primer*.

An accomplished author and researcher, John Michael Greer has written over seventy published works, including *The New Encyclopedia Of The Occult* and *Inside A Magical Lodge: Group Ritual In The Western Tradition*. His experience in Odd Fellowship includes serving as Grand Patriarch of the Grand Encampment of Washington in 2001.

With its third title, *The Emblems Of Odd Fellowship*, the Heart In Hand Institute picks up where the great Odd Fellows literature of the past like Ford, Grosch, and Bristol left off. Their initial publication, *The Odd Fellows' Primer*, was released with great success in 2021 and has since sold several thousand copies, leading to a revival of knowledge in Odd Fellowship throughout the Order. Their second title, *District Deputy Grand Masters' Guide*, updated the piecemeal training manuals and guides of the past and consolidated them into one compact and effective training guide for new District Deputy Grand Masters. *The Emblems Of Odd Fellowship* brings the timeless knowledge of Odd Fellows symbolism to a new generation of members.

The Emblems Of Odd Fellowship is available to order on the Heart In Hand Institute website at <https://heartinhandinstitute.com/books/> and also through Amazon.

For more information, please reach out to Toby Hanson, PGM, PGP of the Grand Lodge of Washington, IOOF at iooftoby@gmail.com, or at the website: <https://www.heartinhandinstitute.com>

‘Plant a Tree for One Who comes after Me’

April is Living Legacy month. If you are looking for a project for your lodge to sponsor, this might be the perfect solution!

One of the many programs sponsored by the Sovereign Grand Lodge is The "Living Legacy Program" which was the idea of Sovereign Grand Master Wilson D. Berkey, who in 1989 noticed many dead trees in the jurisdictions that he was visiting which aroused his concern



for global tree loss. He commissioned this worthy project as "The Living Legacy Program" of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. His untimely passing in March 1990 caused the program to become his own "Living Memorial" for his untiring work for Odd Fellowship!

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is a "Family Fraternity." While it was first organized with only men in Odd Fellow Lodges in 1819 on the North American Continent, the Rebekah branch was organized in 1850 and women were admitted to Odd Fellowship. As other Units organized: Encampment, Ladies Encampment Auxiliary, Patriarchs Militant, Ladies Auxiliary Patriarchs Militant, Junior Odd Fellows, and Theta Rho Girls' Clubs grew to complete the "Family Fraternity." The branches of the "Family Fraternity" have planted over eight million trees since the program's inception and we have only begun!

Fighting global warming is a priority of all countries and governments. Planting trees has been advocated by scientists for years due to the ability of trees to absorb carbon dioxide, store the carbon and release oxygen for human use. Man's best environmental cleaners are trees; as long as air pollution continues-let us plant trees!

You too can help, plant a tree on or as close to "Arbor Day," during the last week of April, but planting anytime can make a difference in our environment. Make contacts in your communities of potential recipients of the trees such as the libraries, schools, churches, retirement complexes, playgrounds, parks, cemeteries,

You will be surprised to see how easy it is to plant a tree. Remember to notify the local media in your community to let them know where and when you will be doing this community service, whether you are a member of, or a working friend of the "Family of Odd Fellowship." In this endeavor remember to request mayors, premiers, and governors to make proclamations for the "Living Legacy Program" for the days that you intend to do the planting.

Come be a Partner-planting trees in your community, while you help to beautify and clean the world in which we live and provide cover and food for wildlife. This is our gift to future generations! So please join Odd Fellows and Rebekahs worldwide in planting trees which will better the community in which we live while helping to beautify the world!

What Shall We Talk About?

This is a subject many of us share in common—the fear of public speaking. One of the most significant aspects of the Odd Fellows is that we come from all walks of life. When new people join, we often know little or nothing about them. As adults, most of us tend to make small talk until we get to know each other better. But many of us often become more guarded as well. Perhaps it's a fear of some inadequacy or an air of superiority on one side or both sides of the conversation. Of course, it should not be this way, but most of us, being elderly or at least mature, have a lot of experience to draw from, and many of our interactions are influenced by our own past experiences. Then, when we become more advanced in our lodge or other groupings of members, we often carry the baggage of what has already happened. It's only natural to have an apprehension of whatever comes next.

Then, we see that each member we encounter may have a flaw or characteristic we feel we have already experienced. Sometimes, we fear or dread further encounters. Nothing in life should be seen in this way, but it is a part of each of us that our personal history may influence all future encounters. One does not need to be Sigmund Freud or Friedrich Nietzsche to see that life's interactions are often imperfect. But it also affects and enlarges our personal histories and can develop into greater familiarity with our order.

Then, because of modern developments within our order and from outside influences, we also see that things are changing significantly. Membership is dropping; we are getting older, and time is becoming more precious as the days seem to shorten. All of us eventually will stop attending due to retirement or unforeseen circumstances. It is inevitable. We are often so inwardly guided by our own sense of the dwindling of time that it affects everything we do, yet it is hard to communicate this fact to one another. When we meet a new member, we become withdrawn in our interactions, filled with a foreboding of what may come, or try to ensure their personality is as close as possible. Naturally, we tend to categorize individuals, and even though we may feel non-prejudicial, this categorization may impact all further interactions with incoming individuals. Speech itself may become difficult or halting.

Many topics we encounter within our order are colored by fear or apprehension, but ideally, it should not be this way. We tend to forget that we are to presume ourselves to be Brothers and Sisters and not separate personalities. Of course, Friendship, Love, and Truth should always be our call signs, but we tend to assume that one aspect or another of our motto is not being adhered to perfectly. We should lose this fear by conscious talk or dispelling anything threatening to come our way. This seems easy but can be a stretch that we must try to attain, or else the question will constantly torture us: What Shall We Talk About?

Consequently, the question quickly becomes: Is membership even a topic any longer? It is a fact that all fraternal groups and even religions are seeing a steep decline in numbers. Still, the Odd Fellows have dropped in numbers at a much more significant percentage than the Masons and other large groups. At one time, did you realize that our now dwindling group was the largest fraternal order in the world? What made our decline even more precipitous than other groups? Why do we intentionally avoid the issue? One member asked me what difference is it if you come from a lodge of 300 members or a lodge of 30? Another member responded simply that the difference is 270 members. Good response. Short and to the point. We must decide if we want the order to continue beyond our own personal involvement. If not, small talk is all we have left. Put simply, if our order has been reduced to the level of 5-10 members grouped around a table, and if we refuse to address our most pressing issue of membership, we are enabling our inevitable downfall and trapped within our attempts at small talk.

In FL&T

Rick Boyles, PGM

What is a Good Odd Fellow?

A few months ago, an Odd Fellow acquaintance approached me in private and told me “You are not a good Odd Fellow.” Admittedly, I was somewhat taken aback. I think of myself as a pretty good Odd Fellow. I do not claim to know everything about Odd Fellowship and I know there are areas I can improve.

After thinking about their comment, I decided it would be a good opportunity for me to talk about what it means to be a good Odd Fellow. Also, I am inviting anyone to contact me to share their thoughts that I will pass on to you in the future. I am always open to improvement. My philosophy in life is to never stop learning and try to get better at things I do.

Here are a few of my thoughts:

1. Participate. Attend lodge meetings. Get involved in fraternal and social and community activities of your lodge. Accept responsibilities within you lodge. Serve as appointed and elected officers. Get involved in lodge committees. Consider participating in district or state committees and positions.
2. Learn. Learn about the history of your lodge and the Odd Fellows. Learn the Ritual and the Charge Book. Learn what is in the California and Sovereign Grand Lodge Codes. And learn what is not in the Codes. Remember, the Sovereign Grand Lodge Code of General Laws states that rules and regulations are to be liberally construed. The chief concern is following the spirit of the law and the good of Odd Fellowship rather than harshly enforcing rules to the letter of the law. It is surprising how often veteran Odd Fellows state that certain things are in the Codes when they are not. For some members, learning these things are the most important part of Odd Fellowship. For others, the social aspect or community service part is more important.
3. Improve. Being a good Odd Fellow in all areas is not easy. It can take time and effort to get there. It should be a work in progress. No one knows everything or does everything perfect. We should recognize that there can be more to our fraternal experience and we should strive to get better.
4. Be Kind. Kindness is implicit in the concepts of Friendship, Love and Truth. There is much unkindness in the world. We should rise above the temptation to carry unkindness from the outside world into our lodges. We should treat our Brothers and Sisters with kindness. This is one way to improve and elevate the character of us all.
5. Be Respectful. I have always tried to treat others with respect. We may not always agree with others but we should be civil and always treat others with respect. I have seen veteran Odd Fellows speak harshly to Brothers and Sisters in meetings in disrespectful ways. This does not improve our fellowship and friendship. This does not make the lodge experience inviting. As Odd Fellows, we commit to being better than others in the outside world because we hold higher standards. It is a tough standard to maintain, but it should always be our goal.
6. Be Responsible. We are the face of Odd Fellowship today. The Order has lived for hundreds of years. It will live on when we are gone. We must be responsible preserving and protecting our lodges and the Grand Lodge so they survive beyond our lives. We are a volunteer organization that depends on the goodness of its members. We should make decisions that will enable the Order to live and thrive in the future.

These are a few ideas I have come up with. I am sure that there are other aspects I have missed. I would welcome any other ideas you may have. Please contact me at dreedng@gmail.com if you would like add to my list. I am proud to be an Odd Fellow and I believe in the ideas I have described.

In Friendship, Love and Truth,

Dave Reed
Deputy Grand Master

Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Grand Lodge of California, I.O.O.F.
122 Race Street
San Jose, CA 95126



Lodge Number or Expiration Date After Name

Half Moon Bay Celebrates!

HALF MOON BAY – The lodge had fun, celebrating a 50-year membership, fellowship and music. These were the highlights of the Half Moon Bay Odd Fellows #143 “Let the Good Times Roll Call Dinner” on January 25.

There were 77 members and guests at this year's Roll Call Dinner. The Lodge currently has 113 members, so this was a huge number of attendees!



Fred Scott (seated) was photographed by Gordon Wiltsie as he received his 50-year membership pin from Trustee Joe Brennan and Noble Grand Cyndi Menzel.

Members sang “Embrace the Odd,” written by Past Grand Judi Engel. Special thanks to the second-generation Odd Fellow and former Noble Grand, who traveled down from Willits to attend the Roll Call Dinner.