

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

The other day I was ruminating about the various Committees we have in my Lodge (Davis #169) and, just for the heck of it, decided to list them. Here's what I found:

Bingo  
Breakfast with the Bunny  
Breakfast with Santa  
By-laws  
Cigar Lounge  
Classic Film Festival  
Communications & Website  
Community Support  
Finance  
Good Fellowship  
Halloween Party  
Historical  
Installation & Awards Dinner  
Living Legacy  
Lodge 145th Birthday Party  
Membership & Initiation  
Music & Concerts  
New Year's Party  
Odd Poetry  
OddtoberFest  
Photography  
Picnic Day Breakfast  
Picnic Day Float  
Saturday Morning Breakfast  
Scholarship  
Senior Project  
Social Services  
Take a Hike  
Taste of Davis  
Visiting  
Wine Club  
Zymurgy

I counted 32 Lodge Committees. This then caused me to reflect on what has occurred in my Lodge over the past 10 years. When I first joined Odd Fellows in 2004, my Lodge only had about 25 members and was rather moribund. In a fairly short time, I was elected Noble Grand, and in that position, I decided to change the attitude and culture of the Lodge. I held the position of Noble Grand for four years and I used that time to bring my Lodge into the 21st Century. Today, we have 230 members (making us the fifth largest Lodge in North America), and we have 21 applicants for membership. What attitude and

culture change brought us to this point?

As I reflected on it, I determined that there were three significant adjustments we made that moved our Lodge in a new direction. (1) First, we undertook a major project to physically transform the Lodge building. It took us over six years, but we improved the building inside and out, making numerous changes to upgrade, modernize and beautify the structure. We also made sure that there was plenty of signage, flags, even a mural, which made us visible to the community and identified our building as an Odd Fellows Lodge. (2) Second, we targeted the one-half of our population that had been largely ignored: women. I made a real effort to bring husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, into Lodge membership. Today, our Lodge is almost equally divided between men and women. (3) Third, and perhaps most importantly, we re-charged the activities of the Lodge. We opened our doors to the public. We involved ourselves in the community. And we organized fun activities for the membership. In short, we said "yes" when members wanted to try new things. And we created committees of willing and enthusiastic members to organize these activities and events.

So, let's talk about Committees.

In my opinion, Lodge committees are the key to success going forward. They will reflect fraternal activity that the members want. They will energize the members. They will make a Lodge a place of activity. And that activity will bring in new members. Every time we put on a community activity (for example, Breakfast with Santa, or A Taste of Davis) people ask about our Lodge, people take tours of our Lodge, and people submit applications for membership. My Lodge in Davis is now at a place where I suppose Odd Fellowship was 100 years ago. Effectively, we went "back to the future." We don't recruit new members. Applicants now seek us out. They see what our Lodge is doing, and they contact us wishing to learn more and ultimately wanting to join. Our Lodge has become the place to be. We are an active place - a center of the community - just like Lodges were in 1914.

Now, I certainly don't suggest that all Lodges can or should have 32 committees. But there is no reason that a Lodge - any Lodge - can't have 5 or 7 or 11, or 13 committees that focus on the interests of the members.

Essentially, Committees can all be divided into three general categories (although there is some overlap with some committees): (1) Administrative Committees; (2) Community Outreach Committees; and (3) Social Committees. Administrative Committees are those that undertake the required functions of a Lodge, such as the Visiting Committee, By-laws Committee, Historical Committee, Membership & Initiation Committee, and Finance Committee. Community Outreach Committees are those that reach out into the surrounding community to undertake good works. In the Davis Lodge such Committees, for example, include the Bingo Committee, Classic Film Festival Committee, Senior Project Committee, , Breakfast with Santa Committee, Breakfast with the Bunny Committee, Taste of Davis Committee, Community Support Committee, Music & Concerts Committee, and Social Services Committee. Finally, the Social Committees are those that plan fun activities and events for the membership of the Lodge. Examples of these are the Good Fellowship

Committee, Halloween Party Committee, OddtoberFest Committee, Odd Poetry Committee, Photography Committee, the Take a Hike Committee, Scholarship Committee, Installation and Awards Dinner Committee, and the Zymurgy Committee. Certainly we know and practice the ritual of an Odd Fellows Lodge - that's what makes us uniquely Odd Fellows. But just adhering to ritual would make us one-dimensional. We try to be three-dimensional. When a Lodge reaches outward into the community to do good works, and also reaches inward organizing fun activities for the members and potential members, it performs the quintessential functions of a fraternal order. That Lodge is three-dimensional. That Lodge provides satisfaction to its members. And that Lodge will grow and prosper.

On a related subject, if you haven't viewed the excellent new video by SGM Jimmy Humphrey, please do so. We have an active, forward-looking and progressive SGL who is trying his best to energize our Order. But he needs our support. Here is the link: <http://bit.ly/1ozWThF>

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