

The California

Odd Fellow and Rebekah Magazine

Volume 74, #1
January, February, March 2024



Happy Anniversary!

NAPA - October 28th marked the 170th Anniversary of the Napa IOOF Lodge No. 18's charter signing on October 31, 1853. The original document is hanging in the Fellowship Hall at The Meadows. Lodge officers planned a formal dinner for 26 members and dignitaries which was held in the Vela Restaurant. The Grand Master Fred Dolling, Grand Marshall Ernie Albice, Grand Warden Rita Cooper, Grand Treasurer Ron Mills, Rebekah Vice President Debra LeVergne along with Peter & Bonnie Sellers, Sovereign Grand Lodge Reps from Yerba Buena No. 15 also celebrating 170 years, and Patricia Player the Noble Grand of Ivy Rebekahs No. 23 were the honored guests.



The Grand Master and Grand Marshall took a tour around the Meadows campus both inside and out on a beautiful Autumn Napa afternoon led by Suzanne Waligore. The visitors got to see the two new redwood trees planted by Peter Sellers for the Legacy Project, for which Napa #18 recently received an award from the Sovereign Grand Lodge. They were joined by the other officers and together viewed our Don Smith Vinyard and Flags of the Order at the Campus entrance.



After gathering for some fellowship and a quick bite in the Atrium area, the Lodge members and guests moved into the dining area. The Dining Services staff worked very closely with the Napa Lodge #18 members Joyce Link and Harriet Goss to create a delicious three-course formal dinner that included a special Autumn carrot cake.

The Lodge members were seated at the picture windows overlooking the beautiful namesake Meadows as the sun set and the full moon rose. Noble Grand Jerry Worth gave a toast to all sampling some Napa sparkling wine for this historical event. Grand Master Fred Dolling concluded the evening with a brief update on the 3 Links Camp and the Cave Degree renovations. Guests were pleased to learn that their dear friend Dick Brouse will have this site renamed in his honor. The Grand Master presented The Lodge with a framed plaque to commemorate this special event. Sister Suzanne Waligore was acknowledged for her service to the Order.

Everyone was pleased to participate in this historical celebration and delighted that all went so very well. We could almost feel the spirit of the founders and the Gold Rush era that brought these original members to Napa and the Order at this time when the veil is thought to be thin! The first Grand Master, Samuel H. Parker's legacy continues well!

Three Degree Day Held!

VENTURA - Olive Encampment # 79 held its first Encampment Three-degree day at Ventura Lodge #201.



They installed seven new Encampment members who have successfully achieved the Royal Purple Degree, on Saturday August 19th. Shown are: Chief Patriarch Ted Poliskey. Left to right Charlie Stevenson scribe, Abel Lazaro, Dooweee Warner, Tom Peterson, Grand Patriarch Greg Schomaker, Carlos Juarez, Steve Crane, Marianne Ratcliff, Ruth Rope. Congratulations to all ten elected new members of Olive Encampment #79. They also welcomed Ron Merson, Martha Anderson, Saul Munoz, not shown in the photo.

Santa Paula members are proceeding with a new petition to reinstate their previous Encampment Santa Paula #118. It was established originally with several members from Olive Encampment #79 September 17, 1910. They closed and consolidated with Olive Encampment #79 October 10, 1971. With our help they can be reestablished in October 2023. Special thanks to Grand Patriarch Greg Schomaker and Chief Patriarch Ted Poliskey for all of their help.

As a reminder of the great work our Encampment accomplished this year, a variety of Food and Donations for the Tender Life Maternity Home in Ventura. They will be receiving more donations for the annual food drive to be disbursed in November.

In addition, the lodge will encourage donations for the homeless Veteran's. The large Community fundraiser for the golf course workers who were affected due to the flood's was just completed. An open meeting was held and it was great to hear the travel adventures of our previous students pilgrimage to Washington, DC which the Olive Encampment financially supported. Great job Olive members!

Oddtoberfest

NAPA - The St. Helena I.O.O.F. lodge #167 hosted "Oddtoberfest" this past September 30th.

Over 200 people gathered for an autumnal festival celebrating the bounty of harvest. There was live music, German Food by CIA Chef Lars Kronmark, German and local beer and wine and tomahawk throwing.

It was a wonderful way for the community

to get together, to break out that lederhosen and come

on down and see what our lodge is all About. This event gives the lodge an amazing amount of exposure to our community.



Haunted House

MOUNTAIN VIEW - Mountain View Odd Fellows Lodge #244 held our annual haunted house on October 31st.

This year's event had a Davy Jones' pirate theme.



We welcomed

over 300 community members to our hall, distributed lots of "doubloons, gold nuggets, and bullion (all made of candy)," held lots of games for the children, and gave many families a kid friendly chance to have fun together. We look forward to hosting it again next year!

— Jessica Dickinson Goodman

A “Supremely” Good Time

VAN NUYS ODD FELLOWS LODGE #442– Odd Fellows Lodge #442 had a wonderful night out to attend a concert by former members of the Supremes R & B group. Fifteen members and their guests attended the concert at the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center.

Prior to his retirement, one of our Lodge members, Ted Cooper, had sung with some of the performers who were the Supremes and Tony Orlando and Dawn. He suggested that we attend the concert and meet some of the singers. The concert included some of the favorite hits by the Supremes and some new material. It was a fun evening with dancing and singing to oldies!



Bonjour Quebec

SAN FRANCISCO - This past October, a group of Franco American Lodge #207 members took a trip to Quebec. This fall vacation has become something of an annual trip for Franco American members. The trip was planned by “Trip Guru” Colby LaPlace and being the amazing travel guide that he is – everything was planned to perfection!

Each day, the group visited all the main sights, enjoyed the city and especially the food! A highlight included a walking/riding tour.. The group split into walking and riding tours of old Quebec City. Local guide, Jean Pierre, provided the tour in English and French. Jean Pierre knew the Quebec history and gave us many insights about life in Quebec in the past and present.

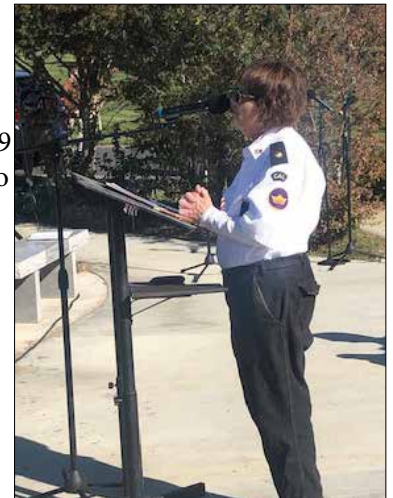
It was a wonderful adventure for all – and the group can’t wait until let year’s trip!



Veterans Day

DAVIS - Three years ago, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) closed its doors in Davis due to a decline in membership. At that time, under the leadership of Past Grand Master Dave Rosenberg, the Davis Odd Fellows Lodge #169 and Canton Davis #7 stepped in to take the VFW's place coordinating Veterans Day and the Memorial Day Ceremonies at the Davis Cemetery District.

At the recent, November 11 Veterans Day Ceremony, with hundreds of community members in attendance, the Davis Lodge and Canton Davis were all over the program.



Master of Ceremonies was longtime Odd Fellow Ted Puntillo, a retired Veterans Services Officer. The national anthem was sung by Odd Fellow Adrienne Fortini, an opera singer by profession. The opening prayer and closing prayer were offered by Odd Fellow Lea Rosenberg, who serves as a Major in the Patriarchs Militant and is the Department Chaplain. Keynote Speaker was Odd Fellow Jim Walker who served as a Sergeant in the U.S. Army in Vietnam, and is the recipient of the Bronze Star with Valor, the Purple Heart, and the Army Commendation Medal. In addition, the community welcome was given by Yolo County Supervisor Jim Provenza, also a member of the Davis Lodge. Scout volunteers, including a Cub Scout troop sponsored by the Davis Lodge, participated in flag placements throughout the Cemetery.

In the audience were dozens of Davis Odd Fellows Lodge #169 and members of Canton Davis #7.

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*“Promoting Odd Fellowship through
Positive Communication”*

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Yreka Cave Work



Yreka - Grand Master Fred Dolling, and the Chairman of the Cave Restoration Committee Rodney Metoyer, are happy to report that work is progressing nicely on the repair work needed for the Pythian Cave in Yreka, CA. This cave has been the home of the Odd Fellows Cave Degree since 1962.

Year after year, the committee would plan a wonderful degree weekend. Long time Odd Fellow, the late Dick Brouse was instrumental in organizing the cave degree for many years and the donations coming in are helping to complete the repair work on one of his “favorite projects.”

A licensed and insured contractor was hired to do the job; and as you can see from the photo below, the deck is coming along nicely, and they are hoping to get the majority of the work done before winter sets in and to have this completed in time for next year’s cave degrees.

All of this work is being accomplished with your donations, and a donation of any amount is appreciated, as we have only received about 50% of the required funds. Any donations can be sent to the Grand Lodge Office at 122 Race Street, San Jose, CA 95126. Please remember to make a notation on the check that all funds go to the cave fund.



Mail News-Pictures to:



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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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The Gift of Life

SAN FRANCISCO - For the past several years, Dennis Milton from California Lodge #1



has chaired the annual Blood Drive.

Members are encouraged to donate and spread the “gift of life” to others in need. At the end of the year, members who have donated are treated to a special meal.

This year, the lodge held its thank you Brunch at the Hilton Hotel in Foster City. It was a lovely morning filled with lots of laughter and special “thanks” to those who chose to make a difference!

Sweet Treats for Halloween

VAN NUYS - Van Nuys Odd Fellows Lodge #442 once again provided holiday treats for the children at Haven Hills Battered Women’s Shelter.

The group assembled individual Halloween bags for each of the 36 children currently at the shelter. The children ranged in age from 9 months to 18 years old.

The children at the shelter do not attend holidays outside of the shelter so Van Nuys members have made it their mission to make sure they have something to celebrate. The children received the “treats” without the “trick”!



PG Rich Barbarossa, Ted Cooper, Rachel Akins, VG Freddy Castillo, Linda Delgado and NG Helene Epler preparing for trick or treating!

Soup Supper

Cupertino - Philotesian Rebekah

Lodge #145 held its first annual Soup Supper on



Wednesday, November 8th at 6:30 PM. Guests were invited to join us and see what we do! There was no meeting after just good fellowship and warm greetings.

The soup supper will support a Community Services donation drive. Please bring goods or money to donate to help support the Cupertino Community Services. Special thanks to Debra La Vergne and Mary Lou Lang for their help with this special project!

Historic Meeting at Volcano Lodge

VOLCANO - On September 16, 2023, with a beautiful warm day and blue skies, in the historic town of Volcano bustling with many visitors, the Odd Fellows gathered at the old Odd Fellows meeting space, where the Masons still conduct their meetings.

Grand Master Fred Dolling headed the annual historic meeting on the second floor of the old building, which the interior remains unchained since 1854. The lodge hall has not changed. It still uses oil lamps, including a beautiful chandelier, which is counterbalanced by weights.

The event brought over 50 members of the Odd Fellows, including the Deputy Grand Master Dave Reed, Grand Warden Rita Cooper, Grand Treasurer Ron Mills, Grand Representative Peter V. Sellars, along with the President of the Rebekah Assembly Sue Michener and Warden Marcy Harper-Seibel. Quartermaster of the Department of CA Bonnie Sellars also was in attendance. The Grand Marshal Ernest Albice signed everyone in at the entrance to the hall. The meeting was conducted by the Grand Master, where the ritual of the 1820’s was utilized with some minor editing/additions.

Members came as far away as Visalia, San Francisco, Davis, Placerville, Vallejo, Berkeley, Valley Springs, and other areas of California. Over a dozen lodges were represented. All in attendance enjoyed the meeting. There was also an attendance drawing, where several Order related buttons were given out to the lucky recipients.



[Photo by Peter V. Sellars, PGM]

Chase the Chill

DAVIS – Once again, Davis Odd Fellow Lodge #169 is “chasing away the chill”.



Pictured are Lea Rosenberg, who organized the event, and Matt Elliott, right. They were photo bombed by a homeless gentleman who appreciated the donations.

The group collects warm clothing, new socks, blankets, scarves and mittens to the homeless and unhoused. This is such a basic necessity and one that might be forgotten; but is so appreciated by those whose lives are affected.

Volunteer Fair

VAN NUYS - Van Nuys Lodge #442 sponsored a table at a Volunteer Fair held at the Simi Valley Boys and Girls Club on November 8, 2023. Approximately 30 local non-profit agencies participated in the event.

Teens and adults interested in volunteering attended the event. Several people, including teenagers, are interested in knowing more about Odd Fellowship. They will be invited to a meeting dinner to meet our members and learn more about the Odd Fellows.

It was a successful evening and a good way to reach out to the community.



PG Rich Barbarossa, NG Helene Epler and Secretary Linda Delgado attending the Volunteer Fair at the Boys and Girls club in Simi Valley, CA.

Franco American Going Strong

SAN FRANCISCO - 2023 was an eventful and generous year for the Franco-American Lodge #207 of the San Francisco Bay Area. Membership continues to grow, having added 23 new members in 2023 and 16 in 2022. Interest in our events is attracting attention of the various French associations of the Bay Area and shows promise of continued growth.

Our annual Spring gala dinner dance is always well attended; and we have added an annual Fall luncheon so that those who no longer attend evening events can continue to enjoy the conviviality of the Lodge.

Our Treasurer, Colby Laplace, had organized yet again this year an outstanding member's trip, this time to Quebec. In early October more than 50 members packed their bags and flew to Quebec to visit the sites of Montreal, Quebec City, and Saguenay all the while enjoying great regional foods and, of course, each others' fun company, for which our Lodge is well known.

Thanks to astute financial planning and increased membership, the Lodge has been able to give more than \$19,000 in donations in 2023. \$5100 went to college scholarships. These scholarships are granted to the children and grandchildren of Odd Fellow members and renewable throughout the 4-year college term. \$1300 was granted to Odd Fellows' Three Links and Rebekah Childrens' Services. The remainder was awarded to various non profit educational and cultural organizations as well as to the widows and widowers of our deceased members.

We look forward to a great 2024 and to organizing more events for our members and reaching out to the greater community.



The Gifts We Give

VAN NUYS - Van Nuys Rebekah's #239 had their first ever Friendsgiving dinner in November. It was a nice event with each member bringing a dish to enjoy and share with each other. We enjoyed s'mores over an open flame for dessert.



The group also had a plan for the Holidays, and they gathered together again to support Rebekah Children's Services (RCS). The group held a shopping day the day after Thanksgiving to get the best deals for toys for RCS. They filled up several carts and got even more donations from our members. Their goal...to bring holiday cheer to the children.

Zombies Are At It Again



DAVIS - Thousands of local and regional folks participated in the annual Northern California's Zombie Bike Ride and "Halloweekend Festival!" Some call it the Zombie Bike Parade in Davis. But regardless of what you call it, you will be in for the ride of your life!

Dave Rosenberg, PGM stated that the Davis Lodge #169 was again able to raise a lot of money to build and give away specialty tricycles for disabled children.

The event included families in costumes riding their bikes around the Davis Bike Loop with entertainment spots along the way, including sky divers!

Over \$20,000 was raised and with it, they hope to build between 8-10 specialty bikes. Some of the funds will also be contributed to other community organizations through this event - like the Davis Bike Exchange.

Building Community

VENTURA - Every year for more than 25 years Ventura Lodge #201 holds its annual picnic on Labor Day. The picnic is free to all the members and their families.

In the past few years, we've been Lucky to have the use of the Girl Scout Camp, a very beautiful facility. They always have an abundance of food! The menu included smoked ribs, chicken, and try-tip. Served with corn on the cob, barbecue pineapple, BBQ beans, green onions and choice of salads, watermelon and des-



Cooking crew with new aprons Canton San Buenaventura #29: Carl Davis, Redgie Fleeman, Greg Schomaker, Fred Dolling, Ernest Albice, DooWee Warner

sert. It was a beautiful day! Games included latter-golf, corn hole toss, and a cakewalk. There was a raffle for great prizes; which helped cover the cost of the picnic. There were over 120 who attended this year. It was an honor to have Grand Master Fred Doling and Grand Marshal Ernest Albice attend. Music has always been a part of our picnic and we host a different band every year! This year's band did a great job!

This event is a huge undertaking and takes more than three days of preparation, so a committee is chosen each year to make plans and improve our picnic. We encourage every lodge to consider picnics and other events with their families and friends.

In F. L. & T.
Redgie Fleeman, PGM

Honoring Those That Served

WASHINGTON - This year, the Ninetieth Pilgrimage to the Tomb of the Unknowns will take place May 3 - 5th in Arlington Virginia.

The annual IOOF pilgrimage is a solemn ceremony that has been named "The Pilgrimage to the Tomb" where a representative from each State is symbolically lays a wreath at the Tomb. The Odd Fellows are also the only fraternal organization permitted to conduct a Pilgrimage to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and given the honor of bestowing a Grand Decoration of Chivalry Award upon an Unknown Soldier. This honor was bestowed upon us in 1934 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.



The Odd Fellows are also the only fraternal organization permitted to conduct a Pilgrimage to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and given the honor of bestowing a Grand Decoration of Chivalry Award upon an Unknown Soldier. This honor was bestowed upon us in 1934 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The first Pilgrimage took place on June 17, 1934. The purpose of this Pilgrimage was not only to honor the Unknown Soldier and the Nation's War Dead, but also the members of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows who had made the supreme sacrifice.

If you would like to join this year Pilgrimage, please ask your lodge secretary for the paperwork or contact the Grand Lodge for more information regarding reservations, etc.

Welcome!

DAVIS – The Davis Lodge #169 are very active in their community – and they show it! Members of Davis #169 have partnered with the City of Davis to spruce up the "Welcome To Davis," sign after many years of neglect. The Odd Fellows have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City to maintain the sign going forward.

In addition to welcoming people to Davis, the sign highlights community organizations within the city. In the end, after much back-and-forth,



twelve organizations, including the Davis and Rebekah lodges have a place on the sign! Special thanks to the "Welcome Sign Committee" who made this happen!

Tis The Season

San Francisco – California Lodge #1 holds an annual Holiday Party each year for its members and their families. One of the highlights of the fun filled afternoon, is that the kids are treated to a special visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus! Tom and Tammy Manini, who are the "heart and soul" of California #1 have chaired this event for many years and they and their special "elves" work hard to make this event so very special.

Special thanks to Odin #393 who have also partnered with California #1 to arrange gifts for the less fortunate. This year, Odin #393 made a gift donation of \$750.00 for children's toys. To which, Santa's elves had a merry old time shopping and purchasing these gifts! California #1 members are encouraged to bring a toy or gift for a child in need, and each year, we have been blessed to be able to support various county organizations including the County Cal Fire Toy Drive, the Boys and Girls Club, and Samaritan House.



Special thanks to all of the California #1 members and Odin #393 members who made the Holiday extra special for a child in need!

Changing Lives in Barstow

BARSTOW – For many years, Barstow Lodge #91 has offered scholarships to community members going to the Barstow Community College.

Last year, they put a new system in place and now, the lodge received new applicants for consideration each January, and awards in June. In working closely with the Barstow College Financial Aid Department, they have determined that once an scholarship has been awarded, that they will continue to work with the student for the entire time they are enrolled at BCC as long as they meet the required criteria. This gift can amount to a scholarship of up to \$2,000 for their 4 semesters – and can be the “edge” that the student needs to be successful in continuing their education!

We commend Barstow Lodge #91 for continuing to invest in the young people in their community—for they are future!



DDGM, Ron Merson Visits

Van Nuys #442 welcomed DDGM, Ron Merson to our Lodge on October 10, 2023. After a dinner catered by Stone Fire Grill, he participated in our usual Tuesday night meeting.



Ron brought us up to date on the Grand Lodge news and reviewed our financial reports and Lodge procedures. He was very complimentary about our policies and procedures and thanked us for the hospitality and great meal!

Training Session

VISALIA - The Grand Lodge of California is hosting a Central California Training Session January 6 -7 in Visalia for all Odd Fellows and Rebekahs.

Don't miss out, on this wonderful opportunity to learn more about the benefits of our homes, mock meetings, desk officers responsibilities, per capita, insurance, non profit status, along with many more topics which will be covered. Reservations are required. Please contact the Grand Lodge at 408-753-9663 for more information and to see if there is still space available.

A Moment in Time

SANTA PAULA - Carlos Juarez from Santa Paula Lodge #314, located in Santa Paula, Ca. reported that his lodge is sharing a historic moment for their lodge in that all elected officers for the 2023-24 term are women.

The lodge is extremely proud of these extraordinary women and we wish them well this year!



From L to R: Carlos Juarez, Past Grand Instructor; Charlie Stevenson, Grand Guardian; Paul Pike, Grand Conductor; Ernie Albice, Grand Marshall; Marianne Ratcliff, Secretary elect; Linda Skeels, Vice Grand elect; Sandy Easley, Noble Grand elect; Josie Herrera, Treasurer elect; Ruth Rope, Financial Secretary elect; Fred Dolling, Grand Master and Ron Merson, District Deputy Grand Master District #47

Three Links Camp News

2023 has been a good year for the Three Links Camp, which is located in the Sierra Nevada about 17 miles east of Sonora. The Camp has continued to upgrade the facility. Business has continued to improve. It has become great location for events and large groups. Recently, the Northern California Disc Golf Championship was held there with 113 participants.

Already, many weekends for the summer of 2024 have been reserved for group events, including weddings, family reunions and other occasions. One group is renting the entire camp for three weeks! The Camp offers RV and tent camping, dorms, a swimming pool, an amphitheater and a multi-purpose room. There are lots of hiking opportunities in the area. The Camp is located only 15 miles from Pinecrest Lake. For more information, go to the Camp website at https://www.caioof.org/three_links_camp or contact Michelle Rosano, Camp Manager, at (209)591-0195

Youth Camp returns. The annual Youth Camp will return in 2024 with one session from June 28 – July 3, 2023. Kids stay in the dorms. Activities include crafts, swimming, and outdoor adventures. There will be guest speakers coming in to teach the children about fire safety, wilderness safety and survival skills. Evening gatherings around the fire are an opportunity to share stories, plan and perform skits, and music and dancing. The application and more information can be found on the Camp website. Every lodge should sponsor a camper to enjoy this great outdoor experience.

TLC Festival June 21 – 23. The weekend before the Youth Camp, the annual Three Links Camp Festival will be held. There will be music, games and activities for the kids including a bounce house. Group meals will be available. You can come up for the day or stay overnight in your RV or tent or in a nearby motel.

Solar is coming! The next big project for the Camp is to install solar electric panels. The savings on power bills will pay for this investment in a few years. We have received donations of about \$39,000 to date. If you or your lodge would like to help this project along, your donations are welcome.

Dave Reed
Three Links Camp Committee

Initiatory Degree

ST HELENA - St. Helena Lodge #167 has been working hard to get the Odd Fellow name out into their community, and they are now beginning to reap the benefits of this hard work. On October 24th, they held an initiatory degree where they welcomed 13 new brothers to the lodge. Way to go St. Helena!



Freeway Sign

SAN FERNANDO - Brother Jesus Ochoa is especially proud to be a member of San Fernando Lodge #365. They have been looking for a community project, and recently, the Lodge adopted a section of I5 freeway!

A few months ago, the sign with San Fernando lodge logo was placed near the on-ramp at Osborn, for thousands of drivers to see every day. Every 2 weeks members get together to clean up some of the 4 northbound

on-ramp ad-

opted. Among the regular showing up to help clean the freeway is brother James Miles, a 60 year member of IOOF.



Visiting Washington

CALIFORNIA - The California contingent was recently in Washington DC at the testimonial for General Doc Malin, General Commanding of the Patriarch's Militant.

L to R Major General Mel Astrahan, Major General Dave Rosenberg (California Military Council Commander), General Malin, Brigadier General Rita Cooper, and Brigadier General Bonnie Sellars.



We are what we sow...

What constitutes an Odd Fellows Lodge? What differentiates us from a club or other social grouping? For one, our basic mandates which were the basis of our beginnings. Did you know, for example, that there are strict legal requirements to which we must adhere to be classified as a tax-exempt organization? The IRS statements, quoted verbatim, are below.

A mutual benefit corporation stands apart from the other types of non profits because its mission is to serve its members and not the public. Common examples of mutual benefit corporations are homeowners' associations, chambers of commerce, fraternities, and professional associations. - Wikipedia

To be exempt under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) section 501(c)(8), a fraternal beneficiary society, order, or association must meet the following requirements:

1. It must have a fraternal purpose. An organization has a fraternal purpose if membership is based on a common tie or the pursuit of a common object. The organization must also have a substantial program of fraternal activities.
2. It must operate under the lodge system or for the exclusive benefit of the members of a fraternal organization itself operating under the lodge system. Operating under the lodge system requires, at a minimum, two active entities: (i) a parent organization; and (ii) a subordinate (called a lodge, branch, or the like) chartered by the parent and largely self-governing.
3. It must provide for the payment of life, sick, accident, or other benefits to the members of such society, order, or association or their dependents.
4. An organization that provides benefits to some, but not all, of its members may qualify for exemption so long as most of the members are eligible for benefits, and criteria for excluding certain members are reasonable. - Internal Revenue Service

There is often discussion when a member receives either reimbursement for an event, mileage, or other payment from the order. Yet this is specifically how our order was originally based. To assume that all members exist to travel hundreds of miles free of charge at their own expense shows: (a) the order does not care for this specific member, (b) they have forgotten or muddled the original purpose of the order, or (c) no longer have the proper funds to care for their own members.

Of course, there are other circumstances. In today's world, everything seems expensive. Yet, if our financial decision is to neglect members or only to help selected members, then we seem to be ignoring our more significant responsibilities. Historically, we can be reminded of the mandates of educating the orphan, feeding the hungry, burying the dead, and other age-old charitable functions. We can no longer do things such as this in their entirety. Our order also used to do other things to aid members. For example, if a member were out of work, the lodge would attempt to find them work. If a member was traveling, arrangements were often made where a member could visit, or even spend the night, at another member's residence.

I believe this is one of the many reasons our order is quickly failing. We have members who believe that no one, often besides themselves, receives compensation for any work done in the order, travel, or other effort made. We have ceased to become an outlet for members altogether. For some reason, we have decided to question every payment a member receives. If a lodge employs a member, not only do we question their competence, but we also question payment altogether. But this is wrong and short sighted. We are losing members steadily. We in California are large enough that it is not readily apparent, but as shown by Sovereign Grand Lodge's annual reports, our numbers are quickly failing. Many states are now below 200 members statewide. Yet, supposedly, we are all religious and want to help one another. Either we react by treating our members like human beings, or we will end pretty quickly.

Rick Boyles , PGM

Santa Claus is Coming to Simi Valley

VAN NUYS – Van Nuys Odd Fellows Lodge #442 once again is proud to be one of the largest donors to the annual Conejo Valley Realtors Holiday Toy Drive.

This year we donated \$1,000.00 dollars' worth of toys and gift cards to families in need. These toys will be donated to St. Pascals Church, Many Mansons, and the Samaritan Center. All of these local organizations will organize holiday parties to give the gifts to families in need.

Two of our brothers, Richard Barbarossa and David Haber, are members of the Conejo Board of Realtors. They were happy to deliver the toys and gift cards. They also organized additional toy drives at their offices to provide even more gifts for the children in the community.



Brothers David Haber and Rich Barbarossa delivering toys and gift cards.



May the good times and treasures of the present become the golden memories of tomorrow.

Wishing you lots of love, joy and happiness this Holiday Season!

Successful Three Degree Day Held

VENTURA - Ventura Odd Fellows No. 201 working with Oxnard No. 89, Santa Paula No. 314 and Santa Barbara No. 232, was excited to have the opportunity to put on a three-degree day event Saturday, September 30, 2023.

They had six members move up to the third degree of our Order-the degree of truth. Charlie Stevenson started the day with a special quiche breakfast, fresh fruit, pastries, coffee and juice. Getting into the old outfits and setting up the props and scenes, continue

to be fun things to do together. We have a very diverse group of members who enjoy getting together. We hope all the Lodges have the opportunity to meet



and demonstrate The Three Degrees, Friendship, Love and Truth

Standing in the first row from left to right: Martha Anderson Chaplin Oxnard, James Juarez Santa Paula, Sandy Easley Noble Grand Santa Paula, Carlos Alonzo Santa Paula, Joe Stewart Ventura, Joe Cano Oxnard, Josie Guzman Oxnard, Lewis Jones Ventura, Kyle Flory Ventura, Carlos Juarez Santa Paula. New third-degree members, wearing scarlet collars. *The next row standing:* Thomas Renick Santa Barbara, Gibby Veramonte's Ventura, James Renick Santa Barbara, Steve Renick Santa Barbara, Ron Merson DDGM Santa Paula. *Top row standing:* Charlie Stevenson Ventura Financial Secretary, Victor Barreto Oxnard, Ron Raines Ventura Past Grand, DooWee Warner Ventura Noble Grand, Abel Lazaro Vice Grand Ventura. *Not in the photo:* Ted Poliskey Ventura PG. John Tidwell Oxnard PG., Ed Skains, Ventura Tammy Patterson Oxnard Redgie Fleeman Ventura.

Odd Fellows at the Dickens Fair



On Sunday, November 19th, at the Cow Palace Arena in San Francisco, members of True Fellowship, Mountain View, Cupertino, and Saratoga lodges, together with their friends, entered the enchantin world of Charles Dickens's London, not as it was, but as it ought to have been.

The day's entertainment included reenactors for both historic personas and fictional characters (largely drawn from the works of Dickens himself, naturally). Pay close attention and you might see old Scrooge walking about with a Christmas spirit. There was a festive air at old Fezziwig's manor, a mystery to be solved at 221B Baker Street, boisterous singing at West Paddy's and Mad Sal's dock-side establishments, and delicious meat pies to be scarfed down along the way to whatever other charming diversion one was planning to see next.

From famous authors reciting their beloved works, to thrilling performers risking life and sanity for the amusement of their audiences, the Dickens Fair managed to provide non-stop delight and wonder for the Odd Fellows and their guests. Truly, this reporter would love to say more, but really, one simply had to be there. For next year, check for tickets which can be purchased online at dickens-fair.com.

Sometimes, being an Odd Fellow means getting out and doing odd, delightful things, with your Odd brothers and sisters. Hopefully we'll have enough people to get a group together next year too.— Mason Wolf

The Importance of Preserving a Lodge's History

By: Peter V. Sellars, PGM

Preserving a lodge's history simply allows members to learn about their lodge and about the Order. The Odd Fellows have a long, yet storied history, involving many changes, not to mention the possible figureheads.

Taking the time to open up the cabinets, closets and drawers, as well as climbing into the attic or stepping down into the basement, this is where the treasure hunts begins. Members should have access to any of these spaces as long as the activity does not interfere with the business of the lodge.

Look through old documents, folders, books, and boxes. Are there letters sent from other lodges? Are there letters signed by the town's leaders from the 1800's? Any famous or recognizable figures included in the documents? Are there any decorative letterhead by local businesses? Keep in mind multi-colored documents have significant value as the printing methods of the past are more desirable by collectors.

Open an old book. You may find an old monetary note or postage stamp between the pages. You may find an old deed or stock certificate or bond note. Old photographs are conduit to your lodge's past and perhaps progression. You may locate a old photograph of a historic event, or famous or infamous person!

Of course, your search of historic items is the first step in creating a history for your lodge members to learn from and to peruse at its leisure. The second step is preserving the history of your lodge. Preservation is keeping those items and documents protected from harm or disintegration.

You may find stacks of documents rolled up in tight bundles, as was often done in the late 1800's and early 1900's. You may even see photographs rolled up. Do not try to unravel. You want to keep them from being damaged. There is a hydration method used by members of the California Odd Fellows Historical Committee that can be accessed by contacted the Chairperson. The hydration method places the water back into the document or photograph and allows the same to be unfurled and then flattened. Then, these things may be placed into either acid-free paper-lined containers or plastic sleeves and then into binders.

Enjoy the hunt - who knows what you just might find!

Gone but not Forgotten... **Roberto Vernice**

COSTA MESA - Costa Mesa #29 lost our dearly beloved brother, Roberto Vernice, on October 19, 2023, after a long battle with cancer.

Roberto was born in Italy in 1954, where he was a professional soccer player before moving to Huntington Beach in 1978.

He operated a traditional barbershop, Salon 888, adjacent to our Lodge and was married to his wife, Sheri, for over 20 years. Roberto joined our Lodge in April 2009, serving as Noble Grand in 2012, 2013, DDGM for District #91 for 2014-15 term, and Inside Guardian to the Grand Master, Mel Astrahan, in 2018.



He established and organized our Lodge's Deep Sea Fishing Trip in 2014, which will continue to be held each summer in his honor. He joined Mesa Rebekah Lodge #402 in February 2016, served as Nobel Grand for the past 3 years, and was the presiding Nobel Grand at his passing.

Roberto had a love of life, love of sharing, love for his Lodge, and love for his wife and family. Roberto will be sorely missed as not only as a brother....but as a friend.

Odd Fun

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I have been publishing this DMC Newsletter since 2010 - the goal being to give members and Lodges ideas to sustain and increase membership. In this regard I receive emails on a fairly regular basis from Lodge members throughout North America and other countries, asking what can be done to bring in new members and to retain existing members in our Odd Fellows Lodges. Of course, as society and as generations change, this is a multi-faceted and complex question - and there is no one silver bullet. Obviously, the Lodge has to be place where friendship, love, and truth is not only mouthed, but practiced, in all things. Just as obviously, the Lodge must be a welcoming place - clean, in repair, updated, and comfortable. Attention to our rules and rituals is fundamental - it is, ultimately, what makes us Odd Fellows (rather than Masons, Elks, Eagles or Moose).

But I think that just as important is the desire to have fun. If we just sit around reading words from books, we would probably derive more benefit in a church, temple or mosque. The social aspects of a Lodge are as important as anything we do. After all, if we're not having a good time in the Lodge, why do it? And I guarantee you that the younger generation members that Lodges covet are not going to join (or continue to stay in) a boring Lodge. They want to enjoy the fraternal experience. And they should. When Odd Fellowship was founded, one of the first things members did was meet in pubs for meals, drink, conversation, and good social times. It worked then. Why should it be any different now?

So how do Lodges emphasize the fun? Well, you can let your imagination run free. It could be sponsoring game night at the Lodge, or a poker tournament, music at the Lodge, hiking, movie night, visits to other Lodges, wine tasting trips, pot lucks, etc.

When Lodge leaders and members ask for suggestions, I often say, "have fun with our Oddness". This can be done in many ways.

For example, start your meetings at 7:31 p.m. rather than 7:30 p.m. Start your breakfast at 8:01 am, rather than 8:00 a.m. Schedule an event at 6:29 p.m. rather than 6:30 p.m.

Think about events that might be "odd". Instead of an OktoberFest, how about an OddtoberFest? How about showing some movies at the Lodge with titles like "The Odd Couple" or "Odd Thomas" or "Against All Odds." If you wish to create a newsletter for the Lodge, how about giving it an "odd" name like "Odds & Ends" or "Odd News" or "The Odd Newsletter." If you create a web page or an email link to help members, don't just call it "The Bulletin Board" - instead how about naming it the "Odd Bulletin Board."

Have some fun with "oddness".

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg
Past Grand Master
Jurisdiction of California

Live Degrees, For a Living Order

SARATOGA - Think back to your first experience receiving the initiatory degree. Was it mysterious? A little frightening? Did you get the sense that something dreadful, but somehow important, was about to be imparted to you? Did it feel like you were entering an ancient order with hidden knowledge and wisdom that you were about to learn? Or did you watch an hour long video of men in robes recite a lot of monologues at you?

For me, I had the first experience, and I will never forget it. But my wife joined during COVID, and we had no way to give her that experience, so she got the DVD. It was boring, but she wanted to do Odd Fellows with me, and that was the only way she could join at the time. It was adequate, but it wasn't special.

I'm a huge believer in the value of conferring our degrees live, with full props and costumes. And I know how hard it can be, especially for lodges without enough members to put together a degree team, or when they don't have access to the props already. If the only way to confer a degree is with a video, or by giving the lecture form (for those that have one), some degree is better than none. But not by much.

The Time and Effort IS the Value. Putting time and effort into something makes it valuable, because it proves that we value it so much that we're willing to spend our precious time and effort. It's circular, but it's true. And candidates get that. They know the difference between a pre-packaged experience and one that is lovingly tailored just for them. Doing the degrees, in full, is how we tell candidates how much we value them, and how much we value the lessons we have to teach.

The DVD's are actually very well done, but the experience is not special. The lesson isn't imparted as a conversation. The Vice Grand in a recording doesn't wait to hear whether the candidate has actually taken the obligation before the degree proceeds. If we won't demonstrate that we think the lesson is valuable enough to give it properly, we can't be surprised when the member doesn't find the lesson valuable either (or even remember it).

It Doesn't Have to be Perfect. The occasional thespian may join a lodge, but most of the time, everyone's an amateur. But so were most

of the Odd Fellows who went before us, and that's okay. If you practice your part enough that the candidate can hear you clearly, and you know when to speak and when to stop, then trust that the words themselves are capable of doing the work.

I started thinking about this topic last weekend when I was one of the candidates taking the Encampment degrees live at Hahn Farm in Oregon. The people putting on the degrees weren't all perfectly polished, and there was the occasional stumble over a line. They were reading from scripts most of the time.

What I experienced that day was genuine love for the Encampment, and the willingness to come together (a long journey for many of the participants) and teach lessons that have been passed down, unbroken, for the better part of two hundred years.

Could it have been done better? Of course! But will I ever forget the experience? I doubt it. Because while I was listening to the words and following the actions of the degree ceremonies, my mind was filling in the detail, connecting the words with the principles, and recognizing the common thread that unites every member of each of the degrees I experienced.

The Shared Experience is the Point. As Odd Fellows, we accept people who come from all backgrounds, classes, professions, races, geographical areas, religions, and so on. To make it work, we need to have something that unites us that we're all willing to agree is more important than our differences. Odd Fellowship is all about recognizing that we are all brothers and sisters, and that it's our duty to care for each other as fellow-siblings, looking past the false distinctions that others see.

Part of the way we learn to look past those false distinctions is by having that experience of joining the Order, and then each degree we take. If I go to another part of the world, and there's an Odd Fellows lodge, even if I don't speak the language or know the customs, I know we share a set of values. And hopefully, we've shared the same experiences partaking in the live degrees. That is a starting point on our journey to viewing one another as family, and the more we can share through our rituals and degree work, the more of a common foundation we have to build on.

What We Teach, We Also Learn. The last reason I love the live degrees isn't for the value they confer to the candidates, as much as to the

instructors. If the only experience you had with the degrees is when you received them as a new member, and now it's 30 years later, that's a lot of time to forget what your lodge taught you. When we stop doing the live degrees, we forget what they mean.

I think every member should either confer, or spectate, all of our degrees on a semi-regular basis. Especially with the initiatory, there's something powerful about watching someone go through it for the first time. There's that moment of surprise that will hopefully start them down the journey of Odd Fellowship, and seeing it in others helps us remember why it is that we're all doing this.

If your lodge isn't doing the live degrees, form a degree team. If you have to double up on parts, do that. And when it comes to the initiatory degree in particular, Sovereign Grand Lodge has approved a live form that teaches all of the lessons of that degree with only 5 roles, so contact your grand secretary if you need that degree script. Ask for the 2017 short form, known as the Feast of Odd Fellowship.

If you need to read from the book, do your best to speak clearly and read. If you don't have all of the props, do what our forebears did and make some (or partner with another lodge that has them). The point here is just that you should try. It's worth the effort.

If you have candidates for the degrees, that's wonderful! It means that your lodge has already done the work that it takes to attract new members and help them to advance. You should keep doing it! But the work of putting on the live degrees is a huge part of what it takes to turn them into Odd Fellows. It proves that you value them, and you value our teachings, and it passes those teachings along in a meaningful way they won't easily forget.

And best of all, it's actually fun!

— *Mason Wolf, Noble Grand*

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

50-Year Jewel Presented

SUNNYVALE - Congratulations to Jackie Brown, member of Hermenia Rebekah Lodge #49 in Mountain View who received her 50-year member jewel on Monday, September 18, 2023 at the Official District Meeting of District #24 held in Fremont, CA.

In our world where it is easy to be served, the call of Jesus and the mission of the Rebekah degree, tells us to be the servant, to develop a spirit of helpfulness to do good and kind deeds. In the ceremony of the Rebekah Degree, we learn about practical instructions of Odd Fellowship which shape who we become and how we care for our community and our neighbors.



On September 11, 1973, Hermenia Rebekah Lodge #49 received sister Jackie Brown into their membership and since then she has been a very active member in the lodge and doing whatever it takes to help keep it going. Over the last 50 years, sister Jackie has accomplished many things and has traveled many miles and through it all continues to honor the watchwords of our order. Her resume includes various offices in the lodge including PNG, and secretary for who knows how long, PDDP, Theta Rho Advisor, appointed Chaplain of RA, Director for the RA, and of course numerous committee appointments.

I believe she has been able to do this because of her strong faith in our Lord, Who has called her to be a blessing to others.

On behalf of Hermenia Lodge, it gives me great joy to present sister Jackie Brown, my mom, with her 50-year jewel. —*Jodie Signes, Jackie's Daughter*