



Celebrating 175 Years

SAN FRANCISCO – This past January, California Lodge #1 was thrilled to be able to celebrate its 175th Anniversary. The Lodge was chartered on September 9, 1849. During the time, the Lodge has been under the name of California Lodge #1 and Concordia Lodge #122. Shortly after merging with Concordia, they filed to have the California Lodge #1 name reinstated and it has been that since!



Over 125 members and friends gathered together at the So. San Francisco Elks to celebrate this auspicious occasion. Three of our members were presented with their 60 year jewel. The three recipients were Ray Link, Axel Meyer and Fred Postel. It was our pleasure to have Grand Master Dave Reed there to help these long time members receive their 60 year jewels.



John Fraher, PDDGM was the Master of Ceremony and the group heard some of California #1 amazing history, including how the charter came around the horn, and how during the great 1906 earthquake and fire, the building on Market & 7th Street were used to block the fire. A member of this lodge defied the police and went into the burning building and came out with the Charter of California #1. This was the only thing saved from the burning building!

California Lodge #1 is proud to say that we currently have 309 members and that we are a strong and vital lodge whose members enjoy each other's company and who work together to make our Order the best it can be!
Congratulations and Happy 175th California Lodge #1



Congratulations to Ray (60 years) and Joyce (66 years) Link who between them have 126 years of Odd Fellow and Rebekah years in the Order!

Installations Begin

SAN FRANCISCO - This is the season that starts off with all the different lodges installations. This past January the Installation of new officers for Yerba Buena Lodge #15 and Rebekah Lodge California #1, was performed on January 9th, 2025.

The installation was officiated by Tom Barton, District #1, District Deputy Grand Master, and Tina Phanivong District Deputy Grand Marshal. A great time was had by everyone.

Here's another photo of the District Deputy Grand Marshal & the Deputy Grand Master.



Spreading Holiday Cheer!

SAN FERNANDO - In the festive spirit of the holiday season, members of the San Fernando Lodge #365 made an appearance at two local parades last December, adding a touch of magic to the Granada Hills Holiday Parade on the 8th and the Chatsworth Holiday Parade on the 15th.

Their float, a creatively adorned trailer, featured lush artificial turf, a beautifully decorated Christmas tree, and an array of holiday decorations. A highlight was the snow machine that dusted the parade route with a winter wonderland effect, much to the delight of the onlookers.

Embracing the festive season to the fullest, the members donned their holiday suits, bringing extra cheer to the festivities. The Chatsworth parade was particularly memorable as they were joined by Brother Ed Burns from Oceanside.

Their efforts and holiday spirit were recognized when they clinched 1st place at the Chatsworth Holiday Parade, a testament to their creativity and community spirit. These events not only showcased the Lodge's commitment to community involvement but also their flair for bringing holiday joy to life. — *Jesus Ochoa*



District Installations Held

FRESNO - Grand Lodge District #62 and Rebekah Assembly District #56 held a Joint Public Luncheon Installation of Officers on January 26, 2025 at the Fresno Odd Fellows Hall in Clovis, California.

District Deputy Grand Master pro-tem, Michael Crile & District Deputy President, Karolinne Livingston installed the officers of Fresno Odd Fellows Lodge #186, Fresno Rebekah Lodge #158, Madera Odd Fellows Lodge #327, Four Creeks Odd Fellows Lodge #94 and Lemoore Odd Fellows Lodge #280. A wonderful lasagna luncheon catered by Olive Garden was provided by Fresno Odd Fellows Lodge. The installation was followed by a social hour and dessert donated by the Fresno Rebekah Lodge.

Madera Odd Fellows Lodge #327

Back Row - David Eddie, Vince Medina, Don Roberts, John Eddie
 Front Row - Katherine Gores & Velaine Elinburg



4 Creeks Visalia Odd Fellows Lodge #94

Back Row - Jennifer Pountney, Michael Crile
 Front Row - Vickie Scnigiel

Lemoore Odd Fellows Lodge #280

Tom Buford & Dean Lahodney



Fresno Odd Fellows Lodge #186 & Fresno Rebekah Lodge #158

Back Row - Julie Skiba, Barbara Kjer, Norman Rose, Karolinne Livingston, Michael Crile & Richard Jennings
 Front Row - Yvonne Fassett, Russell's (Rusty) Fournier, Marilyn Bolin, Sally Minkler & Barbara Jennings



Special congratulations go out to Sally Minkler who is not only the Noble Grand of Fresno Odd Fellows Lodge #186, but also the Noble Grand Fresno Rebekah Lodge #158

— ***Julie Skiba***

April, May, June 2025

**“Promoting Odd Fellowship through
Positive Communication”**

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Visit the Grand Lodge Museum - Grand District Party

SAN JOSE - As Odd Fellows, we're heirs to a rich tradition of crafters and artists creating beautiful custom pieces for their lodges, as well as a number of lovely yet mass-produced items that lodges could acquire from the established fraternal supply houses of their time.

As California Odd Fellows, our forebears in the Order saw roughly 700 lodges that were chartered, operated for a period of time, and then consolidated or disbanded as those lodges, for whatever reason, ceased to be independently viable. And while that's a somewhat sobering thought, it means that over those decades, quite a few rare and beautiful items have been too precious to simply discard once their owners have lost their charters, and instead made their way to the Grand Lodge's care.



During the renovation of the Race Street Odd Fellows building to turn it into the new Grand Lodge office, they created a wing devoted to displaying some of these treasures. As District Deputy Grand Master for #107, which happens to be the district where the Grand Lodge office is located, I've had a few opportunities to browse the museum wing established at these offices, and I think more Odd Fellows should have a chance to see it. It's our heritage, and as April is the month we recollect the founding of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, I think we should celebrate it!

On Tuesday, April 15th, you are invited to join us at a "Grand District Party". It will begin at 6:00 PM at the Grand Lodge building at 122 Race St, where we'll enjoy some light appetizers while we browse the museum collection. At 7:30, the party will transfer to True Fellowship Lodge #52, which is 1 mile away (and an easy walk if you want to build up your appetite), where we'll serve a hearty meal and present a short reenactment of the founding of the first IOOF lodge in North America, Washington Lodge #1 in Baltimore, back in April of 1819. Invitation is open to all, members, and friends curious about what Odd Fellows is about. Tickets will go on sale soon. To be the first to find out when they do, you can register with your email address at: true52.org/districtParty. — **Mason Wolf**

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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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2025 Officers Installed

ORLAND - Stony Creek Lodge #218 held the Installation of new officers on January 14, 2025. The members of Stony Creek Lodge #218 in Orland are in a rebuilding phase!



Recently installed officers are as follows: Associate member Larry Guenther as Noble Grand, Terrance Adams as Vice Grand (not pictured due to an injury), long-standing member Mary Lyons as Secretary, and new member Mike Karle as Treasurer.

Associate members from Davis Lodge #169 are helping the existing members create new energy with scheduled community events, repairs to the Lodge Hall, and outreach to the community of Orland. If you know of a Lodge that is struggling, consider becoming an associate member and helping them through the "rebuilding process."

Davis Odd Fellows Chocolate Festival

DAVIS - The 6th Annual Davis Odd Fellows Chocolate Festival happened on Sunday, Feb. 2nd. If you are a chocolate aficionado, this was the event for you! The festival took place on both floors of the beautiful Davis Odd Fellows Lodge, 415 2nd Street, in Downtown Davis.



This event was hosted by the Davis Lodge #169, and there were chocolate vendors from all over Northern California offering complementary samples of their wares to buy to take home and enjoy! There was chocolate candy, ice cream, pastries, drinking chocolate and so much more. The bar had chocolate inspired cocktails and chocolate beer for purchase. Plus, the popular chocolate fountain with sweet treats to dip was back again this year! There were chocolate demonstrations along with live music with popular local musical group, According to Bazooka.

The Chocolate Festival also featured a "Cookie Bake Off" with local celebrity judges. This is open to anyone who would like to enter their favorite Chocolate Chip Cookie! The bake off will result in the crowning of the Cookie King/Queen of Davis.

All proceeds from this event benefited Davis Odd Fellows programs including, scholarships and summer camps for deserving kids.



Recipient of the Year Award

HAYWARD – This past January, the Hayward Sycamore Lodge #129 was awarded a great honor! On behalf of the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (H.A.R.D.) Board of Directors and General Manager Jim Wheeler, they were thrilled to be the recipient of the 2024 Organization of the Year Award. This prestigious honor recognized the lodges exceptional contributions to the community with Concerts in the Park and their dedication to advancing the district's mission.



Pictured from left to right: Sycamore members Gary Howe, Carl Gorringer, and Frank Goulart

The award was presented during a special luncheon ceremony on Friday, January 31, 2025 at the Sorensdale Recreation Center. For the past 14 years, Sycamore Lodge #129 has partnered with H.A.R.D. to bring these concerts to the community. Each event show cases and benefits one of our area's fine 501(c)3 nonprofit groups, which do much of the heavy lifting in the community.

The lodges extraordinary impact embodies the spirit of these awards and serves as an inspiration to us all. This ceremony is a testament to the invaluable partnerships and dedication that make our shared vision of vibrant parks, inclusive programs, and top-notch facilities a reality. Congratulations once again on this outstanding achievement, and keep the music coming!

Serving the Homeless

SAN FRANCISCO - Morse Lodge #257, in San Francisco, served food to the homeless at St Mary's Center.

Old St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco has a winter shelter for unhoused individuals, and the San Francisco Interfaith Center invites several charity organizations, to take turns serving a hot dinner there on Saturdays. This past year, St. Mary's Center served over 13,649 Meals to seniors and handed out over 645 bags of groceries.

This is a great service to help the people in need and Morse Lodge was proud to be able to help out. The church provided a place for the people to sleep plus we provided something for them to have in the morning. A great time was had by everyone.



Making the Holidays Bright

San Francisco – Santa and his elves were quite busy this year making the holidays a bit brighter for those in need. Each year, members of California Lodge #1 bring presents to the Holiday Party, and the Lodge also donates funds so that members can shop for gifts for children.

This year, Terry Giannini, PNG along with his son Angelo Giannini, gathered friends to help with donations, and these were then combined with the toys brought to the California #1 Holiday party. These toys were then dropped off at the Family giving Tree/East Bay Oakland, an organization dedicated to serving in-need children with wished-for holiday gifts and backpacks filled with school supplies since 1990.

The rest of the gifts that Santa's elves had shopped for went to Ayudando Latinos a Sonar (ALAS) in Half Moon Bay. This is a nonprofit organization dedicated to work for social wellness through multicultural practices, mental health care, etc.

John Fraher, PDDGM arranged for Laurianna Ceja Diaz, Donor Development and Fundraising Consultant from ALAS to come by to pick up the toys and she offered her sincere thanks to our Lodge for their commitment to the children!



4th Annual Family Tree and Gift Event

COSTA MESA - On Saturday, December 7, Costa Mesa Lodge #29 and Rebekah= Lodge #402 celebrated the holiday season by supporting local families in need. Continuing a cherished tradition, they partnered with a local school arbiter, operating under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, to identify 61 families requiring assistance.

In collaboration with Home Depot, Eugene Levert acted on our behalf to purchase 61 freshly cut noble fir Christmas trees, and Home Depot generously donated 61 sturdy tree stands to go with them. Tim and Debbie Krohnfeldt went above and beyond, purchasing 101 gifts for children aged newborn to 10 years old, as well as 45 \$20 gift cards for children aged 11 and older.

Preparations for the event began with a joint Odd Fellow-Rebekah meeting to wrap the children's gifts. On the afternoon of December 6, members assembled the tree stands and then rose early on December 7 to set up the back parking lot to welcome families for tree pickup.

Each family received a Christmas tree, wrapped gifts, a bundle of ornaments, and a \$50 grocery store gift card. To ensure an organized distribution, pickup times were staggered over a three-hour period. Many families brought their children to meet Santa Claus, played by our upcoming member, Mike McMillian. Santa stole the show, spreading holiday cheer with candy canes and festive bracelets for the kids.

We were honored to have Costa Mesa Mayor John Stephens visit to show his support and offer his congratulations. He even invited Police Chief Ron Lawrence, who joined in the festivities.

This heartwarming day reminded us of an important truth: the more we give, the more we receive in return.

Operation Gratitude

VAN NUYS - One of the favorite lodge projects for Van Nuys Rebekah Lodge #181 is supporting Operation Gratitude. Several of the members volunteer there when they have Assembly Days during the week.

Operation Gratitude provides opportunities for the American people to express their gratitude and show our Military and first responders that what they do matters. Since 2003, with the help of our nationwide network of Volunteers, they have sent a total of 4 million Care Packages containing carefully chosen items meant to boost the morale and resilience of our service members and give them warm reminders of home.

At the volunteer day in November, the lodge presented them with a check to help provide boxes and bags to the troops and first responders.



The Grand Lodge Budget and the Long Term

I would like to continue the discussion about the California Grand Lodge budget from our last session in May, 2024. I believe it deserves some real thought and broad discussion. There is no one-time, magic solution to the problem. It is no secret that change in the economic model of the Grand Lodge needs to happen, and that what we have been doing for the past 10 years or so will not see us through the next hundred years.

I am a fan of long-term thinking and planning. The Odd Fellows in North America have been around for over two hundred years. Most of the Lodges in California have been around for well over a hundred years! I believe our Order has what it takes to make it another two hundred, but I believe we need to change some of our fiscal strategies and tactics.

I heartily congratulate the Grand Lodge board - and the membership as a whole - for its focus on the budget at our last Grand Lodge session in Reno. And, I must say, that I have never - not once - seen a friendly amendment that included a spreadsheet! Kudos to brother Colby LaPlace of Franco American Lodge #207! The cuts made to our expenditures were necessary. An annual deficit of \$250,000 is simply not sustainable. But cutting expenses is only half the battle. A balanced budget shows that an organization is living within its means. But cutting expenses alone will not produce a sustainable budget. For that we also need to deal with the other half of the budget - income.

The Grand Lodge of California does not currently have the income to sustain our expenses (hence the increase in per capita dues). What it does have are assets in the form of Lodge Halls. While there are not many that are owned by the Grand Lodge, and while many of them are in disrepair, I believe we need to look at these as long-term income sources. Just as many of our Lodges gain their income from renting part of their space, I believe that the Grand Lodge can generate income from the Lodge Halls it has control over. We simply cannot cut our way to a sustainable budget. Without a new and increased source of revenue, we may slow the decline, but we won't stop it. But I believe we have the potential for that income source already in our possession.

Where we are now with our liquid assets (cash and investments) would not cover all the repairs necessary to fix all the Lodge Halls under the control of the Grand Lodge. But we have the assets to make improvements to some Halls and to get those Halls generating rental income for the Grand Lodge. This is not a small task. It will take diligence, fortitude, and a commitment to the long game. But that is precisely how we

became the largest fraternal order in North America. One Lodge at a time, with people committing to the community of Odd Fellowship. People not just looked at the payback in their own lifetime, but put the Order before the individual. So too, the Grand Lodge body as a whole can realize sustainability if we create a source of sustainable income.

When the Grand Lodge sells a Lodge Hall, the person who buys it is doing so because they believe that they can make money. They believe that they can make money even though they have to include the cost of the property. The Grand Lodge does not have to include the cost of the property because they already own the property. It actually seems axiomatic to me that the Grand Lodge is in a better position to make money from a property than someone who purchases that property. Generating income from rental property is relatively complex in execution, but our Order is literally filled with people who manage and maintain commercial property. Every Lodge that owns its own building manages and maintains commercial property. And just as our Lodges have trustees to manage the buildings, perhaps our Grand Lodge needs trustees to manage its real estate assets? After all, we already have boards dedicated to running the Homes at Saratoga and Napa, The Rebekah Children's Services, and the Three Links Camp. Whatever the details are of the process, I believe this is a viable path forward to make our Grand Lodge sustainable and successful in the long term.

In summary, I believe we need to stop selling off our real estate assets and instead, turn them into an income stream that will bring in necessary revenue without a long-term burden to our members. We already do this at the Lodge level, we just need to do it at the Grand Lodge level.

I would love to hear what other ideas people have on this topic.

In Friendship, Love, and Truth,

Larry D. Guenther
Davis Lodge #169

New Traditions

VAN NUYS - The Van Nuys Rebekah Lodge #181 have started a Friendsgiving tradition in their lodge to help start the holidays by appreciating their lodge and the friendships that they have formed over the years.



This year the event was held at Casa Torres Mexican restaurant. The brunch was all you can eat along with bottomless mimosas. Those not imbibing, volunteered to be the designated drivers. Great fun was had by all!

Toys for Tots Fundraiser



SAN JOSE - Cupertino Lodge #70 would like to send a huge thank you to all those who made the Toys for Tots holiday fund-raiser such a success.

We were able to raise nearly \$1900! In all, they hosted about 36 people who enjoyed a lodge cooked prime rib dinner, live holiday music and 50/50 raffle.

To show even more generosity, some who could not make it in person made contributions online. The true meaning of Odd Fellows comes through when we can help those in need.

-By Jim Kabage

An Odd Dickens Fair

SAN FRANCISCO - On Saturday, November 30th, Odd Fellows from around the bay area converged on the world famous Dickens Fair in San Francisco for a day of revelry and merriment in a lovingly recreated Victorian London at Christmas Eve. Those who attended were treated to carolers, exciting performances, mesmerizing dances, and a wide variety of Dickens's own favorite characters.

The members who attended were able to find their own entertainment and souvenirs, but many of them met together for lunch, where members Andrew Crockett, Bex Clark, and Angela Commean met them with traditional collars to wear. For the rest of the fair, all Odd Fellows could be readily identified. Among the lodges represented, the biggest contingent came from Golden West #322, with 16 members. Other lodges were True Fellowship #52, Cupertino #70, Mountain View #244, Saratoga #428, Livermore #219, Sycamore #129, Davis #169, Apollo #123, Gilroy #154, and possibly some others, but at some point it's hard to keep track.

A highlight of the day came near the end, when we all gathered together for a procession of welcome and friendship at the Athenaeum Club. Brother Andrew Crockett arranged to present a token of friendship and many photos were taken from the light-hearted, yet semi-sincere occasion. The Athenaeum club, in particular, has already invited us to return next year. And we were definitely noticed throughout the venue. It was an event which played to our strengths- many of our collars are nearly as old as the time period we were pretending to visit, and they made fetching accessories for the many lovely outfits members chose to wear.

We weren't there to pass out applications and gain members, but just by being there, having fun, and being visible, we left a lot of people with a positive impression about Odd Fellowship. And since they were mostly the sort of people who like dressing up in 150 year-old period wear, a lot of them are the sort of people who'd probably make good members someday, should they desire! If you want to check out the fair for yourself, it runs each weekend through December 22, and you can find more information at dickensfair.com. But if you want to experience it with some Odd Fellows, stay tuned because we're planning to go back next year!



Shop 'til you drop!

VAN NUYS - Several of the members of Van Nuys Rebekah Lodge #181 went shopping and did what we do best – purchasing toys for Rebekah Children's Services (RCS) for Christmas!

Our personal shoppers this year were: Azalea Mejia, Letty Monge, Lyly Mendez, Linda Loewus, Mickie Vanicek, and Jimmy Vanicek.

The toys were delivered to RCS by Marilyn True, Donna Miller, Nela Latu, and Nancy Latu. It takes a team effort, and what a great team we have!...



I.O.O.F. California State Fair Booth

SACRAMENTO – Remember, one of the Order's most important programs is the planting of seedlings/trees. Since 1989, this has been the most important goal of the IOOF.

The application for the California State Fair IOOF Booth has been submitted! Thanks to the lodges that have given to this worthy IOOF event. But, the IOOF booth still needs contributions from our lodges. The focus is the Living Legacy Program, where the I.O.O.F. presents one of its most important programs. We plant primarily trees, but all vegetation.

We plant trees for the environment. Since 1991, this has been an official program and focus of our Order. We share this goal with the public at the State Fair, so they learn a little more about what we do as Odd Fellows and Rebekahs. We were surprised to learn that many people did not know the Order planted trees and encouraged the planting of trees. Luckily, our volunteers at the booth are there to inform and create awareness.

One year, we gave away over 1000 seedlings in a single weekend. Last year, we shared other organization's tree planting programs. For the past three years, we have received the support of the arborists, who are also in the same building as the I.O.O.F. booth.

They provide brochures to compliment our brochure on the planting of trees. This July, we have something very special to share with the public that deals directly with trees, more specifically, the Sequoia National Forest.

We learned this past year, that of the three named trees in this forest, one of them was reported to be named and dedicated the "I.O.O.F. Tree" in 1903. This tree was located and photographed for us. An outside historian brought this to our attention.

We are grateful. He thought that if worked with the Superintendent of the National Park Service that the I.O.O.F. could rededicate the tree. The booth at the State Fair allows us to bring awareness to people.

With your kind donations, we can continue sharing one of our most important programs with nearly a million fair goers over a 16-day stretch this coming July. We need your support.

Send checks to:
Grand Lodge of CA
122 Race Street
San Jose, CA 95126

Please mark "For CA State Fair IOOF Booth"

***The Grand Master, brother Dave Reed has approved
this request for support.***

Cupertino Lodge #70 New Initiatory Degree Dates for 2025

For those Northern California Members looking to further their degree work, Cupertino Lodge #70 is thrilled to offer many dates to be able to attain this degree.

The have instituted a new Procedure for 2025 to better organize their initiatory degree ceremonies and participation, These new procedures will help make sure fellow lodges are aware of all our degree dates as well make the process and event flow more smoothly!

Initiatory Registration Procedure

- 1) Registration Deadline. We request that all lodges send their registration details, such as candidate and Participant lists, **ONE WEEK PRIOR** to any degree date.
- 2) Registrations can be submitted at: <https://www.CupertinoOddFellows.org/initiatory> (This is an informal request so we can get head count for food, candidate and participant lists.)
- 3) We **CANNOT** confer the degree without a letter from the candidate's home lodge. You may either send an email, a sealed physical letter, or both. Official Lodge Candidate participation requests should be emailed 24 HOURS PRIOR to any degree date to: degree_team@CupertinoOddFellows.org. Emails should be sent by the lodge's secretary or Noble Grand. If you mail the letter, please send it to: Cupertino Odd Fellows Lodge #70, Attn: Initiatory Degree Team at 20589 Homestead Road, Cupertino, CA 95014
- 4) There will be a minimum requirement of 3 candidates (from all lodges) for an initiatory to proceed.
- 5) There will be a maximum limit of 14 candidates per initiatory.
- 6) If there are lodge meetings the last week prior to the initiatory, we ask that any additions to the candidate lists are submitted through the registration form in #2, so we can be properly prepared.

General Initiatory Schedule

- 6 pm: Light Meal served
- 6:30 pm: Members of degree team should arrive
- 6:45 pm: Candidates should arrive and Meet with Outside Guardian at the table in the dining room for preparation. Odd Fellows members joining as spectators should arrive and enter the Meeting Room
- 7:00 pm: Lodge Meeting begins, followed by Ceremony. Refreshments to be offered afterward in the dining hall

The Remaining 2025 Initiatory Degree dates are:

3/31, 6/30, 9/29, 12/15

These simple changes will help us to continue our beloved tradition of welcoming new members to our fraternal family.

- *By Jim Kabage*

Franco American Stays Very Busy

SAN FRANCISCO - Franco-American Lodge #207 had an eventful 2024. They are thriving and very active.

This year, they gave over 18 scholarships and donated more than \$13,500 to various non-profit organizations.

Our membership keeps steadily growing as we offer more exciting activities to our members and their families.

This year, we enjoyed a gala annual banquet in April with 107 participants and our Halloween costume ball luncheon was attended by more than 84.

During our Fall New England trip we had delectable lobster meals and were captivated by the beautiful coastal landscapes.

Our Noble Grand for 2025 is Brother Ron Soucy, and we are looking forward to another fun filled year!

This Fall we are looking forward to an exciting trip by rail through the Canadian Rockies. Preliminary dates are Sept. 27 to October 5th.



Don't Miss This Year's Grand Lodge and Rebekah Assembly

RENO - The annual convention of Grand Lodge and Rebekah Assembly will convene in Reno, Nevada on Wednesday, May 14th. The joint formal opening and banquet is included in the price of your registration.

We are looking forward to providing an excellent program for your enjoyment. Sessions will end with the installation of officers on Saturday, May 17th.

Please support your Elected and Appointed officers by attending the Saturday evening festivities.

Checkout should be on Sunday, May 18th.

HOUSING RESERVATIONS: Please make your reservations directly to the hotel: Peppermill Resort. 2707 South Virginia St., Reno, NV 89502 (866) 821-9996

HANDICAP ROOM RESERVATIONS: Any member with special needs that wants a Handicap room MUST CONTACT THE HOTEL DIRECTLY at (866) 821-9996. There are handicap rooms available and will be assigned on a first come – first served basis.

PARKING: is free Valet is available (not included in hotel fee)

REGISTRATION: there is ONE registration form being used for each person. Those persons who wish to attend both sessions will need to fill out both the Odd Fellow and Rebekah sections on the registration form. If you need a copy of the registration form, you can access on the Grand Lodge Website at: https://www.caioof.org/grand_lodge_sessions_info

Please fill out and check off all of the appropriate information requested. Any registration received after April 30th will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee.

Any questions please contact Grand Lodge, at the following: Phone: 408.753.9663 email: gs@caioof.org

Hope to see you there for these important sessions, as the decisions made here affect every lodge, so make sure that your vote counts!

You Can Make a Difference!

Brothers and Sisters,
As we start a new year, it is great time to think about how we can improve our Odd Fellow experience not only for ourselves but also for others in our lodge, outside our lodge, and in our community. For most of us, our Odd Fellows experience is our lodge. As I have visited lodges during my term, I have seen a wide range of lodge experiences. Nearly everywhere, I saw opportunities to enrich the Odd Fellows experience of members.

Making a Difference in Your Lodge

Being an Odd Fellow has different layers. Knowledge and experience. Participation. Growth. Leadership. Fellowship. Community. Nearly everyone can learn more about Odd Fellowship – who we are and what we do. Some lodges have a few members with a great deal of knowledge and experience. All lodges have members that have less knowledge and experience. Odd Fellows have told me that they wish they knew more about Odd Fellowship and who we are.

If you are an experienced Odd Fellow, think of ways you can help your brothers and sisters learn more about what we do and who we are. Think of ways that will draw members to come forward. Encourage them to learn about Odd Fellowship. Be a mentor. Be kind and supportive and friendly. The brothers and sisters you teach will strengthen your lodge and your Odd Fellows experience and their Odd Fellows experience.

Encourage members to get their three degrees of Friendship, Love, and Truth. Consider taking a group up to the Cave Degree weekend in Yreka. During the weekend, all degrees are presented with degree teams wearing traditional costumes. The second degree is done at a cave outside Yreka at dusk. Mt. Shasta can be seen to the East with a full moon rising. Odd Fellows from many lodges participate in the degree teams. Odd Fellows from many lodges receive their degrees. Some Odd Fellows attend just to watch the degree work. It is a truly inspiring experience. It is a must-see Odd Fellows experience!

As members become more knowledgeable and experienced, they should be encour-

aged to serve as appointed officers. Lodges should hold formal meeting frequently enough that members are familiar with the process. It is not difficult. Encourage members to participate on lodge committees that plan events.

Encourage members to serve as elected officers. In some small lodges, nearly all members serve as Noble Grand and Vice Grand over time. Serving as officers is a way for members to learn and strengthen their leadership skills.

These are ways to improve your Odd Fellows experience in your lodge. These are ways to improve your lodge. These are ways you can make a difference.

Making a Difference in the State Organization

After members have gained knowledge and experience in their lodges, they should see how they can help on the state level. The Grand Lodge of California has boards and committees and officer positions that are always in need of qualified members. The boards include the Grand Lodge Board of Directors, the Odd Fellows Home of California., the California Odd Fellows Foundation, and the Rebekah Children's Services.

The boards meet either every other month or monthly. Some boards give their members responsibilities between meetings. Some boards seek members with special skills such as experience in business or finance or management. Descriptions of the boards and qualifications for members can be found in the California Code and on the Grand Lodge website at www.caioof.org.

Some boards have been the target of criticism. It is good to point out areas that need improvement. But it should be done civilly. It is even better to be part of the solution. Offer to participate. If you have skills and qualifications that would be useful, seek out board positions. We are always looking for qualified, motivated members to serve on boards. Very few members step forward. It is very easy to criticize. It is harder to participate. If members do not offer to participate, change and improvement will be much slower. You can make a difference. The Grand Lodge has many committees such as Finance, Beneficial, Disaster, and Audit, to name a few. At the annual sessions, there are committees that offer input on bills and resolutions including

State of the Order, Legislation, and Judiciary committees. We are always looking for members to serve on committees. You can make a difference.

Some officers have been the target of criticism. It is good to point out areas that need improvement. But it should be done civilly. It is interesting that so few members volunteer to run for office. Admittedly, officers' positions are usually multi-year commitments. Certainly, not every member is qualified. Not everyone has the skill set and leadership skills to do them well. But for those who have those skills, the Grand Lodge can use your participation. We need to continually look to improve what we do and how we do it. You can make a difference.

Every lodge is part of district. Usually there are other lodges in each district. Every district has a District Deputy Grand Master. The DDGM must be a Past Grand. Part of the role of the DDGM is to assist lodges when they have problems. Their role and duties are described in the California Code. When problems cannot be solved or resolved on the local level, they are communicated to the Grand Lodge level. The goal is to enable lodges to be successful and to work through problems and challenges. Ideally, every lodge in a district will have members that will periodically serve as the DDGM. But many lodges never or rarely have members who volunteer to serve as the DDGM. The DDGM has the opportunity to learn more about Odd Fellowship. They have the opportunity to learn about other lodges and what they do. They have the opportunity to share what they learn to help other lodges do better. They have the opportunity to help other lodges be more successful. They can make a difference.

Every May, the Grand Lodge holds its annual sessions. At the sessions, bills and resolutions are considered and voted up or down. A Grand Lodge budget is passed. Every lodge is entitled to send representatives to the annual sessions. Representatives must be Past Grands. Sadly, less than half of the lodges in California send representatives to the sessions.

The Grand Lodge has been challenged financially in recent years. We should expect that there will be bills and resolu-

tions considered that could raise dues or impose assessments on lodges to help balance the budget. If you attend the Grand Lodge sessions, you can make a difference.

Making a Difference in Our Community

Nearly all lodges have some activities that connect with their community. Some award scholarship to deserving recipients. Some lodges fundraise for worthy causes. Some serve meals for their community.

Have you ever spoken to a non-member and they have no idea who the Odd Fellows are or what we do? Or they have no idea that there is an Odd Fellows lodge in town? Only we have the power to change that void. Only we can solve the lack of visibility.

Years ago, the Odd Fellows had a greater connection with their community. We had more members so we had a larger footprint in our community. We provided support to our members. We participated more in our communities. We were leaders in our communities.

How can we change that? We can do things that provide a benefit to our communities. We can tell others what we do. Tell others about the great things we are doing. Think about partnering with other nonprofit groups to fundraise or host events. Allow others to use your lodge buildings for worthy events. Do things that others will see and think, I would like to be part of that organization. Do things that others would like to be a part of. Hold public events that will get people into the lodge. Host a movie or speaker. Hold a concert or a pancake breakfast. Visit other lodges to see what types of things they do to connect with their community. You can make a difference.

You Can Make a Difference

There are many ways we can improve our Odd Fellows experience. Start in your lodge. Then ask, can you help at the district or Grand Lodge level? There are always needs and opportunities in your lodge and beyond your lodge. What about your community?

If you strive for these things, it will strengthen your lodge. It will strengthen the state organization. It will strengthen your Odd Fellows experience. People will want to be an Odd Fellow. It has been said: "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem." Be part of the solution. Make a difference.

We are Odd Fellows! We can make a difference! You can make a difference!

In Friendship, Love, and Truth,

-Dave Reed. Grand Master

Your Invited



***9th Annual Pop a Cork
on Thursday, May 8th 2025
from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM***

Savor the delicious tapas, perfectly paired with exquisite wines, all while supporting the amazing Kneaded Culinary Academy at Rebekah Children's Services.

The Kneaded Culinary Academy creates a therapeutic and supportive learning environment in which youth can acquire culinary skills, develop substance abuse-detering protective factors, learn financial literacy skills and receive job placement training and higher education support. Students learn hands on culinary skills in a commercial kitchen under the supervision of credentialed, professional chefs. These skills will assist our youth in transitioning to adulthood and sustaining themselves as independent, healthy, and self sufficient adults.

Don't miss this opportunity to make a difference. Tickets are on sale now. When you purchase a ticket and support Pop A Cork, you are creating opportunities for youth and young adults! Purchase your ticket today at: <https://rcskids.ejoinme.org/ticketsPAC>

Your support has helped Kneaded Culinary Academy achieve incredible milestones including:

98% job placement and higher education success rate for the past 10 years
4,000 graduated students since 2009
400 more students graduating in 2025
Expansion of services in Santa Clara, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties.

How To Grow Your Membership

By: *Dave Rosenberg*

In 2007, I had been an Odd Fellow for three years. I was a new Noble Grand of my Odd Fellows Lodge in Davis, California, and I was full of enthusiasm about Odd Fellowship. I had just read the acceptance speech of the incoming Sovereign Grand Master in the I.O.O.F. News. In that acceptance speech, the Sovereign Grand Master had asked the following important (indeed, existential) question to the members of the Order: "Why are we losing members and what is causing the folding of the lodges."

I accepted his invitation to answer the question, and so, on October 24, 2007 - some 18 years ago - I wrote a letter to the Sovereign Grand Master, which read, in pertinent part, as follows:

"In my opinion, Odd Fellows will continue to lose members and lodges will continue to fold UNLESS we REVITALIZE our order. Simply put, ODD FELLOWS MUST FIND A WAY TO BE RELEVANT IN THE LIVES OF A NEW GENERATION OF MEMBERS, or face the prospect of a slow decline. Odd Fellows cannot rest on the past. . . . Ancient and anachronistic rituals which may appeal to seventy-year-old long-time members of a lodge, have marginal importance to the thirty-year-old men and women we wish to attract for the future of our lodges. Historical division of "men" and "women" as Odd Fellows and Rebekahs makes little sense in the modern world, particularly with declining memberships in both organizations. In this regard, I propose that you appoint a Special REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE, give it a mandate and a deadline, consider their recommendations and - if appropriate - implement them.

"When I look at the experience of our own Lodge in Davis, I see the ingredients for future success of I.O.O.F. generally. Our Lodge currently has 79 members with 5 pending initiation. We have added about 30 members in the last year, and a significant number in the year before that. Our new members are young (30's and 40's and 50's), ethnically diverse, and about equal men and women. We have added many "husband-wife" teams to our membership. Our lodge has created an active committee structure and we have charged our committees with specific responsibilities. We are actively involved in our community, hosting numerous events in our newly-remodeled lodge hall. We contribute heavily to community and charitable organizations with money, manpower and free use of the hall. We also try to have fun as a group by hosting social hours, evenings just to socialize, and trips together. We have recently started to operate bingo at the lodge as a further way to have fun and raise money for charity. We spend a relatively smaller amount of our time in meetings, and the bulk of our time in community activities. We believe we have achieved the ingredients to be relevant to our members and to be active in our community. Frankly, at this point, we don't need to seek out new members to our order because potential members no seek US out.

"I am happy to discuss this with you in further detail."

EPILOGUE: Neither the Sovereign Grand Master at the time nor anyone from Sovereign Grand Lodge ever contacted me about my letter or followed up with me in any way. Today, in 2025, my Lodge has 373 members, 33 applicants for membership, and close to 70 lodge committees.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg
Past Grand Master - Jurisdiction of California

Say NO to Discrimination!

In the past year, I have become aware of actions involving Odd Fellows described as discrimination. One instance has led to a lawsuit against a lodge and the Grand Lodge alleging discrimination based on sexual orientation (The Grand Lodge denies any and all wrongdoing). Another instance involved a lodge officer saying harmful racial comments when a person of another race applied for membership. We must stand up and oppose and confront discrimination.

The Sovereign Grand Lodge Code of General Laws of states "The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of disability, age [other than that of minimum to join the Order], ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion or other social identity." See Appendix II at beginning of the SGL Code.

The Grand Lodge of California has a similar provision that also includes prohibiting discrimination based on economic status or any other protected category under the law. See California IOOF Code of Laws, Chapter III, Section 21. A. (16).

The Sovereign Grand Lodge Code describes "Conduct Unbecoming an Odd Fellow" to include "Exclusion from membership or participation based on age, other than the minimum age to join the unit, ethnicity, gender, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or other social identity." This means that charges can be filed against Odd Fellows who discriminate. If charges are filed, they are followed by a trial overseen by Sovereign Grand Lodge. And if the charges are found to be true, the member can be sanctioned, up to exclusion from the Order. Separate and apart from the risk of sanctions within the Order, some discrimination actions may be illegal under State and Federal laws and can support a civil lawsuit seeking money damages against lodges and individuals.

Odd Fellows are expected not to discriminate against protected classes of people. It is prohibited in the Odd Fellows Codes. It is sometimes prohibited under State and Federal laws. It can cost lodges and members money damages. Most importantly, we shouldn't discriminate because it's the right thing to do.

In Friendship, Love and Truth,
Dave Reed
Grand Master

CELEBRATION OF FRATERNAL SPIRIT

Past Grand Master Peter Sellars is staying busy and has truly embraced the joy of Odd Fellowship during the bustling months of December and January. His active involvement in installing lodges and conducting mini-seminars reflects not only his commitment but also his deep passion for fostering fraternal relationships and nurturing the spirit of camaraderie within the community.

“It’s really up to the experienced members to respond to the requests of lodges needing assistance,” Brother Sellars says, emphasizing the importance of engagement among seasoned members. Since taking on the role of helping to lead educational seminars starting in 1998, he has approached every opportunity as a chance to share knowledge and uplift others—a testament to his character and dedication.

What’s truly heartwarming is Brother Sellars’ belief that events should be free for attendees. “Members should not be charged to attend seminars or other types of instructions,” he insists. This commitment to accessibility demonstrates his understanding that education should be a right, not a privilege. By removing financial barriers, he ensures that all members can participate fully and engage with the core values of Odd Fellowship.

The positive energy surrounding his visits to lodges like Placerville, Sacramento, and San Francisco has been immensely rewarding. The connections he’s formed with new members at Windsor [#215] and Apollo [#123] Lodges are the lifeblood of the organization. “Learning what they do for a living is really interesting,” he notes, showcasing his genuine interest in others and the diverse talents we have within our ranks.

His installation of Santa Cruz Lodge #96—a lodge filled with long-standing, respected members—brings a lovely sense of nostalgia and continuity to his journey. Sellars’ ability to appreciate both formal and informal installation styles highlights the flexibility and adaptability of our fraternal traditions. He finds fulfillment in seeing lodges actively engaging in the installation process, regardless of the format.

It’s truly inspiring to have a Past Grand Master so dedicated to nurturing our fraternal bonds and empowering members of all backgrounds. Brother Sellars serves as a role model for commitment and service, reminding us that while he stays busy, it’s for the greater good of our community. His passion for Odd Fellowship is infectious, and it encourages all of us to continue fostering connections and educational growth within our lodges.

In a world where genuine connection can sometimes be overlooked, Brother Sellars’ efforts shine as a beacon of what it means to be part of a thriving fraternal family. Here’s to many more joyful gatherings, fruitful seminars, and strong ties within our Odd Fellow lodges!

Three Links Camp Music Festival Postponed

Dear Brothers and Sisters.

Last year, we announced the first Three Links Camp Music Festival to be held on the date of the traditional Three Links Camp Festival in June. I regret to inform you that we will not hold a music festival this year. The Three Links Camp Committee has decided that since we have not held a music festival in the past, it would be too difficult to pull it off this year.

I believe the Three Links Camp Committee will try to hold a music festival in 2026. If you have questions or would like to participate in the planning for 2026, please contact me or Fred Dolling, Chair of the Three Links Camp Committee. Fred can be reached at freddolling@gmail.com.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we still hope to see you at the camp for the Annual Work Weekend!

On the fourth Saturday of each June, the Camp holds a Festival that is open to members and the public, with a variety of crafts, used items, food and games. There is no admission charge. For a small fee, a BBQ dinner is also available that evening. The Festival caps off “Work Week” where-in leaders of the Order and member volunteers gather to clean up after winter, and make the Camp ready for the Youth Sessions held in July.

For those staying over until Sunday, non-denominational Chapel services are held in the “Chapel in the Pines” in which the current State Chaplains for the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs officiate. This closes the weekend and all prepare to head home unless some decide they must stay a while longer!

In F L & T,
Dave Reed
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

Celebrating the Lunar New Year

SAN FRANCISCO - Golden West Lodge #322 celebrated the Lunar New Year and Valentines Day at Hong Kong Palace Restaurant in Millbrae on Feb 15th. The group gathered together to welcome in the new year and wish good fortune to all attending!

Lunar New Year marks the beginning of a new year on the lunisolar calendar and is often seen as a celebration of the arrival of spring. Lunar New Year celebrations typically include: family gatherings, exchanging red envelopes with money (considered lucky), lion and dragon dances, wearing festive clothing, decorating homes with red paper cuttings and lanterns, fireworks, parades, eating special traditional foods, and performing rituals to bring good fortune for the new year.



This year the San Francisco Chinese New Year Festival and Parade was held the same day! The parade combine elements of the Chinese Lantern Festival with a typical American parade. First held in 1851, along what are today Grant Avenue and Kearny Street, it is the oldest and one of the largest events of its kind outside of Asia, and one of the largest Asian cultural events in North America. The parade route begins on Market Street and terminates in Chinatown. Highlights of the parade include floats, lion dancers, elementary school groups in costume, marching bands, stilt walkers, Chinese acrobats, and a Golden Dragon. Observers can expect to hear at least 600,000 fire-crackers let off in celebration!

The group had a wonderful time and special thanks to Tina Phanivong and her team for hosting this special event!