



August 21, 2016

Independent Order of Oddfellows  
Excelsior Lodge #1  
1134 First Avenue  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Re: Report of 2016 Sovereign Grand Lodge Session

It is with modest pride, earnest faith, and deepest loyalty that I express my gratitude to the Lodge for supporting myself and the other officers and members as representatives of the jurisdiction of Hawaii and Excelsior Lodge #1 at the above mentioned session.

The outcome of this journey is a renewed commitment to a *MISSION* for the Order as derived from our *PURPOSE* in Chapter I, Article 1, Sec. 1 of the Code of General Laws:

*To Improve and Elevate the Character of All*

It is imperative that we strive to fulfill this mission and promote the principles of Odd Fellowship in every aspect of the order and our lives. Through Friendship, Love, and Truth we achieve temperance, prudence, justice, service to humanity, and the ultimate goal of fraternity. It is our duty to participate in the government of our lodge to ensure these principles are upheld.

During the formal opening on Sunday August 16, 2016, the honorable Danny Wood, Sovereign Grand Master (SGM) and Sister Kathy Shary, President, International Association of Rebekah Assemblies (IARA), thanked all for their efforts during the past "Year of Unity" in which the *Mighty Oak* symbolized *Deep roots that Build Strong Branches*; and the mottos included *You've got to stick your head out in order to move forward*; and *Building a Team – Together, we make a difference*.

During the installation of officers, the honorable Larry Ferguson, 2016-2017 SGM and Sister Joyce Link, 2016-2017 President, IARA, thanked all Oddfellows for their support and shared their slogan for the upcoming year which are "*The 3 R's: Recruit – Rebuild – Rededicate Odd Fellowship*," and mottos "*Be a Lover not a Fighter*" and "*Unity through Understanding-a link to the future*," respectively. SGM Ferguson also shared his objectives of growing the membership and supporting unity.

Topics of concern raised by attendees during the session included declining membership, a stifling lodge bureaucracy, the old-boy network, resistance to change, regional factions, and groupthink. These topics can affect all lodges from every jurisdiction. There was also a sense of hope shared through a collaborative effort amongst progressive lodges and members to generate innovative solutions that can be shared across the order. It is the responsibility of all



lodges and members to participate in this effort and support positive change towards the elevation and sustainment of the order.

The Jurisdiction of Hawaii was well represented at the 2016 Session. Our representatives performed their duties faithfully while emulating the beliefs and values of Odd Fellowship. Our members attended the formal opening ceremony, all days of the SGL session, various committee meetings, the officer's banquet, fun night, and the installation ceremony. We were also able to experience the beautiful attractions, countryside, and fraternal residents of the great Jurisdiction of South Dakota.

Of special interest for Hawaii was Bill No. 1 – 2015 which sought to amend Chapter II, Sec. 2 F (2) of the Code of General Laws by adding a new subsection (a) that would enable jurisdictions, that do not have the requisite number of lodges, to form a Grand Lodge from a combination of five (5) or more Odd Fellows and Rebekah lodges. Following the passage of Bill No. 1, the bill was reconsidered on the floor, and sent back to committees to address language and procedural issues. This bill was considered by some to provide an easier opportunity for jurisdictions like Hawaii to form a Grand Body. The bill, revised, is expected to be brought forward for consideration in the future.

Another item of interest includes the work being done to adjust the Rituals to be gender neutral. This will largely be accomplished by using the term *member* in place of male and female representative terms.

In closing, I urge you all to join with me and SGM Ferguson to "*Recruit, Rebuild, and Rededicate Odd Fellowship*" during this upcoming "*Year of Unity*" as we strive "*To Improve and Elevate the Character of All.*"

In FLT,

Nathan Ramos  
Noble Grande