WE ARE SAD TO SHARE

2020 IOOF SESSIONS & YOUTH DAYS ARE CANCELLED DUE TO COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021 YOUTH DAYS IN CINCINNATI, OHIO!

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Greetings Brothers and Sisters:

I hope this finds you well, as we hold the course of social distancing and phasing into the opening of our businesses and visiting.

2020, has brought with it enormous challenges which have impacted our ability to meet, socialize and celebrate our great work. It has been an interesting and challenging time for our Order.

It has given the Order quite a few curve balls, however we could not function and would certainly be in a worse position if we did not have many members who are dedicated to lead our membership through these times. With that being said, I would like to thank every Lodge and Member that has offered their assistance to others within their communities during this recent/current COVID 19 pandemic.

Your thoughtfulness and kindness and caring will always be remembered. Why we became Odd Fellows and Rebekahs is to help the less fortunate, to belong to a caring Order and to make lifelong friends and to care for our own. I congratulate the Lodges for finding ways to continue to reach out to assist their members and their Communities. This is the time we need to put our differences aside and work together as Brothers and Sisters.

To the Members who are assisting the less fortunate members, family, neighbours, shut ins and people with disabilities, etc. with your help with delivering groceries/prescriptions, doing errands, or making meals. Thank you for your generosity and time. We truly need to be leaders in the Communities and the use of our gifts of friendship, love, truth, faith, hope and charity which will be shown to all who receive your help in their lives.

I would like to thank the Lodges and Jurisdictions who have cancelled or postponed their Sessions until it is safe for us to meet. To the Officers who have stepped up to the plate to serve until next Sessions, thank you. Our lives have all been placed on hold and changed over the past few months and has almost come to a stop. We have lost out on being able to meet, communicate, (both verbally and visually) with our family, members, and friends.

This nationwide/worldwide slow down can give us a perspective, we can only imagine what we may or might do differently or better once this all passes. Over the past months, we have been focused on the difficult decisions we have had to make to keep our Members, Lodges and Communities safe.

Your Executive have had some hard decisions to make and have had to become creative in ways that have not been done in the past. We held a Zoom Executive Meeting, until we can meet face to face. The Executive has thought long and hard about the choices that were placed before us as we approach some major decisions. The main decision was made regarding our Sessions in August. Our August 2020 Sessions have been cancelled and will now be held in August 2021 in Cincinnati, Ohio. I want to thank the Grand Lodge Representatives for their vote to support this decision. Safety of our Membership is our prime concern.

I want to recognize the Pilgrimage for Youth Committee also, on having the hard decision to cancel this year’s trip. The health and welfare of our Youth was a great concern with the pandemic still growing each day and with the borders not being open for travel as the Youth are the future of the Order.

The Dispensations that have been issued are still in place and will remain so until the Government Regulations regarding COVID 19 are removed or eased regarding social distancing and meetings. The Executive will be travelling to the Jurisdictions when it is deemed safe to do so (when airlines are opened to more countries and the borders are open). We were all able to complete our Fall visits before the pandemic hit, so we will try to pickup our Spring and Summer visits that we had scheduled for 2020 in 2021. We will continue to take action to support the Members and Lodges facing hard times. As this pandemic continues, we remain fully committed to supporting all of you at this time.

No one can predict what the future holds in the coming months but be assured that the Executive will remain committed to moving forward. The health and safety of our Membership is our top priority.

I could not be prouder of everyone in our Order for banning together to ensure that we all stay safe and healthy. Thank you for all your efforts and sacrifices.

As our lives have been abruptly and drastically shifted, along with everybody else around the globe, I have been reflecting and with Strength, Courage, Inspiration, Greatness and Hope in our hands, together there is nothing that we cannot do.

In closing, my hope is that you are all taking the steps necessary to keep your families safe and healthy. As Odd Fellows and Rebekahs, I am confident that we will “STEP UP TO THE PLATE” and do whatever is necessary to get through these times and thus be stronger going forward.

Fraternally,

E. Wesley Nelson
Sovereign Grand Master
Dear, dear Sisters and Brothers:

Charles Dickens’ opening to *A Tale of Two Cities* is applicable to the uncharted challenges that we face: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times....” Though written in 1859, this text describes our experiences in 2020.

The statistics of coronavirus cases and deaths confirm the worst of times. So many deaths have occurred in only a few weeks. Lives of everyone have been impacted by “shelter in place”, “social distancing”, mandated separation from family and friends. Non-essential businesses have been closed. Unemployment has increased rapidly. These facts certainly support the case for the worst of times.

Despite the negatives, though, hearts are open, kindness abounds, and people are creatively finding ways to be together while apart. People with resources are sharing with people in need. The dark times countered by benevolence bring the world of Thomas Wildey to modern day, continuing to support the relevancy of the tenets of our Order – visiting the sick, relieving the distressed, burying the dead, and educating the orphan. The activities embodying these tenets have changed markedly but the needs remain.

As you know, the coronavirus pandemic has caused interruptions in our schedules and normal routine. Fraternal life as we know it has been thrust into upheaval.

Two events, cancelled by necessity, leave gaping holes in our fraternal year: the Pilgrimage to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the wreath laying ceremony at the Canadian War Memorial. Both of these are public demonstrations of gratitude to those who gave their lives so that the freedoms that we hold dear are possible. Gratitude that the restrictions through which we’ve come these past weeks are the exceptions rather than the norms for our lives, gratitude that we have hope and indeed expectation for brighter days on the other side of these challenges.

While the ceremonies were cancelled for 2020, we are still able to show our respect and gratitude personally through displaying our flags, placing flowers, giving prayers of gratitude privately. The methods of display are far less important than living the lives that display commitment to the values for which are veterans’ lives were given.

Even in the worst of times – during wars, pandemics, and other challenges of great magnitude – we can see the best of people. Compassion, kindness, generosity, honesty, and so many other virtues cost nothing and are not limited to happy times.

In all times, both best and worst, may we as Rebekahs and Odd Fellows remain committed to the tenets of our Order so that we can help the worst times to be better and the best times to reach new heights!

Fraternally with commitment to improving all times,

s/ Elizabeth Mowry-Harbstreit
Greetings Chevaliers, Ladies, Brothers and Sisters,

I want to wish each of you blessings and hope as we progress through this crisis with the covid-19 virus. As you are aware because of this virus, everything has come to a stop. The trip to the Tomb of the Unknowns has been cancelled. The Ontario Session and the Canadian War Memorial Pilgrimage in Ottawa have been cancelled. All Grand Lodge, Rebekah Associations, Grand Encampments, LAPM Departments, and Department Councils were also cancelled until further notice.

I did attend Sister Elizabeth Mowry-Harbstreit’s Testimonial Dinner from February 28th – March 1st. The testimonial was very well planned, and everyone had a great time. I also went to the West Virginia Awards Dinner in Elkins, West Virginia on March 7th. One of the award recipients was a group of local high school football players. They helped people from a nearby community by aiding them with their recovery after a flood disaster. Little did I know that this would be my last visit to a jurisdictional function.

As you may know, my own testimonial on March 20th and 21st was cancelled. I want to thank everyone who was planning on attending. I would like to thank the Jurisdiction of Virginia for their support and to members who gave up a weekend to make apple butter which was to be a gift to all attending the testimonial. I would especially like to thank Louise Schwarting and Janet Gibson for their efforts in organizing and planning the testimonial. I wish it would have been possible to have that special weekend so everyone attending could have enjoyed their efforts.

I wish everyone the best of health. Stay home and rest and enjoy your families. E-mail, phone, Zoom, Facebook, and Facebook Messenger are excellent ways to communicate with each other while our Cantons are dark. Remember to help your communities if possible. I will be donating blood on April 28. In my program, I asked that anyone who is able to please donate. There is a crisis and blood shortage at the present time. Remember: “No man is an Island”, and “The Future is Now!”

Chivalrously,
s/ General John C. (Jack)

Lady Jami A. Rafter, President
International Association
Ladies Auxiliaries Patriarchs Militant

Dear Youth of our Order,

Hello to all of you, I hope this news letter finds you all well. I'm sure that this has been a strange time for all of you as it has been for all of us, with school being canceled in most of the country, no sports, can't go anywhere, and not even being able to get together to have meetings or to just spend time together as friends. We will all get through this, life will get back to somewhat normal hopefully soon.

One thing I think that has been helping me is sending cards to shut-ins, making calls to some of our members just to say HI and to check on them. A little friendly reminder for you as our youth, You are the Sunshine that keeps us all going, spread your sunshine to as many people that you can everyday!

Your mind is a Garden. Your Thoughts are the seeds.
You can grow flowers or you can grow weeds!

Stay healthy and hope to see you all very soon!
Lady Jami Rafter
President IALAPM

“Let’s make TODAY one step closer to a strong future.”
Hello Everyone,

The strange days we are surrounded by. A worldwide pandemic, social distancing, and protests have been part of our daily lives. No school, lodge meetings, or sessions have been a new normal these past few months. Safety of our members and community are of the utmost importance. My elders always told me “better to be safe than sorry.” Hope everyone is staying safe and all our loved ones are healthy. Please say a silent prayer for those who have suffered a tragedy during these times.

Unfortunately as most of you have all heard, Youth Days has been canceled. This is just another event on the long list of cancelations this year. We the committee are saddened we will not be able to see you all in Winston Salem this year. But look forward to seeing everyone in Cincinnati, OH in 2021.

All pin designs will be held over for judging next year. We appreciate all who submitted Community Service Recognition, Pin Designs, and Advisor of the Year awards. Great Job Everyone!! Everything will carry over for next year.

Anyone that was wishing to go on the Odd Fellow Youth Tour this year will be allowed to go next year. That committee is allowing those who applied this year to go in 2021. You must have already applied. They are allowing an age dispensation for those who will be one year older.

Hope everyone is enjoying their summer. I’m doing a great job at social distancing as my fishing pole is six feet long.

Stay safe everyone.

Steve Adams
SGL/IARA Chairman

ALL CONTESTS FOR YOUTH TO BE CARRIED OVER TO 2021

Pin Design:
Submit your design for the Youth Pin. Please remember the finished size of the pin is approximately 1”diameter. Keep the design simple. The design must include: the year of the pin, Emblems of the 4 units; Junior Odd Fellow Lodge, Theta Rho Girls Club, United Youth Group & Cadet Corp, the colors to be used. Please take the time and color your designs and make sure your name and address are on the back of the design.

SEND YOUR CONTEST ENTRIES TO:
Chairman, Steve Adams
Email: seawyo@yahoo.com

Community Service Recognition Award
Send us a list of your community service activities in which your lodge, club, or group participated in without compensation. Provide the description of the projects, amount of money collected/donated, the number of participants and the hours of service provided.

Advisor of the Year
Submit in writing why you feel your advisor should receive this award. Tell us the special things that he or she does to make your meetings more fun. Let us know what your advisor has taught you and how you have grown in knowledge of our order. Although we realize that Assistant Advisors are very special too, this particular award is for the Club/Lodge/Group Advisor only.

Website: www.ioof.org (Click on YOUTH)
3 June 2020

To the Grand Representatives and Grand Representatives-elect,
Officers and Past Officers of The Sovereign Grand Lodge,
Officers and Members of the I.A.R.A., GMC & I.A.L.A.P.M. and, 
All Grand Bodies of the Order

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

Due to the restrictions in place from the current Covid 19 Pandemic with regard to social distancing in place and the fact that the Hotels and Convention Center are not open at this time with no definite date to do so, the Executive Committee has communicated via Zoom and agreed that it is not practical or safe for our membership to travel and/or meet this year.

A majority of the Grand Representatives of record are in agreement to not meet.

Future Sessions: the Twin City Quarter has agreed and is pleased and willing to have our convention in 2022 – originally we were scheduled to be in Des Moines, IA in 2022, but the jurisdiction has asked to switch to 2023 and the Executive Committee is in agreement.
2021 Cincinnati, Ohio
2022 Winston-Salem, North Carolina
2023 Des Moines, Iowa

The Hotels ask that you cancel you rooms, if you cannot find your confirmation number or are having difficulty in making contact e-mail: joofhesel@ioof.org and we will assist as best possible.

Stay Safe and Healthy.

Fraternally,

The Executive Committee

E. Wesley Nelson
Charles L. ‘Chuck’ Lusk
Michelle L. Heckart
Terry L. Barrett
Harless A. Turner
Douglas E. ‘Doug’ Pittman
10 Amazing Facts for the 4th of July

1. Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national animal but was out-voted when John Adams and Thomas Jefferson chose the bald eagle.

2. The stars on the original American flag were arranged in a circle to ensure that all colonies were represented equally.

3. John Hancock was the only person to actually sign the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The other 55 signers did not sign it until later.

4. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died on the same day: July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

5. History’s first submarine attack took place in New York Harbor in 1776.

6. There were no fireworks on July 4, 1776, but there were fireworks 1 year later, on July 4, 1777. This was still 6 years before Americans knew whether the new nation would survive the war.

7. George Washington was the best spymaster in American History! He ran espionage rings in British-held areas and he was a genius at misinformation. He constantly befuddled the British by leaking, through double agents, inflated reports of the strength of his army.

8. Washington was a robust man with a seeming immunity to disease and bullets. In one encounter in the French and Indian War, he absorbed 4 bullets in his coat and hat and had 2 horses shot from under him without any injury to himself.

9. The United States of America won its independence despite the fact that the British Army was established, experienced, disciplined, and trained and the American army was not. In addition to this, the British Army had ample quantities of powder, guns, and clothing and the American Army was not well supplied.

10. The song “Yankee Doodle” was sung originally by British officers making fun of backwoods Americans.
Did you know???

Take out a one dollar bill, and look at it. The one dollar bill you're looking at first came off the presses in 1957 in its present design. This so-called paper money is in fact a cotton and linen blend, with red and blue minute silk fibers running through it. It is actually material. We've all washed it without it falling apart. A special blend of ink is used, the contents we will never know. It is overprinted with symbols and then it is starched to make it water resistant and pressed to give it that nice crisp look.

If you look on the front of the bill, you will see the United States Treasury Seal. On the top you will see the scales for a balanced budget. In the center you have a carpenter's square, a tool used for an even cut. Underneath is the Key to the United States Treasury.

That's all pretty easy to figure out, but what is on the back of that dollar bill is something we should all know.

If you turn the bill over, you will see two circles. Both circles, together, comprise the Great Seal of the United States. The First Continental Congress requested that Benjamin Franklin and a group of men come up with a Seal. It took them four years to accomplish this task and another two years to get it approved.

The Latin above the pyramid, ANNUIT COEPTIS, means, "God has favored our undertaking."

"IN GOD WE TRUST" is on this currency. The Latin below the pyramid, NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM, means, "a new order has begun." At the base of the pyramid is the Roman Numeral for 1776.

They say that the number 13 is an unlucky number. This is almost a worldwide belief. You will usually never see a room numbered 13, or any hotels or motels with a 13th floor. But think about this: 13 original colonies, 13 signers of the Declaration of Independence, 13 stripes on our flag, 13 steps on the Pyramid, 13 letters in the Latin above, 13 letters in "E Pluribus Unum", 13 stars above the Eagle, 13 bars on that shield, 13 leaves on the olive branch, 13 fruits, and if you look closely, 13 arrows. And, for minorities: the 13th Amendment.

The Bald Eagle was selected as a symbol for victory for two reasons: First, he is not afraid of a storm; he is strong, and he is smart enough to soar above it. Secondly, he wears no material crown. We had just broken from the King of England. Also, notice the shield is unsupported. This country can now stand on its own. At the top of that shield you have a white bar signifying congress, a unifying factor. We were coming together as one nation. In the Eagle's beak you will read, "E PLURIBUS UNUM", meaning, "one nation from many people."

Above the Eagle, you have thirteen stars, representing the thirteen original colonies, and any clouds of misunderstanding rolling away. Again, we were coming together as one.

Notice what the Eagle holds in his talons. He holds an olive branch and arrows. This country wants peace, but we will never be afraid to fight to preserve peace. The Eagle always wants to face the olive branch, but in time of war, his gaze turns toward the arrows.
IT’S ALL FOR FUN!

FIND THE HIDDEN OBJECTS

The Fourth of July

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Anyone graduate from your lodge, club or group?

Is your jurisdiction working on the Youth Honors Program?

We would like to add any of this information to our Newsletter for mailing and recognition purposes:

Graduate Members: Jurisdiction: ____________________________ Graduate Name: ____________________________

Youth Honors Program: Level_________ Name ____________________________

Please send this form to the SGL-IARA JYC Committee Secretary:

Michele Trynor

FACEBOOK PAGE: SGL-IARA Youth

*Use Facebook to share your activities with others.
*Use Facebook as a question and answer page.
*Keep in touch with everyone that attended Youth Days in the past or just this year.
*Share your organization’s website with others.

We want to include you in The Youth Informer!

The Youth Informer would like to publish your article in our next publishing. Please submit your articles to: Gwen Wixom, Editor. E-mail to gwen.century21@aol.com Remember, this is your paper. Take an interest in being a writer for your community and let us know what your club has been up to. Send me your pictures and articles and we will try our best to get all entries in your Youth Informer.
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We’re here for you!
Do you need us? Do you need help? Advice? Or just an ear to listen? Request a visit by contacting Youth Committee Chairman Steve Adams directly by phone, email or letter and we will be there. We only ask that you contact us as soon as possible to enable us time to make arrangements to get to you as quick as we can.

Did you know: you can find us at these places?
Website: www.ioof.org (Click on YOUTH)

FACEBOOK PAGE: SGL-IARA Youth
*Use Facebook to share your activities with others.
*Use Facebook as a question and answer page.
*Keep in touch with everyone that attended Youth Days in the past or just this year.
*Share your organization’s website with others.