

“Odd Fellows SOS Village”

—excerpted from Sovereign Grand Master Henry Dupray’s article I.O.O.F News Vol. 6., Issue 5

An exciting new orphanage project to be named “Odd Fellows Village” was introduced and adopted at the 2003 session of The Sovereign Grand Lodge in Halifax, Nova Scotia by the incoming Sovereign Grand Master Henry “Hank” Dupray. This project will be launched in partnership with SOS-Kinderdorf International. The group respects varying religions and cultures and works in the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to promote these rights around the world. They work for children who are orphaned, abandoned, or whose families are unable to care for them. The new village which will consist of 15 family homes, a social center, a medical facility and kindergarten facility will house approximately 150 orphaned and AIDS affected children ages 0-12. The village will be built in Battam Bang in the Kingdom of Cambodia which lies at the far South of Indochina in Southeast Asia, bordering Thailand and North Vietnam.

While Cambodia was able to protect its neutrality during the first years of the Vietnam War, 1970 saw a coup d’etat, which in turn led to support for the USA in the fight against the Vietcong. After years of civil war the Khmer rouge emerged victorious and their leader, Pol Pot was driven out. In the following decades, peace negotiations and discussions about installing a new Cambodian government took place, and in 1991 a peace treaty was signed and a new constitution enacted, which established a state based on a parliamentary monarchy.

In 1999, SOS-Kinderdorf International struck an agreement with the Cambodian government to build SOS Children’s Villages and thereby bring Hermann Gmeiner’s ideas to the country and relieve some of the distress of the many children in need. During the decades of war, thousands of children lost their parents and because of the lingering precarious economic and social situation in the country, many parents are not in a position to look after their children.

In 2000, the Cambodian SOS Children’s Village Association was founded and in 2001, a group of 120 children, along with their mothers, was able to move into the first SOS Children’s Village in the capital, Phnom Penh. The second village located in Siem Reap was ready for operation in October 2002.

The need for suitable facilities for orphaned and abandoned children is enormous. The limited means of the government are required for fundamental improvement in the infrastructure. About 35% of the population live below the poverty line and rarely have access to the educational system. The heads of the Cambodian government both greatly value and support the work of SOS Children’s Villages and asked for more facilities

to be built in the country. Thus, we are proud to announce the birth of “Odd Fellows Village” in Battam Bang.

“This exciting project is one we can call our own” states Dupray. “Much like Norway’s new Odd Fellow Village in San Remi, El Salvador, it gives us a purpose and a new direction. At the same time fulfills two tenants of our Order, that of relieving the distressed and educating the Orphan.” The construction cost of this project is approximately \$1,555,000 US dollars with an annual running cost of approximately \$200,000 US dollars.

Sovereign Grand Master Henry Dupray believes strongly in this program, and knows that “Charting the Course Toward Unity” brings us together worldwide in a common bond. Since June, the Brothers and Sisters of Norway have raised \$1,666,000 to cover the construction cost of their village. To start the Battam Bang Village, we must initially raise \$125,000 for land and development costs. Therefore, the Sovereign Grand Master has asked all Brothers and Sisters in the US and Canada to adopt this village as your project. Go out into your community with fund-raisers. When the members of your community realize you are working for children, they will want to be a part of this exciting venture. As Kevin Costner in the movie Field of Dreams stated, “build it and they will come.”

Please forward all check’s to The Sovereign Grand Lodge noting in the remarks sections “SOS Children’s Village Fund.”

International Leaders to Visit Sacramento on January 3rd

SASCRAMENTO – The International Leaders of Odd Fellowship, Henry (Hank) Dupray of North Carolina, Sovereign Grand Master; and Sharon Magden of Oregon, President of the International Association of Rebekah Assemblies, will make a social visit to the Sacramento Odd Fellows Lodge #2 on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2004.

The meeting will be held in the Odd Fellows Hall, 1831 Howe Ave., Sacramento,. The evening will begin with a 5:30 p.m. social hour. A catered dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. at a cost of \$15.00.

Reservation checks for the dinner, may be made payable to Sacramento Lodge #2, and sent to Eloise Peters, 101 Elkhorn Blvd., Rio Linda, CA 95673, or phone (916) 991-2447.