



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

October 2, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I'm pleased to forward to you another article by one of the co-founders of DMC, and Past Grand Master Rick Boyles. As you have seen over the years of our newsletters, Rick is quite an accomplished writer, and his submissions sometimes amuse, sometimes provoke, but always get the mental juices to flow a bit. And that's a good thing.

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Dave Rosenberg  
Deputy Grand Master

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Where Did You Grow Up Punk, (and When)?!

To paraphrase a famous S.F. Bay Area sports talk personality who hilariously and almost daily utters his famous line "where did you grow up, punk?" he means what has influenced your life and personal opinions? All of us come from unique and personal vantage points. Many of us grew up in California, and many of us moved here, while many of us grew up in the sixties, some grew up in an earlier time and a few of us later on. In my case, I grew up in Chicago, in the sixties, saw riots, participated in demonstrations, got tear-gassed in rallies, was editor of my college newspaper, interviewed many personalities, including movie directors, authors, politicians, and saw that there were good and bad people of every political persuasion be it republican, democrat, independent, or anarchist. My wife and I moved to California in the seventies, and once again, we edited a newsletter published in San Francisco. We enjoyed it a great deal and attended coffee house readings all over the bay area. Although the bay area is firmly democratic, it is also home to a famous annual book fair called the "Anarchists' Book Fair", which always sparks the joke (since anarchists are by their very nature adversarial), how can they agree where to hold such a thing? In other words, California is certainly a home for the free spirit, where no one should feel confinement of any kind. I have friends of every political persuasion, but the most encouraging thing in America and even more so in the state of California is that even though we may disagree on a vantage point, we can still co-exist. In other countries this is not always the case. A free spirit in the Middle East for example could easily be jailed (or worse) for his or her opinions. Not so here, in fact, if someone is jailed here for a political point of view, quite often there is public outcry. The point being, that all of us



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should and do feel free to express ourselves. The one negative, of course, is sometimes these points of view may seem onerous or insulting to others. This is the nature of living in America, our independence, our resolve, our freedom.

Therefore, a question might be, just like anarchists who agree to disagree who in turn agree, how does our country remain a country, or rather, what sustains our union if all think independently? Quite simply put, it is the principal of freedom. It has become ingrained in every one of our waking moments. We may question each other's point of view, but we don't question our ability to have a point of view. Which in my mind addled as it may be brings me to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Specifically put, how do we guarantee a vibrant but unique group? Obviously, if every Odd Fellow thought alike, it would be very boring indeed. What should give us hope is the individuality of our members - their uniqueness. Just as Sovereign Grand Lodge has shown us videos of unique lodges, such as the lodge in the Midwest, comprised of a motorcycle club that does charitable deeds for their community, we need to trumpet our uniqueness. This is the very thing that gives our order its flavor, its oddness, its future. It is not our sameness that attracts people it is our very nature of individuality. Just as America is composed of people of all walks of life, of all political shades, of all colors, shapes, emotions, and sensitivities, so must we be. In order to continue, and grow, we must embrace our own oddities, our own individuality, our own *raison d'être*. What has caused stagnation in our order is our terrible tendency to practice sameness, to adhere to a form text, to question anything new or different. We only grow by accepting things as they come, not in fighting the future, because the future comes no matter how much we may want to forestall it. If we really think that the past is all we have, then truly we are a dead or dying group. If on the other hand we look to the future with an open mind and heart, than our order is guaranteed survival no matter how different it may appear.

If change or evolution frightens us, then the only other alternative is stagnation.

In Friendship, Love, and Truth, Rick Boyles