



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

August 11, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I attach to this e-mail an article just written by DMC member and Grand Warden of the California Lodge Rick Boyles. Rick, who has a droll and refined sense of humor, has written a thought-provoking and provocative piece. Please keep in mind that it is quintessential satire, written in that style to make some serious points, and encourage some serious dialogue. So enjoy the satire, sarcasm, irony and humor, but please reflect on the underlying messages. Enjoy!

Also, I remind all Brothers and Sisters that the annual "Odd Fellows Homes of California" barbeque is TOMORROW: Sunday, August 12, from 11:30 a.m. till about 3:00 p.m. The barbeque rotates from Meadows of Napa Valley one year to the Saratoga Retirement Community the next year. This year the barbeque will be at the Saratoga Retirement Community. And it's a special event celebrating the 100th Anniversary of that wonderful retirement campus, owned by the Odd Fellows. Please come - even if you haven't RSVP'd - just come! It's \$10 per person, a bargain. You get a fine barbequed lunch, entertainment, and if you wish, tours of the facility.

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Dave Rosenberg

Dedicated Members for Change Newsletter

An Ever Decreasing Circle of Dwindling Logic for Those Who Desire No Change

Rules we must follow in order to circumvent change and remain the same. Commonly known as "Rick's Rules of Disorder" It goes without saying that anyone who writes an article such as this suggesting change should be brought up on charges. After all, change is to be feared, for some reason, although it seems hard to verbalize. While I write this being almost completely tongue-in-cheek, I have heard similar comments (said seriously) by those who want to remain static. My view is that change is emblematic of life itself. Change invigorates. Obviously, change has taken place in the last 175 years, whether we like it or not, and change will continue to take place. The absurd thing is to try and block change. It is easily shown that those fraternal groups which have opposed change are the very groups that have most quickly died. It is time to look at the future rationally, not to just vocalize our fears. If you stand on the side which opposes change, consider this, how could no change cause improvement? For many years, our leaders



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have talked about staying the course, sticking to the ritual, holding our meetings expressly as written, but what is the harm in humor, or caring, or open arms to a wondering public, or just that overstated but underemployed term “friendship”? Isn’t friendship our very first tenet? Let’s try and remember that we face an uncertain future together, but together perhaps we can forge a path to a new millennium.

Rick’s Rules of Disorder, or, a Not Too Secret Path to Our Certain Demise

- 1) No new members. This is easy. We need do nothing different to accomplish this. Our lodges shall remain closed to the public. ***Why bother to change what doesn’t work?*** A store gets no customers with the doors closed. Our lodges should be run in the same fashion.
- 2) Enlarge the code, and use it as a bludgeon by which to punish our members. Also easy. What we need are layers of codes that conflict. Wait, we already have that!
- 3) Call into question every member not within a core group whose only goal is the total empowerment of the core group.
- 4) The object of power is power. The phrase coined by George Orwell’s classic book 1984, carried forward into the Odd Fellow universe. Forget the theory that representatives are supposed to represent. “Representation”, of course, is ludicrous and would smell of democracy. Certainly, the rabble cannot govern themselves, and if they decide to do something, find a way to undo it.
- 5) All new members are bad. All old members are good. This is implied by our actions. New members tend to have new ideas. New ideas should be discouraged as being counterproductive to the same old course of action. Obviously, if we follow the same old course of action, we will get the same old results, so this is evidently what we want.
- 6) Old members are entitled by their length of service to berate new members. New members are to be subjugated to duties generally performed ever since the dawn of Odd Fellowship. All old members carry a title. All new members have no title so they are naturally of lesser quality. A title allows the older members to bully the newer members. Also, should newer members say or think anything new, they should be ignored completely.
- 7) If a lodge has any success whatsoever, that success is to be dismissed as being contrary to Odd Fellow tradition. Lodges of less than 10 members are to be envied because they are able to maintain the same meeting size, date, location, seating, and jokes. The goal is always to get a quorum of five members.
- 8) Elective positions must spend their time picking their favorite mascot, their favorite song, their favorite flower, their favorite day of the week, ad infinitum. We should all worship under the sign of the duck or whatever ludicrous creature we can find which has not been used in the last three years. Our colors are red, white and blue because it is a well known



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fact that the older elective officers are more patriotic than the newer communistic members.

- 9) Everything an officer does must be more elegant and stylish than the one previously. All events are to be handled just as they were in the 1940's. Our favorite singer is Ethel Merman. Our favorite band is Benny Goodman. Nothing since 1950 is allowed. This will help to make our order more uninviting to anyone under the age of 75.
- 10) Men are encouraged to wear tuxedos. Women are encouraged to wear corsets and long flowing dresses. Especially in heats of over 100 degrees, heavy sweating is the purpose of all events. No one respects a person who is dressed in modern clothes. Forget the fact that it is becoming harder and harder to find traditional old style clothing, and let's gather together to eat our lasagna and our chicken, wear our bibs, and talk about whatever we want that is within our coded list of rules.
- 11) Rule number 1 of course is that the public is not allowed. Nor should we allow anything that may be attractive to the public. No committee shall be allowed which might be interesting to a prospective member. This will keep the membership at the same lower amount, which is, after all, what we want.
- 12) A lodge which does anything unique must be discouraged. Uniqueness should be against the code unless of course you are one of the powerful older members than your uniqueness will be attributed to a quirk of personality.
- 13) Successful lodges we call "clubs", therefore we can demean them. If we call them clubs, we can belittle them enough so that we can force them to walk in lockstep with the rest of us.
- 14) Fun is not to be permitted, unless we call fun eating thawed lasagna while reciting the chants in unison. Therefore, we wish to attract only white Anglo-Saxon overweight Christians. No one else need apply. The name "Odd Fellows" is now actually contradictory so it might be a good idea to re-name our group "The Nothing Out of the Ordinary Fellows" which would be a more accurate term. Never mind the fact that America is a melting pot of religions, colors and national origins. We must ensure that our order does not reflect modern society but rather the society as it was 175 years ago.
- 15) Representatives shall not speak for the order; they will only speak for themselves. Voting is irrelevant, and the results of all votes will be determined by those in charge.
- 16) Even though multiple codes are in common usage, policies can be changed at the whim of anyone in charge. Codes in conflict leads to worlds in collision which leads to bedlam made policy.
- 17) Any member interested in change should be brought up on charges. Change, although inevitable in all other avenues, is to be discouraged at all costs. Respect is earned by wearing the sign of the duck-billed platypus or whatever goofy animal we are wearing this year and singing patriotic songs, while demeaning all who may disagree.



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- 18) Any member with an opinion should be brought up on charges. Charges are to be enhanced to include tar and feathering, flogging, and time in the stocks.
- 19) Any member not willing to drive 300 miles weekly at their own expense is suspect. We judge the quality of a member by their willingness to travel great distances at their own expense. Any sign of individuality is to be brought into question.
- 20) Meetings are to be held which will conflict with normal working hours. Every effort will be made to prevent normal working people from joining as members.
- 21) No one under the age of 75 is to be trusted. A retooling of a popular phrase coined in the 60's which goes "trust nobody over 30", these same individuals now fear the young. The real meaning, therefore, is obviously trust nobody but them. Of course, this calls into question what happens when those over 75 pass away? I ask this question a lot, and invariably, the answer is "why would we care?"

The point to this longwinded article is that if we don't react quickly to our diminishing numbers, we are doomed to fail. That popular saying that we should repeat the same steps over and over but expect different results is appropriate here. Do we really expect improvement doing everything exactly how we have always done it? I personally love all my fellow members but we have to guard against complacency, we have to revisit our own youth, we have to seize the opportunity we now have to make progress before we descend into utter dissolution. Our declining numbers can't be disputed. There are lodges which have made headway. We should learn from their example. Do we really think that lodges with less than 10 members are somehow the most to be admired? Every lodge and every human being is flawed but we need to learn from each other, and stop accusing each person as inciting problems. If we really want the order in general to walk in lockstep, we are doomed to walk in lockstep to our own graves.

This article may cause some controversy, but it is time to realize that we either adapt to today's world, or we accept the fact that we will soon decrease as an order to nothing. Let's remember our similarities, and see that it is our emblem of "friendship, love and truth" which we should show to the public and know that it is a measure of our ability to show these traits to the world which will gauge our success into the future. We as an order must have a frank and open discussion about our future path and stop hurling insults, spreading rumors and instilling fear in all our members.

In Friendship, Love and Truth, Rick Boyles