



WE GREW UP IN TIMES OF HOPE: WHAT HAPPENED?

BY: Mindy Rader, Rockland Post Contributor



I watched a very old film called Monterey Pops. It was the story of the 1967 Monterey Pop Music Festival. While the music was fantastic, watching the people in the audience drew me to compare life in 1967 to life in 2026.

The 1960's were the years of peace, love and protest. The draft was sending increasing numbers of Americans to Viet Nam. The music was protest music and reflected the times. I realize something else. Everybody in that crowd, the people, seem to know who they were and simply enjoyed the music. They seemed to socially interact with each other. It reminded me that there was once a time in this country we could disagree with each other and be drawn together as a nation and people even by just enjoying music.

Who were these people? They were the Boomers. They were me. They were my husband and my friends. This was my generation. Our parents were products of the Great Depression and came out of World War 2. My generation fought for change in American society, but we still loved our country and still loved each other. How did my generation, the Boomers produce via their children and grandchildren, the current mess and hatred that we have for our country and for each other, basically.

I blame it on a lack of socialization. I see my grandchildren speaking to their friends via internet chats and social media on the internet. What happened to going out and playing with your friends. What happened to forming a team and doing pick up basketball. What happened to just "hanging out"? Now it all must be organized via a chat, and the helicopter parents have to make it something organized and competitive. And while they say it's for fun, they keep score and parents yell at the referee.

When did it become okay to disobey laws? We corrupted the concept of civil disobedience. Those who led that charge for the civil rights era spent many a night in jail. Now it's you don't put them in jail. You don't do anything. Today, we don't do protests, but we burn cities, we block roads, and we have called this peaceful protest. We have just perverted everything we stood for. Today's generation has lost sight of what it means to live in a free society. A free society involves civility to others and respect for each other's different ideas and points of views even if we don't agree with it. Today we believe there should be no punishment for bad acts if it is done for some greater cause which sometimes nobody understands. We have seen an influx of people arriving largely from the third world that says that the basis of the American society is wrong. It's the belief that the very ideas that produced this country and freedom for millions around the world is basically bogus.

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Finally, social media has led us to hate each other. Everybody with an idea posts it and thinks their idea is the best. Since we don't know the person at the other end of the keyboard you can attack them and you can "cancel them". It's almost like killing somebody without committing the physical act. All of this has led to generations of despair. People feel they have no hope. We are socially isolated. No, my friends on Facebook, for the most part are not real. They are just Clickbait. We don't respect each other. Everybody has a camera and thinks they are a reporter. And they have no sense of decorum or propriety.

We need to go back to the 60's and 70's in our thinking. We need new John F. Kennedys and Martin Luther King's to inspire us to be better than we were. We must not appeal to our worst instincts. Appeal to our best. Get our children to talk to each other, pick up a phone, and go out and play. We need a message of hopefulness by someone who can deliver it. Not that we are better, but that we could be better and our best days are ahead. Deliver that message. Deliver it like John F. Kennedy did who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." And I say that in even broader terms, don't ask someone to solve your problems, get out there and solve them for yourself. Don't be part of the hatred machine on the internet. Teach your children and yourselves to go out and be part of society. And be there for the greater good.