



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

SEPTEMBER
2014

“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

GOLDEN RULE REPORT

By Chuck Dewitt

To All:

September has come and gone. The middle of the month brought 3 inches of rain and the roof did not leak. Last week including today Indian summer gave us 80 plus degrees at the waters edge right here in the boat yard, it just doesn't get any better than this on Humboldt Bay.

Mike is putting the finale coats of varnish on the Mahogany deck boards for the pulpit. The steel frame is already in place awaiting the deck so that we can bolt it down firm. We are fabricating a sliding, rotating shelf for the Radar and GPS screen over the engine. This will allow us to view the screen from inside the cabin or slide it over, turn it around and view it from the aft deck while manning the tiller. The prop, shaft and stuffing box are squared to the keel and have been epoxied. Next step is to align and adjust the engine and bolt it down, it's almost perfect now just needs some fine tuning.

Two years ago we salvaged the life lines, stanchions and all the accompanying hardware from the English sloop, Kanwara. This week we had them inspected and were told that they are in perfect condition. The vinyl encased stainless steel cable shows no signs of damage or oxidation of any kind so we've decided to use it along with the 18 stanchions, 4 of which come with gate braces. We can use all of the hardware and fittings except for 8 studs that will need to be replaced once the lines are fitted to our length. This will constitute an approximately 4 thousand dollar savings. The clamps for the mast construction are finished, all 41 of them. We've also cut 82 small 7 inch by 7 inch by 5/8ths inch blocks so the clamps don't damage the mast wood. Thanks to Mr. Greg Dale of Pacific Sea Foods and the Harbor District we have 3 gallons of epoxy with hardener and wood flour awaiting our upcoming gluing party. Incidentally, anyone that would like to help on this please let me know, we are getting close to construction time. We've got 12 saw horses ready and as soon as the wood has been scarfed and glued together and the shop cleared out of other projects we'll be set to go.

A few weeks back we had a visit from Mr. Don Mathes from northern Oregon. Don is an experienced sailor having already sailed down to Kwajalein in the Marshalls and back. He has possession of 8 mm. film taken by his father of Captain Bigelow and the Golden Rule back in 1958 prior to their arrest and jailing and has agreed to try and get it put on a disk so that we might be able to add it to our web site. Don has also expressed interest in the gluing party as well as possibly crewing once we've launched and gotten through sea trials. In less than a year the Rule will be in San Diego Harbor so folks if you know how to sail and believe in the mission it's time to speak up so we can begin to form a list. The Rule will have 4 permanent berths.

Before I end this report I need to say that we are running low on cash and still need a few items. We still need 6 port holes, brass, 6 inches round. Even if the glass is damaged, I can fix them. We're lacking 4 cleats, 8 or 10 inch can be either brass or chrome and 4 chocks to go with them. The bunks two of which are finished need mattresses and covers or sacks sewn and they are not standard sizes or shapes so if you think you could volunteer some sewing time get ahold of me and we can figure out material and technique and pillows also.

This update is respectfully submitted by Chuck DeWitt, Restoration Coordinator for the Golden Rule Project. Finn Town, Humboldt Bay California.



12 Atrocities the US Totally Ignored That Are Worse Than Syria

By: BRIAN KLONOSKI

The Obama Administration wants to go to war with Syria despite strong resistance from Congress, the international community and the American public. Why? The reasoning, according to Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry, is that we can't stand idly by while Assad uses chemical weapons to murder his own citizens (even though there is no irrefutable proof that he has done so).

As the world's preeminent super power, it's our duty to confront genocide, war crimes, ethnic purges and humanitarian injustices in every dark corner of the globe — no matter what. Or so the argument goes.

"These are real human beings, real children, parents being affected in ways that are unacceptable to anybody, anywhere by any standards," Kerry said, speaking about the YouTube videos showing Syrians dying from sarin nerve gas. "And the United States of America that has always stood with others to say we will not allow this — this is not our values, it's not who we are."

Always stood with others? Values? With all due respect Secretary, that's bullshit.

The bottom line is that the U.S. — and most other world powers — only intervene when there is something in it for them. And much of the time, there's absolutely no advantage to stopping the injustices of distant lands. That's why, throughout history, the U.S. has allowed humanitarian atrocities on an overwhelming scale.

Don't believe us? Here are 12 examples from the last century.

12. BURUNDI CIVIL WAR AND GENOCIDE

WHERE: Burundi, Africa

WHEN: 1993 – 2005

DEATH TOLL: 200,000 – 300,000

BAD GUY: No one guy, really. Lots of bad guys. This was ethnic violence.

LONG STORY SHORT: Ethnic violence between Tutsis and Hutus (which claimed the lives of 200,000 Hutus in a previous genocide in 1972) reared its ugly head after Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, became Burundi's first democratically elected president in 1993, and was assassinated by Tutsi extremists less than six months later, sparking another round of ethnic violence and genocide (this time Tutsis were the target) which led to the deaths of up to 100,000 people in the first year alone. By the time the whole, bloody affair was

more or less wrapped up in 2005, nearly 300,000 people — Tutsi and Hutu among them — were dead.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: Less than a month before Ndadaye was assassinated, a little something called Black Hawk Down happened. The snafu, also known as The Battle of Mogadishu, occurred when Somali militants shot down two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters in Somalia, leading to a standoff that claimed the lives of 18 U.S. troops. Americans were pissed. There was no way President Clinton was going to put any more boots on the ground in Africa, even if it meant turning a blind eye to genocide.

11. THE BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR

WHERE: Bangladesh, Pakistan and India

WHEN: 1971

DEATH TOLL: 269,000

BAD GUY: Another case of ethnic violence.

LONG STORY SHORT: Pakistan held general elections for the first time in 1970. The Awami League, which represented Bengalis living in Eastern Pakistan, won a majority of the seats. But the thing is, Pakistan's president never gave the Awami League any real power, triggering a mass uprising in Eastern Pakistan. The military responded with Operation Searchlight, a purging of Bengalis, including massacres, killings, rape, arson and the systematic elimination of religious minorities. Eastern Pakistan eventually won the war, defeating Western Pakistan when India intervened, leading to the establishment of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation — but not before nearly 300,000 civilians were killed.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: Simply put: We were homies with Pakistan. Remember, this was 1971 — the heart of the Cold War (not to mention Vietnam) — and the last thing the U.S. wanted to do was curb its imperialist tendencies and encourage internal uprisings that might pave the way toward communist revolution. Despite having detailed knowledge of the atrocities, President Nixon and his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger (both of whom had close relationships with Pakistani leadership), were focused on preserving the territorial integrity of Pakistan via the doctrine of "Massive Inaction." In doing so, they didn't just ignore genocide — they encouraged it.

10. CIVIL WARS IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE

WHERE: West Africa. Specifically: Liberia and Sierra Leone.

WHEN: 1989 – 2003

DEATH TOLL: 300,000

BAD GUY: Charles Taylor

LONG STORY SHORT: Charles Taylor is a bad man. After training under Muammar Gaddafi, Taylor moved to West Africa and started not one, but two civil wars in Liberia. He also managed to get involved in Sierra Leone's civil war, providing rebels with weapons in exchange for blood diamonds. Remember that re-

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ally dark movie Blood Diamond (starring Leo DiCaprio)? It was about the Sierra Leone war. Taylor relied heavily upon child soldiers, often using drugs to manipulate them, before making the children kill their parents. His forces raped, looted and pillaged their way through Sierra Leone. When all was said and done, Taylor — who was eventually convicted for crimes against humanity — had killed 300,000 people.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: Much like the Burundi genocide, the Clinton Administration was still reluctant to risk the lives of American troops on African soil in the wake of Black Hawk Down. The more pertinent reason, according to diplomats, is that Liberia and Sierra Leone were of no strategic interest to the U.S. But the bigger story here is that America may have actually helped Charles Taylor carry out his crimes against humanity. After all, he was on the CIA's payroll during his bloody reign. Can you imagine the backlash if your tax dollars were lining Bashar Assad's pockets? This was much, much worse.

9. DARFUR GENOCIDE

WHERE: Darfur region of Western Sudan, Africa
 WHEN: 2003 – now
 DEATH TOLL: 300,000
 BAD GUY: Omar al-Bashir

LONG STORY SHORT: After two Darfur rebel movements launched attacks against the Sudanese government in 2003, Sudan responded with with brutal raids, targeting ethnic groups that supported the rebels. Villages were destroyed, millions displaced (resulting in a humanitarian crisis) and up to 300,000 killed in violence that continues to this day. President Bush called the atrocities “genocide,” but failed to stop them. Sudan’s president at the time, Omar al-Bashir, was indicted at the International Criminal Court on three counts of genocide and five of crimes against humanity.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: The Bush administration publicly condemned the violence in Darfur, with the president describing the events as “genocide.” And to be fair, the U.S. did provide some support in the form of humanitarian aid. But as far as intervening and stopping the violence? Nope. This was yet another example of an isolated region in Africa not mattering in terms of larger, foreign policy goals. With the War on Terror in full swing, and resources (both political and military) reserved for the Middle East, even genocide wasn’t enough to warrant intervention in Darfur.

8. UGANDA UNDER IDI AMIN

WHERE: Uganda, Africa
 WHEN: 1971-1979
 DEATH TOLL: 300,000 – 500,000
 BAD GUY: Idi Amin

LONG STORY SHORT: As commander of the armed forces, Idi Amin ousted Ugandan leader Milton Obote and seized power in a military coup in 1971. He soon began his reign of terror, using death squads to carry out widespread torture, killings and ethnic cleansing. He developed a fearsome reputation as a cannibal, and became known as the “Butcher of Uganda.” All told, up to 500,000 people were killed for ethnic, political and financial reasons during Amin’s eight-year rule.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: Thousands of American kids were dying in the rice paddies and jungles of Vietnam. With America’s resources deployed in Asia and across the world to fight the spread of Communism, allocating military assets to stop genocide in an African country where we had no strategic interests as far as the Cold War was concerned just wasn’t going to happen. Shortly after the Vietnam War ended, Jimmy Carter took office. He was sort of a pussy, with little desire to continue the militarism of his predecessors.

7. RWANDA GENOCIDE

WHERE: Rwanda, Africa
 WHEN: 1994
 DEATH TOLL: 500,000 – 1 million
 BAD GUY: More ethnic violence. Noticing a pattern here?

LONG STORY SHORT: Like Burundi, this was another instance of ethnic violence between Tutsis and Hutus. Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana and Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira (both Hutus) were assassinated when their plane was shot down while landing in Rwanda, leading to a swift, precise, organized genocide against the Tutsi minority and moderate Hutus that claimed up to one million lives in just 100 days. Women were raped. Parents

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Next VFP56 meeting will be held on Thursday, November 6th at 7:00 PM. Meeting will be held at 24 Unitarian Fellowship Way, Bayside, Jacoby Creek Road. Veterans and non-veterans are more than welcome to come and help us dialogue about what we together can do to bring about peace in this complex world.



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were hacked to death with machetes in front of their children. Millions more were displaced as refugees. Tensions had been building for a long time, with the Tutsi minority controlling power for centuries, until the Hutus took over after the rebellion of 1959-1962.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: This one is tough to swallow. There was strong Congressional support to deploy a “rapid action force” to stop the killings, but President Clinton, perhaps still embarrassed by Black Hawk Down, chose instead to make a series of impotent pleas to the groups carrying out the violence. He also put the impetus on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda, which had already stated that they did not have the resources or mandate to carry out their mission. Essentially, Congress looked to President Clinton, who looked to the UN, who didn’t really have the power to do anything. Before anyone grew the balls to take action, the genocide was over, with as many as one million people dead.

6. ETHIOPIA’S RED TERROR

WHERE: Ethiopia and Eritrea, Africa
WHEN: 1977 – 1978
DEATH TOLL: 500,000 – 2 million
BAD GUY: Mengistu Haile Mariam

LONG STORY SHORT: After gaining control of Ethiopia’s Communist military junta — called the Derg — following a bloody shootout in 1977, dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam oversaw the Red Terror, a violent campaign of repression targeted at a number of anti-Derg groups. Hundred of thousands of men and women (who were also subjected to rape) were executed, including some who were herded into churches and burned. Derg soldiers often refused to release bodies for burial until family members had reimbursed them for the cost of the bullet used in the killing. Mengistu was found guilty of genocide in absentia in 2007, and eventually sentenced to death in 2008. He remains exiled in Zimbabwe, where he fled in 1991, following the conclusion of the Ethiopian Civil War.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: Chalk this up to another instance of Jimmy Carter being a pussy. Well, sort of. Carter did curtail arms sales to Ethiopia in response to human rights abuses, but that’s about it. The Red Terror also happened really fast. By the time 1978 rolled around, Mengistu had more or less crushed all the opposition groups. The genocide was over, and he could now focus on making the Derg a legitimate, ruling force. With Vietnam still fresh on Americans minds, Carter didn’t exactly want to risk creating an African front to the Cold War — certainly not for something as measly as the lives of hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians.

5. THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

WHERE: Ottoman Empire (modern day Turkey)
WHEN: 1915
DEATH TOLL: 1 million – 1.5 million
BAD GUY: The Ottoman Government

LONG STORY SHORT: The crumbling Ottoman Empire (Muslims) systematically rounded up and killed up to 1.5 million Armenians (Christians, Jews) in a desperate attempt to preserve and purify their eroding state. Men were executed on the spot or forced into labor camps before being killed. Women, children and the elderly were marched into the Syrian desert to die. Rape and sexual abuse were abundant. When all was said and done, there were fewer than 400,000 Armenians remaining in the Ottoman Empire. Before the killings, there were two million. To this day, the Turkish government denies that this was a genocide — but they’re wrong. Systematic violence against an ethnic group? Check. Rape on a widespread scale? Check. Brutal murders and death marches? Check. Sure sounds like genocide to us.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: Even though this happened in 1915, the U.S. had a pretty good idea of what was going on. Unfortunately for the Armenians, President Woodrow Wilson had declared that the U.S. would remain neutral in World War I. The Ottoman Empire was a participant., so intervening, even to halt the genocide, would have violated the doctrine of neutrality, which remained in place until 1917, when the U.S. finally declared war against Germany in response to their use of unrestricted submarine warfare. By then, the damage had been done.

4. CAMBODIAN GENOCIDE

WHERE: Cambodia
WHEN: 1975 – 1979
DEATH TOLL: 2 million
BAD GUY: Pol Pot (and lots of other bad dudes)

LONG STORY SHORT: The Communist Khmer Rouge party took control of Cambodia in 1975 following the Cambodian Civil War. The super paranoid, super totalitarian regime run by sociopaths like Pol Pot immediately began arresting, torturing and executing anyone they deemed to be their enemy, which included professionals, intellectuals, artists, musicians, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Ethnic Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese, ethnic Thai and other minorities, as well as anyone with ties to the former government. That’s a lot of people. Many passed through the horrifying Tuol Sleng Centre where they were interrogated, tortured and forced to give up the names of friends and family before being marched to the infamous Killing Fields to be executed via pick axe (Pol Pot was a thrifty psycho who wanted to save bullets) and buried in mass graves. In the end, some two million people died from executions, disease, starvation and forced labor.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: Actually, the U.S. carpet

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bombed the hell out of Cambodia in the early 1970s in an effort to break-up Viet Cong forces hiding out in the eastern part of the country, which had declared neutrality during the Cold War. Many historians argue that the Khmer Rouge used those bombings — which killed up to 150,000 civilians — to recruit insurgents. Once they gained power and turned the entire country into a concentration camp, the U.S. stayed quiet, despite having detailed knowledge of the atrocities being committed. Putting boots on the ground — especially in such a volatile region — wasn't an option so soon after the quagmire in neighboring Vietnam. Before the U.S. could take action, Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1979 and took control of the government. The situation got really dark when the U.S. refused to back the new Communist government, and gave millions of dollars of aid to the Khmer Rouge, essentially supporting a group that had committed genocide on the grandest of scales.

3. STALIN'S COLLECTIVIZATION, PURGES

WHERE: Soviet Union
 WHEN: 1928 – 1939
 DEATH TOLL: 6 million
 BAD GUY: Josef Stalin

LONG STORY SHORT: Stalin had no trouble finding ways to kill people. It all started with collectivization, which was the state's seizure of land from farmers, who Stalin then sent to work in camps and factories in an effort to transform the Soviet Union from an agricultural power to an industrial one. Farmers in the Ukraine started to get pissed. Stalin responded by cutting off their food supply and starving them, taking special aim at a group of affluent farmers known as kulaks. Then there was a little something called The Great Purge. Essentially, Stalin killed or sent to the gulags (to die) every person he deemed an enemy of the state. This included government officials, military leadership, intellectuals, peasants and farmers.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: First of all, it took a while for the West to realize what was going on because Stalin's society was so repressive. Anyone who uttered anything about a famine was jailed or killed. Moreover, Stalin exported most of the grains that should have fed starving farmers and peasants, using the money to purchase products and weapons from Western countries to help him carry out his Five Year Plan to increase the Soviet Union's industrial and military might. There was no way the U.S. was going to take on a super power that was shipping boatloads of cash to the West. Sure, we tried to send aid in the form of food, but it was refused. We didn't love Stalin, but we were more or less in bed with the bad guy on this one.

2. THE HOLOCAUST

WHERE: German-controlled territories in Eastern Europe.
 WHEN: 1933 – 1945
 DEATH TOLL: 6 million – 11 million
 BAD GUY: Adolf Hitler

LONG STORY SHORT: We all know this story. Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, sought to exterminate every single Jew in Europe, and almost succeeded, killing nearly two-thirds of them. Jews were herded into ghettos, packed onto trains, then shipped off to concentration camps, where they were gassed en masse. The Holocaust is chilling not only because of its efficiency, but also because of the intricate roll played by various German institutions. That's why some scholars now refer to the Third Reich as "the genocidal state" — the whole country was in on it. Estimates of the number killed vary widely, but it's safe to say AT LEAST six million Jews were killed, including one million Jewish children.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: Wait, didn't the U.S. defeat Hitler in World War II and liberate concentration camps all over Eastern Europe shortly thereafter? Yeah, but not so fast. The U.S. knew what was going on as early as 1942, and Jewish groups in both the U.S. and Britain demanded we do something about it. So we did. But not really. It was called the Bermuda Conference, and the whole point of the despicable affair was to make it look like we cared about the Holocaust victims while actually doing nothing to help them. It was a performance, a show, a staging. For real.

1. MAO'S GREAT LEAP FORWARD

WHERE: China
 WHEN: 1958 – 1962
 DEATH TOLL: 45 million
 BAD GUY: Mao Zedong

LONG STORY SHORT: Much like Stalin sought to industrialize the Soviet Union with the Five Year Plan, Mao Zedong hoped to transform the agrarian economy of China into a more advanced communist society with a plan of his own: The Great Leap Forward. And just like Stalin, Mao used fear, coercion and systematic violence to enforce collectivization. People were set on fire, buried alive, doused in excrement or forced to work naked in the winter. But unlike Stalin's Five Year Plans, which more or less worked, The Great Leap Forward was an economic disaster, not to mention the fact that 45 million people died from starvation, execution, forced labor and suicide, among other causes.

WHY THE U.S. STAYED AWAY: It being the Cold War and all, the U.S. was focused on the doctrine of Containment — that is, preventing the spread of Communism worldwide rather than trying to topple already existing regimes (that would be called rollback). With worldwide tensions already heightened, invading mainland China and starting World War III wasn't really a decision anyone was willing to make. There was also this little conflict starting to heat up just down the road that was devouring our military resources: The Vietnam War.

RYOT NOTE: *The bottom line is that — at least historically — the U.S. only intervenes when there is something in it for them. Sorta makes you wonder what this whole Syria situation is about, doesn't it?*



JOURNEY TO FOREVER

By John Mulloy
Episode X

CAVE EXPLORATION; JOURNEYS WITHIN the EARTH

My lengthy involvement with the world of spelunking (cave exploring) was confined to the vast multitude of limestone caverns in the Appalachian Mountains. These caverns were formed by millions of years of water flowing through fissures in the limestone rock formations. Caves range all the way from one small room, to systems that extend for miles, with intricate tunnel arrays and an abundance of large rooms.

I, like most 'cavers', had two interests. First, there is the sheer exhilaration of exploration. Where does this tunnel lead? Can I fit through this fissure? What's around the corner? When the tunnel forks, which way do we go? Is there another exit, or do we have to backtrack? Secondly, there is visual beauty. Underground streams, small lakes, and waterfalls are not rare. Highly sought after are underworld chambers filled with limestone carbonate cones (stalactites and stalagmites). In a large room, the cones create a cathedral setting. A large pipe organ would be appropriate.

For safety, a caving team of at least four is desirable. That keeps the 'buddy' system in play, if there is injury. Wear a good helmet, with attached battery-powered lamp. In my early days, we used carbide lamps, but they have become a rarity. Pack a regular flashlight also, with extra batteries and bulbs for all light sources. In a cave, light is life. Bring a canteen of water. You'll experience lots of crawling and climbing in a rock environment, so knee and elbow pads are a good choice. A good rope is useful at times. Caving is a lot of fun, providing memories of exploration and Earth's beauty. Be adventurous, while exercising caution.

My most interesting caving experience occurred in West Virginia. My 'caver' friends and I were attracted to a complex system that had four or five known entrances., one of which was a huge opening that had been developed for tourism. We chose the most obscure entrance.

Only when you were right on top of our entry, could you see it. A small springhead flowed out of an opening that was only three feet wide and two feet high. This was no place for a claustrophobic. I took the lead, crawling about thirty feet through negligible flowing water and harmless salamanders. Finally, the tunnel opened up and I could stand up.

For the next twenty-four hours, we progressed through a maze of unbelievable complexity. Tunnels forked in every direction, most

coming to dead ends. Fissures led up and down to more layers and more tunnels. Climbing up, climbing down, going sideways, always having to decide the next move. At every major decision, we'd draw an arrow on the wall pointing back to the path we had come. Arrows always pointed to an exit.

We found beautiful chambers of limestone carbonate cones, as well as a pretty waterfall. Just climbing around in the bizarre matrix was satisfying. We rested a lot and the camaraderie was wonderful. We came to a long, winding tunnel that clearly angled upward. I rounded a corner and there was an 'off' light bulb on the ceiling. After a few more corners and 'off' bulbs, I could see artificial light. It was an 'on' bulb above a tunnel-blocking iron gate. Meant to keep tourists away from the maze, the gate was mercifully unlocked. We headed up and came to the giant tourism entrance. There we were, grimy and haggard, with the tourists watching us as we rose from the depths.

The scenes of majestic beauty and the joy of exploration lead to a sense of protectiveness for our celestial orb.

STUPID

Fall, 1974, found me meandering around northern California, having fun amidst small adventures. The San Francisco Bay Area has much, much magic, hosting a myriad of portals and windows to knowledge and experience. Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley was a route to Wonderland. Of particular high energy, during this now long ago era, was Telegraph's Café Mediterranean (the Med), an all-night coffeehouse that served as one of the entrances to lands whose characters exist on the dreamy edge of reality.

I floated into the Med one night in mid-December, backpack on my shoulders. The classic midnight crowd inhabited the huge spaces: intellectuals, students, artists of all flavors, revolutionaries, acid heads, pimps and prostitutes, alcoholics, bikers, runaways, mental cases, religious cultists, travelers and, of course, the innocent; a potpourri that spiced up life's trajectory.

I collected some coffee and landed at a small table. I sat there feeling like an aging veteran of the road, revolution, and counter-culture. Ready to turn 30, the eternal questions of "who, what, when, where, how, and why" were pressing at my consciousness. The 'meaning of life' venue was seeking some sort of introspective fulfillment within my SOUL.

Coming through the front door was a much older man. My instinctive SELF was drawn to him. He was swarthy, with a backpack. He had close-cropped grey hair, with eyelashes that stuck out a full inch from his dancing, blue eyes. In obvious fulfillment of my psychic need, he came to my table and asked if he could sit with me. Of course!! I knew that I was in the presence of a 'truth-teller', a well developed being of high experience. I should keep quiet and listen.

Ever so gently, my new friend outlined a few major episodes

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from his planetary journey, all of which I could identify from my studies, my knowledge locker. As a young man, he had been heavily involved with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). In the mid-1920's, he had deported himself from the U.S., one step ahead of the newly passed sedition laws that sought to imprison revolutionaries and labor organizers. Using his radical contacts, he assumed a new identity and journeyed to the Soviet Union where he kept himself for the next decade. Many American expatriots were living under the Soviet umbrella, studying politics and economics, dreaming of revolution and the making of a better world.

By the midpoint of the 1930's, our man of twinkling eyes was fed up with the horrors of Stalin's bloody purges. The bloom was off the rose. Given the ways and means, our hero sallied forth toward China, where he would join up with Mao Tsetung and the communist forces. Staying with the Chinese revolutionaries for almost ten years, he immersed himself in Chinese politics, culture, and thought.

With the end of World War II in 1945, the world's population was in flux. Armies were headed home; massive numbers of refugees and former prisoners were headed to and fro; millions were on the move. A perfect time for relocation, with few questions asked, led my new friend to assume another identity and move on, hopping a series of freighters and ending up in San Francisco. There, he would use contacts with old IWW mates to become an organizer with the Longshoremen's Union.

Now, in the 1970's, he was traveling about, visiting communes and radical collectives. He found that he had much information and worldly analysis to pass on. Meanwhile, the passionate energy of encountered youth rejuvenated his own SELF. Too many of his old associates had become more conservative and dulled by time and aging. Staying on the cutting edge of action and thought was vital to him.

In the latter stages of our visit, realizing that we had never introduced ourselves, I thrust out my hand. "I'm John, by the way." He put his hand strongly into mine, saying, with his eyes dancing, "My name is Stupid." A capital 'S' jumped right out at me and I accepted his moniker without question. I felt his thoughts as we clenched hands. He had been through so many identities over the decades, that it doesn't really matter what one's official 'I.D.' is. What counted is what you say, how you act, and what you do. That, over time, defines the 'you'. This man could get his points across without words, but with the transference of energy waves from within his SOUL.

Meeting Stupid certainly dissolved my reverie wherein I viewed myself as an aging veteran of life's journey. This man was 75; I was 29. It would be 46 years before I could catch up to where he already was, in terms of knowledge and wisdom, and he was still going strong.

Stupid didn't teach with rules as his tools. He ensured that one

had to figure it out for one's self. In reality, I had just begun on the eternal road of experience, knowledge, and wisdom. The answer to the 'meaning of life' issues could come with time and an open mind. SELF consciousness would evolve; there was no 'test', no grades. A great weight was lifted and I could head into the future with a light step and yearning for what lay ahead.

By four in the morning, Stupid and I were out in the middle of Telegraph Ave., singing union songs and laughing. We said our "good byes and good lucks", heaving our packs on our shoulders. Turning in opposite directions, we continued on the pathways to our own destination. I never saw him again, at least in this corporeal form.

As the years passed, I grew to a full comprehension of Stupid's role as my Guide. Meeting him was looking into a mirror, seeing the personage that I could become, if I just kept going forward. I was blessed that he dropped into my path for a visit, at just the right time. When I encounter young people, I'm very aware of my joyous responsibility to give my best in terms of helping then open doors of perception.

* * * *

POSTSCRIPT

A few months after my pivotal encounter with Stupid, I told the story to my very good friend Larry, brother of the road and revolution. A year passed. Larry sent me a newspaper from Portland, Oregon. He had highlighted an article about a regional food co-op conference. I was reading along when, "And Stupid said, ...". Several times, Stupid, capital 'S', was quoted. His name was unquestioned and he was doing exactly what he needed to do, pass knowledge to the youth.

Of course, I had never doubted the existence of this wonderful human being. I knew that our encounter was quite real. But, it was nice to be reaffirmed and have my remembrance validated. The journey of consciousness and love would continue, for both of us.





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LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read which might interest the members of VFP-56, please e-mail it to turtldncer@aol.com, in word format, or mail to Jim Sorter at 1762 Buttermilk Lane, Arcata, CA 95521. Submissions will be included on a first come basis until the newsletter is full. Late arriving submissions will be archived for future issues.



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