

The Great Loop:

Mid-Atlantic musings from a Hawai'i GR fan,
Barbara Leigh Cooney

GR Ambassador, former faculty in Peace Studies, Kobe College, Japan



Moored at DC wharf: Helen Schietinger & Barbara Cooney, April 15, 2023

After the passage of 61 years, the Golden Rule arrived again in Honolulu in 2019, more than a year after our traumatizing alert of an impending North Korean nuclear warhead. After 38 minutes confronting horrific death and doom, thankfully it was revealed to be a false alarm. I ask: what would you do if you were suddenly told you have mere minutes before nuclear impact? Please pause and consider this... Thankfully, the Golden Rule Project is in alliance with a vast network of entities dedicated to preventing any such occurrence.

I am honored and privileged to be an Ambassador to the Golden Rule Project due to my involvement when the boat was temporarily based on Oahu. During Covid this second attempted mission to the Marshall Islands (and beyond) had to be aborted. The highlight of my tenure was connecting our local Marshallese community to GR, protesting together on Remembrance Day (Castle Bravo anniversary) and ultimately sailing with a boatful of excited, appreciative Bikinians.

In April-May 2023 I joined the Great Loop mission in my homeland in the State of Maryland, the indigenous lands of today's Piscataway Indian Nation, the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, and the Accohannock Indian Tribe, as well as the lands of the Anacostan, the Patuxent, the Susquehannock, and the Lenni-Lenape along our route. My European ancestors began arriving in the 1720s as settlers, with colonialism well established. I acknowledge the practices of ancient lineages of people on these lands and waterways that allowed me to enjoy their gifts on this journey, while recognizing unsustainable practices by generations of settlers still in place.

After participating in various DC events and joining organizer Helen Schietinger in lobbying the Senate by distributing the VFP Nuclear Posture Review, I joined the amazing GR crew of Skipper Steve Buck, Ren Jacobs, and Mary Ann Van Cura. I cannot emphasize adequately the warm welcome and camaraderie amongst my crewmates! During peaceful moments traversing the troubled waterways of my youth, healing transpired and inspiration bubbled forth. Somewhere around Solomons Island, haiku happened.



GR cabin meal at Smallwood State Park: (lower right, counterclockwise) Julie Yates Tayac, matriarch of the Piscataway nation; Baltimore organizers Malachy Kilbride & Ellen Barfield; crew Steve Buck, Ren Jacobs, Mary Ann Van Cura, & Barbara Cooney

**Glistening beauty
O'er ancestral waterways
Graced by Golden Rule**

**Olive green currents
Chesapeake ospreys watching
Morning departure**

After cruising by the Calvert Cliffs nuclear power plant and bearing witness as a huge tanker was being filled with fracked gas at Cove Point, we were graciously hosted by activists Jane Cyphers and Joe Levine on their family farmland on the banks near Chesapeake Beach. Also present was Pat Elder, PFAS and military pollution expert, as well as representatives from the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability and others.



Osprey occupied nearly every buoy



**Hosts extraordinaire Joe Levine & Jane Cyphers
with Ren Jacobs near Chesapeake Beach**

**Scrumptious healthy meals
Heritage homestead gives warmth
Crumbling bay cliffs**



Repairs at Herrington Harbor South

GR repairs required a precarious climb up the mast, resulting in a near drop. Our skipper expressed himself in a five-syllable haiku pattern.

**Heroic accent
Mesh ladder plus butt support
Urgent repairing**

“F*ing halyard failed”
Good planning saves captain’s life
“Hell yes! Life is good!”**

Mostly intact, our journey resumed...

**Chesapeake calm, bliss
On bow watching for crab pots
Sighting the Bay Bridge!!**

**Thomas Point lighthouse
DC supporters sailing
Escort gratitude**



Passing historic Thomas Point Shoal lighthouse as seen by our escorts, April 24, 2023



Escort boat on the Chesapeake crewed by Cynde Norton & Helen Schietinger, with GR crew in foreground. A few weeks prior Cynde had captained GR up the Potomac River from Quantico to Alexandria

**Now Annapolis
Elected officials come
Give Proclamation**

Gavin Buckley, Mayor of Annapolis, with Helen Jaccard & Gerry Condon

We Marylanders love our Chesapeake Bay, the nation's largest estuary, and are thrilled to traverse the 4.3-mile Bay Bridge, connecting populated western rolling plateaus to rural flat Eastern Shore with its ocean vacationlands. I carried a sprinkle of my mother's ashes to this place of our family's elation.



GR dingy between twin spans of the Bay Bridge

**Approaching Bay Bridge!!
Fulfill childhood, lifetime dream
In a boat below**

**Releasing ashes
Below beloved Bay Bridge
Peace be with you, Mom**

**Approaching Key Bridge
Patapsco & Baltimore
Await to greet us**



Passing under the Frances Scott Key Bridge. This iconic bridge collapsed March 26, 2024 when struck by containership Dali. RIP six migrant workers! Baltimore Strong!

Baltimore's super supportive community, spearheaded by VFP Ellen Barfield, with Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility and Quakers among others, organized a myriad of events, including much appreciated fund raising. Remarkably, a phenomenal cake was adorned with an artistically rendered sugar replica of GR.



Celebratory cake to commemorate 65 years since the Honolulu arrest of GR crew



Watercolor of GR in Baltimore harbor imagined by supporter & organizer Bob Prokop, VFP, who passed away before GR's arrival

On a chilly, wet morning we departed for Havre de Grace (thanks to organizer Becca Gardner and host/musician Suzanne Dayton), where my siblings came to meet the Golden Rule.



Havre de Grace—sister Nancy Hawse with Steve Buck

We were gifted convenient marina docking, thanks to Jean Cushman. Louis Curran was instrumental in obtaining a Welcome Proclamation from Baltimore City Council, as well as connecting us to writer Vincent Intondi. VFP David Robson, former GR captain, showed up at a church service. With this boat, magic happens!



Sailing Baltimore Inner Harbor with supporters Ivy Parsons (donated use of her Cube car) & Rhonda Robinson (jazz singer at Homewood Friends event)

**Younger sister sails!
Understands my engagement
This boat, this lifestyle**



Deer Creek Friends Meetinghouse

Share at Friends meeting
Bid farewell to Chesapeake
Susquehanna friends

C & D Canal
Connecting Bay and River
Unnatural, eerie

Mindfully watching
Delaware River debris!
Blue herons follow

Smooth glassy surface
Juxtapose shore industry
River, sky prevail

Gather floating junk
Driftwood debris now plain trash
Game to retrieve balls!

Distant horizon
Mimics offshore ocean waves
Straight flat edge of trees

Unbelievable
Bliss with outstanding crewmates
River reflects clouds



Approaching Philadelphia—North Wind escort,
May 9, 2023



Crew with Sally Willowbee, our gracious host, daughter of original 1958 crew member George Willoughby

We were escorted into Philadelphia by a boatload of supporters on the North Wind Schooner, then greeted at the dock by even more supporters, including Quakers, VFP, Raging Grannies, as well as City Councilor Mark Squilla

A highlight in Philadelphia was an invitation to Swarthmore College (a dream-come-true for a peace educator), hosted by Lee Smithey, with GR memorabilia from the library's Peace Collection on display. A crowning moment was the thrill of taking George Lakey on my last sail at sunset!

- Mahalo most awesome crewmates!**
- Mahalo Helen and Gerry!**
- Mahalo all planners and participants!**
- Mahalo Golden Rule and its Project!**

Disclaimer: This story arises from the fickle memory of the experiences of one crewmember during her participation along the Great Loop. It cannot in any way represent all endeavors of all supporters during the mid Atlantic portion of the GR's journey.

Helen Jaccard and I would like to appeal to all "Goldie Loopers" to share their photos, videos, and/or stories. Quick, let's reflect and remember before the next mission to the Pacific Northwest begins!



Legendary George Lakey, thrilled to be sailing aboard legendary GR! In 1967 he sailed in protest on the Phoenix to South Vietnam to give medical supplies to the Buddhist anti-war movement.