



Helen Jaccard, manager of the Veterans for Peace Golden Rule project, stands aboard the Golden Rule. The boat will be in Old Sacramento Sunday promoting nuclear disarmament. Jane Braxton Little The Sacramento Bee

LOCAL

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Golden Rule sails to Old Sacramento to promote nuclear disarmament

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WALNUT GROVE

A small wooden boat sporting a 6-foot-wide peace sign on its mizzen sail steered up the Sacramento and Mokelumne rivers Friday on a mission to promote nuclear disarmament.

The boat, called the Golden Rule, was in unfamiliar waters, navigating the rivers' winding channels under a series of swing bridges and drawbridges. On Sunday, it will dock in Old Sacramento, where it will offer public tours from 10 a.m. to noon.

The latest expedition of the 30-foot ketch continues a legacy launched in 1958, when a crew of pacifists tried to sail the Golden Rule to the Marshall Islands to protest atmospheric testing of nuclear bombs.

That voyage was halted by the U.S. Coast Guard and the captain, Albert Bigelow, a Quaker and former U.S. Navy lieutenant commander, was thrown in jail.

The international publicity the confrontation it attracted helped spur opposition to nuclear tests and the arms race. It also inspired another boat, the Phoenix of Hiroshima, to complete the mission, sailing into the atomic test area and initiating a tradition of protest boats carried on most notably by Greenpeace.

Today promoting awareness of the possibilities for nuclear disarmament is more critical than ever, said Helen Jaccard, manager of the Golden Rule project coordinated by Veterans For Peace, an international organization dedicated to increasing public awareness of the causes and costs of war.

North Korea's recent launch of a missile capable of reaching Alaska or Hawaii has raised that awareness along with the threat level, she said.

On Friday, as the Golden Rule steered around sandbars, the United Nations concluded creation of the first multilateral nuclear disarmament treaty in over 20 years, and the first treaty ever to ban all nuclear weapons. The 122 nations that voted "yes" included North Korea – but not the United States or any other nuclear-armed nation.

The Golden Rule is part of an effort to "do everything peaceful" to help achieve nuclear disarmament, Jaccard said.

Along with meeting with civic organizations, wooden boat owners and the Sacramento-area public curious about the jaunty sailboat with the huge red peace symbol, the Golden Rule's crew sailed to a flat section of the Mokelumne east of Tyler Island, where the Phoenix of Hiroshima lays 20-feet under.

Earle Reynolds, who built and captained the Phoenix, was in Honolulu with his family en route to Japan in 1958, when the crew of the Golden Rule was imprisoned. It inspired him to sail the 50-foot yacht into the test zone, where he, too, was arrested and imprisoned.

Jessica Reynolds Renshaw, who was 14 at the time of her father's arrest, was on hand to witness the reunion of the boats for the first time in 59 years. The United Nations action is heartening, she said:

“It’s no longer up to nuclear nations to decide or continue to refuse to oppose the things that threaten all of humanity.”

Renshaw is coordinating a \$500,000 plan to restore the Phoenix to eventually sail alongside the Golden Rule, which was restored over five years by Veterans for Peace.

Now on its third voyage as a floating peace museum, the Golden Rule will travel this summer to San Diego, then along the East Coast next year. The plan is to eventually sail to the Marshall Islands and Japan.

Despite several decades of a relatively inactive nuclear disarmament movement, Jaccard said she remains hopeful that the tide is turning.

“People are ready for a new nuclear abolition movement,” she said. “We’re dropping a tiny pebble in the water. The waves are starting to ripple out.”



*A six-foot wide peace sign adorns the Golden Rule’s mizzen mast. The boat will be in Old Sacramento Sunday promoting nuclear disarmament. **Jane Braxton Little** The Sacramento Bee*