

CANDOER News



A quarterly Newsletter dedicated to Communicators AND Others Enjoying Retirement

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Welcome to the latest issue of the Newsletter dedicated to the **CANDOERS** (Communicators **AND** Others Enjoying Retirement). This **Newsletter** will be published quarterly. New issues will be posted on the Web for your reading enjoyment on or about, January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

The **CANDOER** web site and **Newsletter** may be viewed at: www.candoer.org.

The success of this newsletter depends on you. I need story contributors.

Do you have an interesting article, a nostalgia item, or a real life story you

would like to share with others? If you do, please send it to me at the following e-mail address: candoercat@gmail.com

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The PDF file and Microsoft Word document will allow you to download and print the newsletter exactly as if I had printed it and mailed it to you.

Cat's Corner

Well it appears that I have survived another winter in Southern Maryland.

I have already gotten the boat out of mothballs and have it ready for this fishing season. In fact, I have already been out fishing a couple times.

I stated in the last issue that I was to begin radiation treatments for Prostate Cancer. My first of 40 treatments was on the 23rd of December.

I was able to get free housing at the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge. A great experience that I will describe later.

My last treatment was 22 February!

Because the cancer was caught so early, complete remission was achieved. Now I have to get a PSA test every three months for a year and then every six months for the rest of my life.

Small Towns are Unique

By Robert Catlin

I recently had a Facebook conversation with Tina Baranowski Christopher about comments we receive when people ask where we work and then we responded with, at the State Department.

Tina said she usually got the question, "Which State?" She said she responds with "All of them?"

I usually got the question, "What type of road repair equipment do you operate?" My response was always, "No equipment, I am a flagman!"

Coming from a small town where most discussions are about the bad streets or what is going on in their immediate vicinity, I expect this.

After graduation from high school, I joined the Army. My hope was that I would be able to go to electronics school so I could earn a decent living after leaving the military and begin raising a family.

Half way through basic training, at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, I developed pneumonia and spent several days in the base hospital. I then finished basic a week after the Electronics School started. It was a 26 week course. When you finished the Electronics training you had to have 24 months left in the Army or you had to reenlist. If I wanted to go to the Electronics School I would have had to stay at Fort Jackson until the next start of school and then reenlist after completion of the

training. Instead I opted for Cryptographic School at TSESS Tech, Fort Gordon, GA. This of course led to my career at State as a "flagman!" Not a bad second choice for training!

Now back to my small town.

Of course, one of the things that happened when I opted for Cryptographic training was that I had to have both a Cryptographic and Top Secret clearance. Well, you can only guess what happened in my home town when two guys showed up to interview people I had grown up with.

The crypto training ran over the Christmas/New Year holiday period. Because of this, the school shut town for a nine day period and allowed us to go home for the holidays. So, home I went. Because the town was so small back then, I knew everyone and everyone knew me.

As I walked down the street headed to see friends, I kept getting stares and controlled greetings. I could not figure out what was happening until I stopped in and talked to the people in the store I worked at throughout my senior year of high school.

I was asked, "Why were the Military Police running around town looking for you?" I responded, "What are you talking about?" They responded that two guys came around town asking all kind of questions about you a couple of months back. You have been the talk of the town ever since. Speculation was that I had gone AWOL and they were trying to find me!

I told them what it was all about, but not sure they believed me.

Small towns, they are unique!

Now, having said that, understand I would not have changed growing up in this small town for a million dollars! Well, maybe not a thousand dollars!

My Dog Humped Everything

by John Lemandri

My dog humped everything, or at least he tried. Sparks was a Coton de Tulear, a French Terrier breed named after the town

of Tulear, Madagascar, where his type dwells in abundance. It was said that during the 17th and 18th centuries, the French had Coutons on their ships because their small size and aggressiveness made them excellent rat killers. Sparks was no different, gentle when he needed to be, but aggressive to a point where achieving his goal was the only thing that mattered. About 18 inches long and standing a foot tall, he was no match for the bigger dogs in town. No matter how hard he worked, Sparks could never amount, or should I say, mount anything.

One evening as we walked along the cobblestone streets in old Istanbul, he noticed one of the opposite sex standing adjacent to an old brick house with broken marble stairway leading to the front door. Sparks took a four foot flying leap, but slid off the back of the bitch, which was a good 18 inches taller than he. He then tried to mount her leg, but succeeded only in dry humping a few inches of muscle and bone. Not to be dismayed and full of character, Sparks sized up the situation, gently nudged her against the stairs, ran around and up the staircase and jumped her backside, where he again slide off in dismay.

The situation had evolved to a point where Sparks was getting depressed, and I have to admit I felt sorry for the little guy after going through all that effort. So as any good dog owner would, I decided to bring his promiscuity to fruition. I telephoned a Turkish friend with a female black spaniel Sparks size, and negotiated a price to consummate the act.

Two weeks later when the bitch was in heat, we drove both animals to a park and watched as Sparks grew into manhood, exhausted after a half hours work, but with a grin and technique that put any Great Dane to shame. I, of course, was out a total of \$76.00 dollars for the cost of a case of Johnny Walker Black at the commissary, which my Turkish friend and I proceeded to liquidate in triumph.

Introduction to Nouakchott

By Rudy Garcia

Nearing the end of my first tour, in Bogota, Colombia, I bid only on Bamako, Mali, as it was a two-man post. Most of my peers were former military personnel who worked in a communications environment. I felt I needed more experience to get to their level of expertise. Naturally, I was assigned to a one-man post, Cotonou, Benin. It did, however, get me to the CPO conference held in Nairobi, Kenya; I was, after all, the CPO. During this conference I told Joe Hazewski I was interested in an AFRECON (formerly WATTS) post as that was my reason for coming to AF. He told me the only post open in the near future was Nouakchott, Mauritania. So I said I'd go. It did have Collins AFRECON gear, and the latest whiz-bang TERP I equipment (using cassette tapes, for those of you not around back then) and was due for a telephone PBX upgrade to a Mitel SX-200. (Aside: I was told Mitel stood for Mike and Terry's Lawn Mower). During the evening session of the conference he announced there was a volunteer for Nouakchott. Everyone looked around trying to figure who had made this rash choice; I overheard some whispers to the effect of "who's the fool?" I tried to hide behind a column to minimize my presence.

My trip to Nouakchott was via Paris. I brought with me a Lhasa Apso pup in a pet carrier under my seat. My seat neighbor was a young English secretary accompanying her boss to Dakar. He sat in first class, of course. She said it was the first time she had ever been on a plane so I offered to let her have the window seat so she could see the sky. As we approached Nouakchott we looked out and saw a huge sand storm -- no land, just sand. She asked if that's where I was going to live, to which I nodded. She gave me the purest look of pity I've ever seen. The pilot announced that had we arrived 10 minutes later he would have had to land in Dakar instead...so close!

I was to replace the CPO. The SCO,

who had tried to sell me his pink Suzuki jeep with bullet holes in the rear, had already departed post and his replacement was not due in for a few more weeks. While I was there the CPO took some time off to marry his fiancée in a Mauritanian civil ceremony. He upset the presiding official by quoting a large number of camels he would give the bride's father to allow him to marry her. The judge yelled that no woman was worth that many camels and that this was a serious ceremony not to be given to frivolous answers.

A couple of weeks later two Land Rovers full of armed personnel crossed the Senegal River and drove north to Nouakchott. One vehicle went to the radio station to occupy it and start broadcasts, probably to the effect that they had taken over the government. The other vehicle went to the Presidential Palace situated next door to the chancery. We suddenly heard all the shooting and ducked under windows on the palace side of our building. The invaders took over the palace but were not able to take the radio station. Mauritanian army personnel assembled in front of the chancery gate and were shooting into the palace to dislodge the invaders. They brought their big guns and fired across a corner of our compound at the palace. At one point our Charge's driver, Sheybani (a seventy year-old who had just married a 17-year old girl) called me and asked for some 3-in-1 oil as many of the soldiers had rusty rifles that wouldn't work smoothly.

The airport and borders were closed. However, a few days into the siege, the CPO and his new wife were able to slip across the border into Senegal via pirogue (canoe) and take a bush taxi to Dakar and on to CONUS for home leave. The Charge' ordered me to reside at the embassy compound in the currently empty Ambassador's residence so there would be a communicator on hand. I rode home on my motorcycle to get some clothes and food. I was met with incessant barking and people yelling. The Mauritanian government accused the Moroccans of training the

invaders in Morocco and assisting them to plan the coup d'etat with hopes of influencing the outcome of the Spanish Sahara situation. They sent soldiers to surround the residence next door to my house. The pup was going wild, barking through the chicken-wire fence at the soldiers. I told the gardener to keep him indoors as much as possible. I didn't want them shooting at him if he caused too much noise.

I rode home after work each day to get a change of clothing and some food, feed the dog, and check on the house. Being the only communicator there I pulled some long hard hours trying to tune to workable frequencies on our HF-RTTY gear. Our relay, AE Ouagadougou, kept complaining that they could hardly hear me, so I took a look at our antenna to make sure it was aligned. We had a manually rotatable LP antenna (without the rotating motor) with wire elements. I noticed it was pointing about 180 degrees away from Ouagadougou, which meant I was transmitting through the rear end of the antenna. I didn't want to climb the 40 foot tower as the soldiers and invaders were still firing at each other sporadically. Finally, after a couple of days, I asked the Joint Administrative Officer to tell the Mauritanian soldiers in front of the compound that I was going up the tower and to hold their fire. I noticed the collar of the antenna shaft was loose although its screws were as tight as they could be. I got some nylon rope, and, with great effort, swung the huge antenna in the direction of Ouagadougou. I tied the antenna down to prevent any further rotation by the wind. We were now sending and receiving a good signal from the relay station. When the AFRECON radio techs arrived from Lome a couple of months later they replaced the rope with a U-bolt. They said there was no fix for the collar; it was just built too loose.

A few days after the start of the coup the Mauritanians were able to dislodge the invaders from the palace. I don't know what happened to them; that was over 30 years ago. The SCO arrived some days

later and I went back to my house. The soldiers still occupied the Moroccan embassy compound next door to my house. The pup still barked at them. The sand dunes still approached. All was normal. I will note that in the time spent on the compound without my stuff, the Charge' didn't even once have me over for a meal or drinks.

On the subject of Nouakchott: In our communications class in 1976 we had a handful of back-up communicator/secretaries. One of them lived in Arizona and went back during a break to check on her HHE packing and shipping. She was assigned to Port Louis, Mauritius. She came back really mad. She had just caught the packers before her shipment left. The head packer said she had made a mistake on the name of the city; it was St. Louis, not Port Louis. Furthermore, that city was not in Mauritania but in Senegal; but not to worry, he corrected the address to Nouakchott in Mauritania.

Hiring on With State

Chapter IV Dacca, Bangladesh Experiences Part II

By Dick McCloughan

In December of 1972 the CPO announced he couldn't see spending Christmas in Dacca and began making plans for a week's trip to Bangkok. There had been some demonstrations in Dacca, stirred up by the Communist party, regarding the U.S. bombing Hanoi and mining of the harbor in Haiphong, but nothing too serious until December 11th. On that date a group of youths defaced the USIS center in Dacca with anti-American slogans and Communist Party insignia. Mike considered delaying his trip, but things settled down and he departed on the 21st. That afternoon a group of students rushed the few Bengali soldiers who were guarding USIS and took it over. Fortunately, the PAO and his local staff managed to escape through the back door.

The soldiers, as to be expected, made no effort to stop them, but ran away. All week long the Charge met with the Foreign Minister in an effort to dislodge the students from USIS, but without any success. On the 26th students virtually destroyed the USIS center in Chittagong, a city south of Dacca. On the same day the USIS center in Rajshahi, north of Dacca, was also destroyed. On the afternoon of the 27th the army rushed the USIS building in Dacca and dislodged the students. However, in doing so they fired into the group and killed four.

I got up on the 28th around 0600 and sat down at the dining room table and waited for my servant to serve breakfast which he usually promptly did. This morning he didn't appear and I after a few minutes I walked back to the kitchen. There he sat and hadn't started anything. When asked what was going on, he explained I better not go to the Embassy, that it was very bad out there, students had taken over the city. I threw up my hands in frustration and headed out to the garage to drive in. (By this time the GSO had generously assigned us a CPU vehicle to drive to and from the Chancery. Being the nice guy he was, he gave us a brand new 1972 International Carryall. It was a nice vehicle with a good sized V-8 and a four speed stick on the floor). I was just walking out the front door when the phone rang. It was the TDY TCU guy advising the Embassy driver had not picked him up. I told him what my servant had said and since he was staying at the TCO's house, which was close by, I'd pick him up. (The TCO had also gone to Bangkok for Christmas). I picked him up and we began our trip to the Embassy. We got about halfway there and discovered a large, dilapidated British double-decker bus blocking the street. I put the Carryall up on the sidewalk and we discovered approximately fifty youths were on the other side of the bus. They saw the big, gold U.S. Embassy emblems on the Carryall's doors and started throwing bricks. The International took some

damage, including the loss of a couple windows, but I put my foot in the gas and we got away.

About two blocks further on, where we had to take a left to get to the Embassy, we saw the street had been blocked by a number of 50 gallon oil drums. There were also a number of men behind the drums. I told the TDYer to hang on, punched the Carryall hoping the oil drums were empty. Fortunately they were and the crowd scattered when I drove through the barricade, scattering barrels every which way. One barrel came back and took out the windshield and the students hurled bricks shattering the remaining windows. Fortunately neither the TDYer nor I were hit too seriously. I don't know if we hit anyone, but we definitely were not going to stop.

By the time we got to the Embassy the engine was smoking and the temperature gauge was pegged in the red. Obviously by hitting the oil drums I had seriously damaged the radiator.

The Carryall was more than a little worse for wear and I knew the GSO was not going to be very happy. We had, however, made it in one piece and I mentally thanked the Carryall's makers at International.

Naturally the elevator operator had taken the day off and we ran up six flights of stairs. As luck would have it, the youngest MSG in the detachment was on duty and was nearly going out of his mind. His relief had called and given him the word of what was going on in the city. Needless to say, his relief wouldn't be coming in. The MSG was unarmed. (They were still trying to figure out how to get weapons in for the detachment from Bangkok). The young Lance Corporal was quite concerned regarding his lack of weapon. I thought that a single .38 Smith and Wesson wouldn't be much of a deterrent if a horde decided to take over the Embassy.

I opened up CPU and the TDYer his side. A few minutes later the Station Chief and the Econ officer arrived. They said they had been stopped at a road block on their way in, but the Station Chief, who was driving

told the students, first in German and then in English, they were with the German Embassy (he was fluent in four or five languages) and they let them through.

The Econ officer phoned the Charge who advised he would not attempt to come in and directed him to draft a message advising Washington of what was going on.

It was also courier day and I sent a message to Bangkok letting them know I would not be making the exchange. The CPO, TCO and a few other Embassy personnel who had celebrated Christmas in Bangkok were also scheduled to be on that flight. In my message to Bangkok I requested they call the airport and have Thai International advise all the Americans not to board the plane. (This they did not do). I then called the local Thai International representative, a Danish guy with SAS Airlines and a good friend, to see if the flight was going to land owing to the situation. He said he had reports that the Army was doing some shooting at the airport and that he had advised the plane not to taxi to the terminal when it landed. He had suggested it stop at the end of the runway, disembark passengers, and immediately take off for New Delhi.

I typed up the Econ Counselor's message, got it sent, and called the GSO compound which was about a mile from the Embassy. The GSO, a short, crusty Texan, Ed by name, answered the phone. I told him I was worried about the Embassy personnel possibly arriving on Thai International if they didn't get the word in Bangkok. He told me not to worry, that he would handle it.

As soon as he got off the phone, he got the oldest vehicle in the fleet, a full sized Chevy station wagon, grabbed a can of red paint, and painted big red crosses on the doors and one on the hood. From somewhere he found a white uniform and had one of the drivers put it on. Later Ed told me he had the driver raise his right hand and told him, "In the power invested in me by being GSO, I hereby swear you into the International Red Cross." He told the driver if he did get stopped at any

roadblocks on the way to the airport, to tell them he was with the Red Cross and had to get to the airport, that there was a very sick individual coming in on Thai International.

The Station Chief made contact with one of his Bengali contacts who advised a memorial for the four slain students was planned around 1300 at the big mosque just a few blocks from the Embassy. He then went on to tell us the word he had received was after the memorial, a group of around 100,000 were going to storm the Embassy. Both the TCU guy and I laid out our destruction tools and prepared to burn all the one-time tape. The Station Chief and Econ Officer went up on the roof, found a long ladder and threw it across to the adjacent building. This was to be our escape route if the students did take over the Embassy.

Around noon the Thai International flight landed and our personnel, who had not been advised in Bangkok of the situation, were indeed on board. The "Red Cross" vehicle was able to access the tarmac and took the personnel to the Marine House which was located in the suburbs. Shortly upon arriving there the CPO phoned to see how things were going. I advised him of what I had done regarding emergency destruction and our escape plans. He made a few suggestions and then said he was out there at the MSG House having a cold Heineken and hoped we made it out. However, if we didn't, could he have my stereo speakers, that they were really nice. I would have killed for a cold beer and nearly blew, but I knew he was joking. I told him I'd get out one way or another and to save me a Heineken.

At 1300 the five of us assembled in the Charge's office which gave us a view down the street to the mosque. We saw a crowd of at least 100,000 waving placards and banners assemble and began marching towards the Chancery. They came up to the Embassy, marched around the circular driveway, but no one attempted to enter the building. Not a single brick or paint bomb was thrown and they marched away.

We considered ourselves very lucky not have had the Chancery overtaken. The five of us spent the night in the Embassy and the Station Chief opened up the cafeteria. He made up some Spam sandwiches and with Cokes we had supper.

The following afternoon Embassy personnel, including the CPO, made it through several road blocks and made it to the Embassy. The CPO told me to go home, that I had done enough and he could handle it. I gratefully left with a driver, got to the apartment, and promptly slept for about fourteen hours. Yes, the GSO wasn't too pleased when he saw the International, but was glad it had held together and gotten the TDYer and myself safely to the Embassy.

In June of 1973 the Charge' made the command decision there would be no formal 4th of July celebration. He decided it was just too hot in Dacca at that time of the year and the 4th of July party would be re-scheduled in October. The Marines took umbrage at this announcement and plans were secretly formulated to hold an "unofficial" 4th of July celebration at the Marine House on the regular date, but only a select few of the Embassy staff would be invited. (Neither the Charge' nor his wife were to be invited). All of the individuals, who were invited, were sworn to secrecy. Being big supporters of the MSG detachment CPU and TCU personnel were co-conspirators in planning the party. The 4th fell on a Wednesday that year, and the Sunday before the party a group of us met at the Marine House to begin decorating. Somewhere in Dacca the Marines had found red, white, and blue crepe paper bunting and we began affixing that to the ceiling of the main room. I don't recall who it was that said, "Its shame we don't have any balloons. Those would really add to the decorations." Amongst our group of collaborators was the AID Population Control Officer. He began laughing and said he thought he had just what was needed. He explained he had received around 100,000 gross of multi-colored prophylactics which were just sitting in a

warehouse. He said they were of no use since they were for the average size U.S. male. (most Bengalis are of rather short stature and not as well endowed). He sent his driver to the warehouse who shortly returned with several boxes containing multicolored condoms. By this time numerous beers had been consumed and we thought it was hilarious to blow them up and with Scotch tape, attach them to the ceiling. We were really getting into the swing of things when the doorbell rang. One of the Marines answered and there was the wife of the Charge'; commonly known as "Ding Bat Alice". She stated she had heard we were decorating and wanted to know if she could help. We all looked at one another and I believe it was the Population Control Officer who said she could help us blow up balloons. We gave her some boxes of prophylactics, sat her down on the stairs leading to the second floor, and she began blowing them up. We definitely had a difficult time keeping straight faces, but somehow we managed. A half hour or so passed and the Charge's wife was really getting into it when the doorbell once again rang. There was the Charge' who immediately saw what his wife was doing. In a loud voice he exclaimed, "What do you think you are doing?" She replied that she was just blowing up balloons. He stormed out with, "Those aren't balloons!!!!" He grabbed her by the hand and stalked out. We collapsed in hysterics. The party came off as scheduled and everyone, especially personnel from other Embassies, thought the decorations were just great.

In early the fall of 1973 the CPO rotated out and his replacement, whose previous post had been Bern, arrived. Dacca was his first hardship post and he soon found it to be a decided change from Bern. In October, a week or so before Eid-al-Fitr (the end of Ramadan) we suddenly lost all power in the Chancery. This was a common event and we didn't think much about it until the GSO discovered a very large, hungry rat (there wasn't any other kind in the country) had committed suicide by chewing through the large, 440 volt main power cable which fed

the Embassy. The GSO notified the local power company and was informed that because of Ramadan, repairs could not be accomplished until the end of Eid. We immediately powered up our small emergency generator, which was only large enough to power CPU and TCU. The secretarial staff, all two of them, were forced to prepare outgoing cables using manual typewriters and neither were very happy. The first day we ran the generator we discovered it would dangerously overheat after an hour or so and had to be shut down. This was because the exhaust had been vented into a narrow crawl space. The TCO, who was responsible for the generator, made the decision we couldn't run it during the day, but would come in at night, run it as long as we could, and send/receive as much traffic as we could. Even with this method, we could only run the generator for 3-4 hours. Needless to say, after three or four days of this procedure our message back-log was steadily increasing. I suggested to the new CPO we request to go minimize. He exclaimed, "But what should we give as the reason?" I replied, to tell the truth, Washington wouldn't question the message. They knew where we were and the situation we were operating in. The message was sent, Washington didn't query us, and immediately granted minimize. We operated that way for another 10 days until Eid ended and the cable was repaired. The new CPO began to realize just where he was and things weren't the same as Bern. I learned a lot during my first tour. Both the CPOs I had were patient and good instructors. I also made a number of good friends, a number of whom I am still in contact with today. Dacca was indeed a hardship tour, but we banded together during the tough times, and partied hardy on more than one occasion.

LOST WORDS OF OUR YOUTH

Heavens to Murgatroyd!

Would you believe the email spell checker did not recognize the word

murgatroyd?

Lost Words from our childhood: Words gone as fast as the buggy whip! Sad really!

The other day a not so elderly (65) (I say 75) lady said something to her son about driving a Jalopy and he looked at her quizzically and said "What the heck is a Jalopy?

OMG (new) phrase! He never heard of the word jalopy!!

She knew she was old but not that old.

Well, I hope you are Hunky Dory after you read this and chuckle.

About a month ago, I illuminated some old expressions that have become obsolete because of the inexorable march of technology.

These phrases included "Don't touch that dial," "Carbon copy," "You sound like a broken record" and "Hung out to dry."

Back in the olden days we had a lot of moxie. We'd put on our best bib and tucker to straighten up and fly right.

Heavens to Betsy!

Gee whillikers!

Jumping Jehoshaphat!

Holy moley!

We were in like Flynn and living the life of Riley, and even a regular guy couldn't accuse us of being a knucklehead, a nincompoo or a pill.

Not for all the tea in China!

Back in the olden days, life used to be swell, but when's the last time anything was swell?

Swell has gone the way of beehives, pageboys and the D.A.; of spats, knickers, fedoras, poodle skirts, saddle shoes and pedal pushers.

Oh, my aching back. Kilroy was here, but he isn't anymore.

We wake up from what surely has been just a short nap, and before we can say, well I'll be a monkey's uncle! Or, This is a fine kettle of fish! We discover that the words we grew up with, the words that seemed omnipresent, as oxygen, have vanished with scarcely a notice from our tongues and our pens and our keyboards.

Poof, go the words of our youth, the

words we've left behind We blink, and they're gone. Where have all those phrases gone?

Long gone: Pshaw, The milkman did it. Hey! It's your nickel.

Don't forget to pull the chain. Knee high to a grasshopper.

Well, Fiddlesticks!

Going like sixty.

I'll see you in the funny papers.

Don't take any wooden nickels.

It turns out there are more of these lost words and expressions than Carter has liver pills. This can be disturbing stuff!

We of a certain age have been blessed to live in changeable times. For a child each new word is like a shiny toy, a toy that has no age. We at the other end of the chronological arc have the advantage of remembering there are words that once did not exist and there were words that once strutted their hour upon the earthly stage and now are heard no more, except in our collective memory. It's one of the greatest advantages of aging.

See ya later, alligator!

See you next quarter!

KEEP THE STORIES COMING!

Enjoy life, but be safe!