

AULD LANG SYNE

"Should old acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind...in the days of Auld Lang Syne, so often sung as the old year passes to the new. Almost forgotten is its essence from Scottish literature 'old long since' (old times, good old days, our youth). Too a time of the immediate past and what it portends?"

Since I have shared some thoughts about our troubled world in the perspective of yesteryear -wars, culture, religion, the participants and wondered if we have the understanding (and will) to confront the encroaching and insidious character of militant Islam I have been impressed by the words of others. I am drawn to those who perceive problems, address them with zeal, competence and logic but perhaps like me are caught in the vacuum and wilderness of our culture. I cite two of them: Russell Anderson and Virginia Muraski.

Anderson seems caught in the continuing web of political and governmental action or perhaps inaction. He is vigorous, seemingly competent and poses good arguments: his latest is to chastise Gulf Shores on a myriad of things: lack of open space planning, poor building code management, overbuilding in conflict with insurance and real estate markets...and argues to look at Orange Beach as a model for some of these things. Many earlier articles suggest he is a crusader with possible food for thought and change. I wonder how successful he has been or is it 'whistling in the dark?' When in Crestview, Florida some years back many of us took on 'City Hall' and the Okaloosa Commission with complaints over outrageous water rate and property rate raises and we prevailed because of 'numbers of people and facts'

Professor Muraski! Where were you during the Sixties? I suspect at the threshold taking on 'self-proclaimed gurus, juvenile delinquents' and the teachers who joined in the destruction of campuses condoning drug use and other gratifications. Your expose, anger are refreshing and you tell it like it was and still is. I added 'teachers' to your eloquent diatribe against the 'democrats'. Herbert Marcuse and Angela Davis come to mind as intellectual dregs of that culture. In 1965-7 I was enrolled in SF State College working on a Masters Degree in International Relations and we were involved in our mini-revolution parroting Mario Savio at Berkeley

and the guy at Columbia. Working one's way through the corridors found students and teachers holding hands and arguing about the Vietnam War usually incoherently and emotionally. As a military officer I often guest lectured in one of my classes (Conflict and Cooperation: Windmill) and took the taunts, intimidations -especially when in uniform. I do not intimidate very easily. Soon I was en-route to VN to fight for the rights of those students and teachers and their 'free speech symposiums'

Today we are faced with something better said by Lincoln in paraphrase, 'whether this society, this culture and this ideology can endure and prevail?' We need the inspiration, eloquence and knowledge of the Andersons, Muraskis whose 'crusades' seem worthy. Inherent to all this is a simple reminder by Steven Jacobs of Mobile: "At what point in time did the freedom that our forefathers envisioned and for which so many have died throughout the years get twisted into the belief that individuals can trip merrily through life without social or moral responsibility."