

The Other Side of the Coin



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There is a country.....

There is a country where crime, corruption, drugs and so many evils of society are widespread. It is made up of many different ethnic groups, so many; it would be hard to mention all of them, it is literally a **"Melting Pot"** of races. There is a country where abuse and discrimination ran unchecked until recently, even today is very much present amongst its people, a nation, where moral values are being questioned by many foreign societies and also by their own people. Presidents have been assassinated; children were massacred in schools by their own peers. It went through a civil war many years ago that took thousands upon thousands of lives.....

Human right violations are common place and, more than likely it ranks amongst the highest consumers of illegal substances, not to mention organized crime and juvenile delinquency.....I don't believe I need to go on, if you have not guessed by now what country I am referring to you "missed the boat".

But let no one make a mistake!! This nation is the **"envy of the world"**, and this fact shows from friends, allies and adversaries as well. Have you ever wondered why? It really is not hard to figure out.

As a democracy it is, as close as you can get to a perfect model, as we know democracy today, and we all know it is not by any means perfect. Their foundation stone is based, among other values, on equality, freedom and justice. It is



"indivisible" and this fact, so far, has been proven through its not too long history. The liberties and rights of the people, much denied in so many parts of the world, are part of the basic way of life and instilled in every citizen. Laws protecting the rights of expression, consumer rights, social security, the right to a fair and speedy trial are only but a few, there are really too many to mention....I would bore you.

Furthermore, the vast majority not only respect the law, but also are very much aware of their **"responsibilities in a democratic society"**. This you do not see happening in too many places, I would call it **"Law and Order"**.

Through every crisis confronted, as a "united society", they managed to find the courage and the ability to resolve it, with little or no help from any other nation. Yet, it has throughout history helped many without any retribution except criticisms. Still today, after the events of the 11 of September of 2001, I would like to know who is joining in the grief and truly helping this great nation beat the greatest threat to man **"terrorism"**, the evolution and a byproduct of **"communism"**, actually very few..... what a hell of a shame!!.

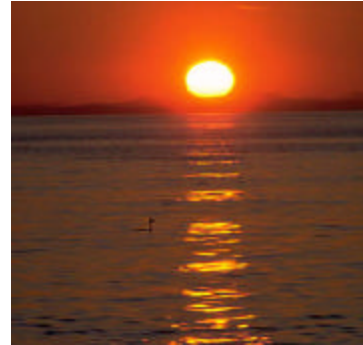
I for one, have had the privilege of, in my prior articles, be very critical of this country, try that where you live. Maybe many of you do not appreciate what I had to say in these very few lines in defense of the greatest and most humane nation in the world, **"The United States of America"**, if that is the case I feel very sorry for you because, my friend, you truly more than missed...**"The other side of the Coin"**

<http://www.revistainterforum.com/english/articles/111201otherside.html>

Less than 1.5 billion seconds; It's that ALL?

I hear people, intellectuals and scholars speak and write all the time concerning the issue of our resources and how precious they are. On television, the Internet and the radio we also get bombarded with the same theme. "We need to protect our natural resources", they tell us, "let's not waste our water", "conserve energy", "we are going to run out of oil", and the list goes on and on.

Large and small enterprises constantly take an interest in "Human Resources"; there are whole departments dedicated to the issue. They are considered one of the most important resources, of course this is very true, without them there would be absolutely nothing at all, we simply would not exist.



However, I do not hear too much about time, I wonder why, it happens to be one element very often overlooked when it comes to resources. Is it considered a resource? Truthfully, I do not have the faintest idea, but if it isn't one, we are out on left field somewhere. I would venture to say, that as far as I am concerned, it is the most valuable resource at our disposal as human beings. We do not even have a full understanding of the concept of time itself.

Many books have been written about the management of time and how to make the most out of it. Do they really address the time issue correctly? Well, I guess that to some degree they do and perhaps there might be some written material, which I have not seen nor read, that can put the concept of time in an understandable form without having to get as deep as Einstein's Theory of Relativity and other related material.

Ok, just think of living a full and healthy life until the age of seventy-five, that's a fair figure. This gives you about 2.5 billion seconds of existence (2,368,440,000.00 seconds, plus or minus a few) on this tiny planet, that is not a lot of seconds. Compared to money, "the all mighty dollar", 2.5 billion is but a drop in the bucket for large corporations or national budgets. There are quite a few billionaires in the world today you know.

Let's take into account our conscious time, this is simple to figure out. Your first three years of life do not count, simply because most of us tend to forget them, so take away about 9.5 million seconds, well that are not a lot. Add to that our sleep time, based on eight hours a day, I know people who sleep more, this means that your capital just decreased by about 788.5 million seconds, that is a big chunk.

My God! I'm not showing a profit here I only have left 1.48 billions seconds left. Of course that is considering I get to live to be 75, do not loose my marbles at 60 or so, get hit by a train at 40 or die of a heart attack caused by stress after reading all the books about time management. Needless to say, I must stay away from the corporate world and not join the "Human Resource Department". This is just to give you an idea of our "Conscious Time" element.

Without taking into consideration the amount of time needed for our biological necessities, which depending on the individual can be considerable, we do not have a lot of seconds left; do we know?

Now, the big question is...

"Just how precious is time as a personal resource and how do we manage it?"

Well, all things considered it happens to be an extremely important **"Personal Resource"** and the way we manage it, or better put, the way we are **"conditioned to manage it"** might just be entirely wrong. Let's sit down with a simple calculator and instead of figuring out our budget or our profit margins do a few calculations much more meaningful. Seriously, if we are intelligent beings at all, less than 1.5 billion precious seconds are worth budgeting right. Let's use our **"time"** wisely, and for our own sake let's not miss... **"The Other Side of the Coin"**

http://www.revistainterforum.com/english/articles/otherside_1billion.html

Educational nightmare



If you were fortunate enough to attend College or perhaps a University, let's say in the past twenty-five years or so, I'm afraid you are one of the lucky few enduring the disgraceful, utterly inadequate and now dangerous so-called School System. Back in the early sixties, when arriving in the States at the age of twelve, I was first introduced to the American Educational System. Although far inferior to European patterned institutions, problems that are so overwhelming today were not apparent then. I can remember, to a certain extent, an atmosphere of respect, Morning Prayer and a half-adequate Dress Code. Academically, throughout my Elementary, Junior High and High School years I was quite bored. The courses and curriculum were not only narrow minded but fell short of what I was used to before arriving. The ultimate thing was smoking cigarettes or having an occasional beer, never was I exposed or heard of drugs. What are the youth of today facing? Why the rapid deterioration of one of the most important institution a Country can have? Do parents realize the mind warping curriculum and horrifying environment their children spend a large percentage of time in?

Abolishment of prayer, irrational relaxation of the Dress Code and Busing are a few reasons responsible for what we are experiencing today. That's not all though, the curriculum plays an equally important role. The percentage of Dropouts grew over the past decades to staggering and unacceptable levels. Crime, of all sorts, is abundant on school grounds rendering many virtually unsafe. Drug usage and Drug Traffic is a common occurrence, quite often in the classroom. Student behavior goes unchecked and teachers have been "Reconditioned" to disregard, accept and, believe it or not, sometimes encourage sub standard values. A few years ago I went to the Junior High School my son was enrolled in, I was totally embarrassed. Actually, I could not carry a conversation in the hallway with the Principal, the noise and

screaming would not allow. I expected this individual to bring the situation under control, to my amazement and disbelief he did nothing. As I left frustrated I noticed the flag was not raised, instead just lying on the pavement, it was ten in the morning; No excuse.

Academic subject matter In the American School System is unacceptable by Global Standards. History, with the role of providing students a wide outlook of the world, has evolved into a self indulging story, closely resembling a legend, labeled by the system, History. American History is a joke, smartly manipulating and distorting historical facts. Social Science and related subjects are saturated with subliminal statements intentionally "Conditioning" our youth into a set of beliefs and conforming attitude containing bigoted moral values. The brainwashing techniques designed into the academic programs are very obvious but unfortunately go undetected by the interested parties, the parents. After all, most parents were students once, not too long ago, taught basically the same way. Why should they object? Many students openly complain about the curriculum, conditions and abuse by other students and teachers, often rebelling out of utter frustration earning them the title of "Undesirable Behavior Problem" by the faculty. The teaching of indispensable values such as, morals, social conduct etc. is virtually non-existent, that important task delegated to the parent. However, sex education is a most revered subject.

The School System position as to discipline and moral-social education is questionable. Teachers are entrusted with the student's academic education but equally as important their social edification. I have heard more than once of educators claiming not to implement disciplinary measures for fear of legal reprisal from the parent. This sort of attitude, now the norm, is a cheap attempt to evade professional responsibility. Any reasonably educated parent can easily realize academic knowledge is only part of the educational process. Teaching moral and social values is of equal if not more importance. How can a responsible teacher openly evade the undeniable responsibility of teaching moral-social values? Blaming the parent has become the "Escape Goat" and a nightmare for the parent. Some children themselves are smart and devious enough to take advantage of the situation. Countless parents loose discipline at home as their children blackmail them; "I'll just tell my teacher and call HRS."....Cute. So, the Educational System won't teach values, morals etc., but they can certainly interfere with parental discipline at home; it doesn't make sense...or does it? Without going into detail, I am fully convinced HRS., is an almost useless, counterproductive government department undermining and disrupting home discipline and values, plagued with an abundance of incapable and maladjusted personnel.

The US Government have too many departments and systems but none as important and vital to our Nation's real security and future as the Educational System; No, not even the Military or Social Security, Medicare included. What is happening to parents in America, don't they care enough who is, or what is being taught to their offspring? Have we become so relaxed and dependent on the "System", accepting it without question? Is it not our responsibility to safeguard our children's best interest? I refuse to believe that parents do not care, it is simply not possible. Furthermore, I will not accept the theory that we have become so complacent, a nice word for lazy, to the degree of knowingly sending our children to a damaging



environment every day. Why buy the excuse; "I can't afford a private school", it just will not stick. Don't forget we pay school taxes to ensure an excellent education for our children. The Educational System is a catastrophe and a national tragedy. The entire chain of command, from the superintendents to the faculties of the many schools, have become an embarrassment and extremely poor representatives of their profession. I would never attack a system and the professionals involved so strongly if the youth of our Nation were not being literally destroyed by the System.

For the past thirty-five years the decline of America as a Nation is very apparent to all of us.....Or is it? Over the same period of time we have witnessed the undeniable deterioration of our Educational System. Many American parents are themselves products of a twisted system. Young Americans are in many ways leading this great Nation. My question is; where are they leading us? How can educationally, morally narrow minded individuals make the right choices? I firmly believe in the separation of church and state but that has nothing to do with the teaching of social conduct and values. Furthermore, if we believed so much in such a separation: Isn't about time we deleted "In God We Trust" from our currency? A wide-view, unbiased academic curriculum is vital to our Nation. A curriculum designed to educate our children not only in reference to our Country but the whole world as well. Even with excellent academic programs, not teaching upright social and moral values will lead the Nation to failure. Real values and morals are "Universal", the so-called American Values are to say the least, superficial. Our shortsighted, self-glorifying approach to education will in time be responsible for the inevitable fall.

It is a known fact that formative years are the most important, where values and morals are set, teaching these intangibles in school is a must. Parents alone at home cannot do the job especially with the School System virtually destroying the home environment and discipline. Just about all the crime we see or hear these days can be attributed to the issue of Education; Cant' we see that? If proper values and social-conduct were taught in American schools would we see the drug and sex problems of today? If real history was part of the curriculum maybe our children could begin to see what happened to Rome and most importantly, why. American history could educate our youth as to the reality of our Nation's past, not a self-glorifying fantasy, allowing them to correct the future. Maybe our kids would not ask for "Nikees" or demand their freedom at the age of ten or earlier if they were taught properly at school. I have traveled extensively and never met anywhere any creature that even closely resembles "The American Brat". Why? Are we proud of raising academically and morally deficient offspring? I think a better question is; Are we aware of what our Educational System is teaching our children?... I certainly hope not.

Unfortunately many so-called values have been ingrained deeply into our society, too many to cover in a short article, some are not even considered values to begin with. As a whole, we believe a Nation based on Obsolesce is OK; ever heard of or used a disposable camera? We are taught that to be sociably accepted we need to have at least one thousand square feet of living space and a two-year-old car, no older; those are minimum requirements, of course. The importance we place on "Making Money" is like an obsession. Maybe that is why "In God We Trust" still remains on the "All Mighty" dollar. We claim and hear all the time of our concern for the world and how we help other nations in need. The truth is we do not really care and we rarely help unless there is bucks for us, if you do not believe me, get a real education. These and many more so-called values are reinforced in our School System and the teaching of real values completely forgotten. Who is responsible for this more or less two and one half century old evolution turned into a horrible mutation we call The American

Way? ...have you considered the simple answer, "ourselves".

The base of our problems today can be traced to our Educational System and the way it has betrayed our Nation. As American citizens, parents or not, putting our head in the sand wont make matters better. Ignorance, not a derogatory word, is our only excuse since we are not properly educated to begin with. Seeking the unadulterated knowledge is our responsibility toward our youth. Only when we realize our deficient overall education can we decide and agree to fix the horrifying Educational System. If all of the sudden we developed a taste for learning and understanding other civilizations, cultures and social behavior both now and in the past we might stand a chance. However if we are so stupid, not ignorant, as to remain in the path we are now in... Well, I guess, we never will see...**"The Other Side of the Coin "**.

http://www.revistainterforum.com/english/articles/otherside_edu.html

Love ", the word, the meaning, the use

Love, Webster's defines it as, "Strong affection, beloved person, enjoy greatly ". This is a simple, perhaps erroneous definition for such a strong and meaningful human emotion, Love. What is Love? Can we clearly define this widely used word? Do we really know the meaning of Love? In the English language the word Love is widely used in our daily conversations. I often hear statements such as, "I love going to the beach ", " I love my new car " or "I'd love to have an ice-cream". I can safely say this word is one of the most used in our language having many different interpretations. A clear example comes to mind when I constantly hear people say they love inanimate objects like cars, trains and planes. Well, although I guess it is within the realm of possibilities to love an automobile, a more suitable adjective can be used such as enjoy, like, cherish, etc. Religious denominations generally refer to love as the ultimate strongest force and emotion, God like in nature, and capable of rebuking all evil. Of all human emotion it is the most misunderstood while at the same time holds the greatest moral value of all.

The English speaking countries use the word love quite loosely, giving little thought to the real meaning or proper application of this word. Using it as we do, in so many different ways, not only confuse the elusive definition but renders it, well perhaps, "Cheap and Common ". In the Spanish language, Love translates as "Amor" and grammatically or in daily communication the word love applies only when referring to the actual emotion. Many other adjectives are used to describe feelings that the English language confuses for love and are not even related. Synonyms are many for love but they are not given the importance they deserve. Should there be one to begin with? Short of Telepathy language is the most important communication means at our disposal, not abstract in nature and highly descriptive. Thousand of words are used, some highly technical, describing perfectly and precisely objects, emotions etc., leaving no room to the imagination or false interpretation. The grammatical definition of Love falls very short of being comprehensive, if correct at all, and the use in our daily communicative process is ambiguous and confusing to say the least. Perhaps the lack of understanding of Love as an emotion gives cause to the misuse of the word.

Love, in the emotional content is the least understood most often confused and

certainly one of the most written about subjects. Our lack of understanding of this precious emotion hinders the attempt to properly define it. In its purest and only form love could be defined as; "The feeling of fulfillment experienced by a voluntary act of kindness without expectations of material or emotional gain ". If we are to take this simple and short definition seriously, we certainly can realize how this word is totally misused by all of us. The indiscriminate abuse of the word Love in our daily written and verbal communications undermines our very concept of the emotion, its meaning and practical application. Some might argue that there are many kinds of Love and ways to display it. For instance, "The love of Sports", in essence one is not capable of loving sports, only participate and enjoy them. I believe there are many misconceptions regarding Love, however I refuse to accept the idea of many kinds of Love. If you search for commonly used phrases you will find countless references using the word love, erroneously by true definition or application. I do not think it is feasible to drop the distorted use of this word from our communications. In addition, I do not foresee Webster coming up with a new word properly describing this powerful emotion. What then, how can we, within our language, use and give Love the proper place and meaning it deserves? Tough proposition, is it not?

Maybe we can approach the issue through our children at the Elementary School level, home, church and other educational environments. First by trying to properly define this word and then educating our youth as to the proper use. As adults, we should realize the importance of good communication skills improving and using our language correctly. Poor or inadequate use of words can have a very significant and adverse effect on our lives and society. Communication is responsible for the enduring of values, among other implications; improper use or the lack of an adjective describing a specific emotion will damage the results. By realizing that in fact we have become accustomed to using the word Love constantly and incorrectly we can begin to attempt a more, let's say, respectful use. Even though "Picking" on the word love and how it is used may appear unimportant, it is not. Theoretically, it may have had a tremendous impact in our English Speaking society, until today totally overlooked. The way in which we express ourselves not only educates our children but also molds our character and influences our everyday life. The use of language, like music, strongly influences values, mores and behavior and is not to be overlooked.

There are distinct differences in the American way of life and set of beliefs in comparison to the Latin or Spanish speaking countries. I am by no means suggesting that the use of the word Love is responsible for the overall contrast. However, language as a whole plays a role. Family ties, emotional expressiveness, amorous and sexual behavior, religious beliefs and devotion are areas of pronounced differences between the two groups. Spanish is a "Romantic" language and incorporates the use of gender for inanimate objects. As I mentioned before Spanish uses a single word defining Love, "Amor", seldom if ever used loosely as we use Love. When "Amor" is part of a phrase, sentence or verbal exchange it clearly depicts the emotion of Love. It is very difficult for the English speaking community to grasp and understand the differences between the two languages and form of communication. By not mastering the Spanish language makes it just about impossible to realize the significant and different way in which it affects, educates and influences the Spanish speaking society.

As we look at America today we cannot help to notice the rapid decline in moral values and the lack of what we can refer to as principles. Many factors and circumstances are responsible for this. The Educational System is to say the least, deplorable, in my series of articles I will be addressing this very important issue. The Government is also a major contributor to the problem with high levels of corruptive contaminants,

widely known as Politicians. The Media may indeed come in first in the responsibility race as it is held accountable for our communications and information; I think they also might run the Country, we just do not know it. My Expose of the word Love and its use is but a "Drop in the Bucket" in the overall picture; however a valid argument

To Americans, Loving an ice-cream cone is perfectly natural... think about it. "I'd love to see him fired ", Love just instantly turned to hate, no problem; How's that for "Warping" values? We are constantly and usually unaware of the countless times the word Love is desecrated, yes of course by us. Personally, I was not aware of it until the other night after going to bed ending a long night of writing. I had been working on a Spanish article and after a few minutes in my forward cabin, just as I began to relax, it dawned on me. In that particular article I had to measure very carefully using the word "Amor" in order to express the proper emotional content in my work. All of the sudden, I realized the word Love could be used almost at will. I decided then to write a short paper exposing this crime against literature. I do not think for one minute that Americans in general ever gave a second thought to the subject at hand. Furthermore, I am sure that by not doing so they totally missed exploring the... **"Other Side of the Coin"**.

http://www.revistainterforum.com/english/articles/otherside_love.html

A nation of "Junkies"?



Americans probably "Fired Up" more "Joints" than consumed Mac Donald's and Burger King Hamburgers combined. Ounce per ounce alcohol consumption surpasses bottled water. Cocaine is like a "Blizzard" covering even in the southernmost states. Billions of taxpayer's dollars are spent every year in an attempt to eradicate the problem, while more than likely double the amount of money is made by "Drug Lords" and "Pushers".

The illegal cash is used for more drug production, perhaps terrorist activities and certainly other illicit ventures. Meantime countless lives are lost in the so-called "Drug Wars", including innocent people and law enforcement officers. American families are being devastated by the addiction regardless of financial status, education or religious denomination.

Children of elementary school age are being approached by pushers and turned into "Junkies". This problem of immense proportion and catastrophic consequences seems impossible to bring to an end. Are the tremendous effort and money spent by the US Government to stop Drug Traffic and consumption paying off? Is the end in sight? Are there better ways to end this horrifying situation affecting a large segment of the American population?

In order to have steady lucrative supply there has to be a demand first. It is obvious that American demand for illegal drugs climbed sharply since the early to mid sixties. The Government budget allocated to combat the problem also rose sharply over the same period. This leads to larger profits for the "Drug Lords" and their "Puppets".

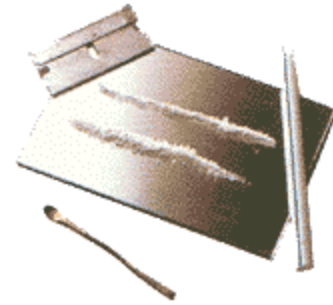
Some private and Government-funded organizations came into existence offering "Drug awareness" and "Rehab" programs yielding some success. However, these types of organizations are costing a great deal of money and employing countless hours of mostly volunteer work. Drug related crime statistics are soaring as more and more robberies, murder, etc. are committed to finance the habit.

Even at corporate levels, companies are being embezzled, as high-ranking corporate officers become addicted, Government officials of all branches are not exempt. The use of narcotics is widespread also under publicized. Financial organizations, government officials, private industries among others are getting involved in the lucrative business of "Illegal Drug Trafficking", further adding to the spiraling problem. Is there a realistic answer that offers a foreseeable end to the drug problem?

Stiff penalties for the pushers and perhaps even users have been suggested, some even implemented. The problem is, we do not have correctional facilities large enough or the budget to support them. Furthermore, what can we do with the countless teen and sub-teenagers using drugs?

Thousands upon thousands of parents who do not use drugs are confronted by the realization that their offspring are technically "Junkies". When the horrible reality is discovered, the parent can do very little and the suffering and pain begins, sometimes ending up in irreversible tragedy.

Many organizations advocate "Parent Responsibility" for the child's behavior. In the case of the H.R.S, this federal organization legally pursues, harasses and invades the privacy of innocent, concerned and honest parents. They contest lack of parent involvement, supervision and even willful neglect. In the majority of cases, this is simply not true and this philosophy, now widely used and accepted, is completely counterproductive. The H.R.S is also a tool for the youth to use against the parents, literally tying the parent's hands.



Television programming address, the "Parent Responsibility" syndrome making matters even worse, parents do not have complete control over their offspring. School, television, media, friends and music, by a large percentage, outweigh parental influence. Many children are introduced to drugs in the school environment completely rendering parents as "Victims".

Short of incarceration at home without formal schooling or television the youth of America are exposed to the drug problem, many becoming drug addicts. A lot is left to be desired of the Educational System and a lot of responsibility should be placed upon it, however that is a different subject all together.

Alcohol is a legal substance taxed by most Governments also a tremendous industry when bar, nightclubs etc. are considered. Alcohol in America is responsible for countless loss of lives, also an equal amount of personal tragedy. Looking back at "Prohibition", back in the twenties, is not difficult to see how useless it was, a small example of what is happening today.

Since the demand for alcohol did not decrease, legalization was necessary. Although the problems related to alcohol remains, some controls are possible. By the tax, revenues rose and obviously "Bootleggers" went out of business. Laws such as D.U.I are doing a good job in keeping the highways relatively safe from drunk drivers. Alcohol is part of society and consequently society cannot hide or suppress the demand. Governments and people alike can only hope to control its abuse.



Marijuana as opposed to cocaine and other drugs is not nearly as destructive as alcohol and although the thought is controversial in nature, it should have been legalized many years ago. Legalizing Cocaine is even bolder and definitely a highly controversial issue. A proposition of that nature would make anyone an instant undesirable. What would happen if the US Government legalized not only Marijuana but Cocaine as well among other substances? Will the US become a nation of "Space Cadets" and "Junkies"? Not caring much how I am judged on this issue, let us take a hypothetical view at a very possible scenario.

If Cocaine and Marijuana became legal, some very interesting changes are likely to occur. The American Government could bring forth regulations as to the production and sale of Cocaine and Marijuana by licensing U.S. companies, enforcing strict price and quality parameters. Retail establishments for the now legal drugs would be more or less like "Liquor Stores" or incorporated into it.

By strict price control legislation and after taxing market price of the substances should be far below attractive level for outside production and illegal traffic. This action would immediately put the "Drug Lords" and "Puppets" out of business. A by-product of this measure and other regulations and controls that could be implemented would be the attainable accurate statistics of consumption. Soon after, the huge network of drug enforcement personnel, costly equipment and operations could be virtually dismantled. The revenue from taxation and the savings attained from the not necessary drug enforcement machine will be of great financial help to the taxpayer.

What about the possible and undeniable reality of drug addiction in minors, will it not reach epidemic proportions? Hardly, the use of drugs by minors now is of epidemic proportions. If regulations similar to alcohol are incorporated and added to, far too many to discuss here, minors although socially exposed, will not have the "Uncontrolled Availability" they now have. As for the social exposure of minors, lets face reality, today they are not only socially exposed to the drugs but to the crime associated with it as well.

What about the adult population consumption, will it increase now that prices and availability are within reach? Even more frightening; Will it become as alcohol is "Socially Acceptable"? Perhaps, but let us analyze a few things first. If a parent tells a child of any age "You Can't", I bet you a dime to a dollar he "Will". This somewhat primitive and a simple statement could very well apply to the adult population drug consumers or consumers to be.

The "Sociably Acceptable" conditioning is also a bit wishy-washy. If drug demand decreased there would be no multibillion dollar "Drug Traffic", so one must conclude that unfortunately, society wants to use them, acceptable or not. Additional benefits could arise from legalization, the considerable savings in drug enforcement and new tax revenues. These could be better more comprehensive drug programs and education could be provided to the public.

It could be construed by many that the Government is contributing to the corruption of the nation and that all-moral values are now lost. That would be a horrifying statement that would "Stick" with an apparent truth behind it, however reality cannot be overlooked. America's values, not just toward drugs, are vanishing day by day right before our eyes. I personally do not believe that the consumption of Marijuana and Cocaine by the adult population would significantly increase after legalization. Perhaps the opposite would be the case. One thing I can just about guarantee, children's consumption, addiction and availability will certainly decrease drastically.

The majority of parents in America are decent, honest and moral individuals that would never lead their offspring to destruction. Now the way it stands, parents have no idea of whom, when or how their children are getting drugs and by the time they find out, it is too late.

Other things come to mind when we look at the hypothetical legalization of Marijuana and Cocaine. Will Colombia cease to exist? This question is not a joke. What about certain American underworld interest, what will they do? Just how much money is involved in this huge "Illegal Traffic"? How many people are involved, who are they, does anyone know?

In a period of less than a month, while anchored off Puerto Rico's Bay of Boquerón, a few drugs "Busts" took place on the Island. The quantity of drugs, mainly Cocaine, seized exceeded one billion dollars. Keep in mind this is only what was confiscated. Probably a small amount of what comes through this Small Island. In the same period, I heard of murders, executions style, just about every night on the local news, many of them were minors. The illegal drug business probably surpasses any other illegal business in the world today. With that in mind, closing it down is "Easier Said than Done".

Legalization of Marijuana and Cocaine even though hypothetical and certainly controversial is a very real option to the problem. The real question is not whether it will work or not but is the American public and Government mentally flexible enough to even ask the question?

The present approaches are far too costly, yielding little results if we look at the overall picture. New ideas regarding this problem must be seriously looked at for feasibility. Why let the "Drug Lords" get richer as they destroy America's youth while we spend billions of dollars on drug enforcement and related programs with no substantial results? Let us seriously look at other avenues to end this national tragedy. New idea is a good idea as opposed to no idea at all, or one that does not work and, in practice, ineffective and too costly.

As a Nation we must face the problems realistically and find workable solutions leaving aside personal feelings. The truth is that American Society is plagued by drugs, simply because Americans use them creating a huge demand

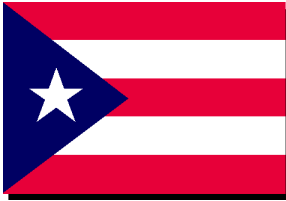
This horrible evil has touched the lives of millions of Americans leaving them scarred and destroying their lives. Drugs in America have claimed the lives and incapacitated large amount of innocent children and adults alike. Either the American people as a whole suddenly decide to stop the use of Marijuana and Cocaine, highly unlikely, or they should begin to look at legalization as a real option.

We as Americans cannot blame the Government for the problem. It is an issue for the people to correct and realize the proportions and the Government to represent the people and take proper action. Perhaps it is about time we looked at our values a little deeper and formulates the correct questions. Do we want, as a Nation, to continue the use of Marijuana and Cocaine as a favorite national pastime? If so, should we legalize the substances enabling us to achieve better control? If Americans were honest enough to entertain those questions then they might begin to see... **"The Other Side of the Coin"**

http://www.revistainterforum.com/english/articles/otherside_junkies.html

U.S. role in the Caribbean, target Puerto Rico

Most Americans are not aware are of the Caribbean region, the nations, the people, their struggle. The majority back in the mainland envision the Caribbean as a place of used to be pirates, romance and most of all that two-week cruise they worked hard all year for. I saw it just that way until I set sail for the Caribbean a few years ago aboard my sailboat, "Attitude Adjustment", little did I know the name of the vessel would be so fitting.



The Caribbean region is compromised of countless Islands. The Bahamas on the north, with unbelievable crystal clear waters, white sandy beaches and fantastic fishing & diving. Cuba, "The Pearl of the Antilles", just ninety miles off Key West, is the biggest and perhaps most beautiful Island in the Caribbean. Hispanola (Santo Domingo), with Haiti occupying about one third of the island, it is the land of magic, Voodoo and mystery it is also the first independent republic in the hemisphere. The Dominican Republic, which occupies the rest of the island, home of Diego Colon and the Colonial City, the oldest city of the New World. Puerto Rico, without a doubt is "The Island of Enchantment " rich with malls and Chain Stores..... it is just a joke.

The American and British Virgin Islands are known as the chartering capital of the world. Martinique, Granada and the rest of the Island belt ending with Trinidad and Tobago on the south side, just off the Venezuelan coast, with a special mood of its own, not to mention Aruba and many more. Between the magnificent contrasts are literally hundreds of Islands and keys making up the Caribbean. Aside from the beautiful Islands, which are rich in culture and tradition, we have their equally gorgeous and hospitable inhabitants. In the case of the Dominicans, they are simple yet beautifully natural and sincere people. However, there is another strong influence in the region, the United States.

Puerto Rico, a mountainous island measuring a mere thirty five by one hundred twenty miles lying south east of Hispanola, under U.S. influence and partial control since the 40's or maybe earlier in some ways. Upon your arrival in Puerto Rico the American presence is not apparent, nor is the tremendous influence it has exerted upon the Island and its inhabitants, mostly descendants of Taino Indians, Spaniards and African slaves.

To the many visitors that come to the island it is just a well-deserved tropical vacation filled with exciting landscapes, mountain ranges and a delightful exposure to a different and colorful new culture and customs, finding them amazing and entertaining. San Juan, being the Capital, has the most accommodations including an International Airport where just about all tourists arrive. When I first visited Puerto Rico, as a tourist in the seventies, I had no conception of the problems they faced and what the U.S. had brought to this small but "Enchanted Island".

Only upon my return in the nineties, to cohabit within their people, did I begin to understand the realities faced by their society. Actually, by living among the natives I began to comprehend their culture, way of life and idiosyncrasies making up this marvelous Caribbean community. The natural beauty in Puerto Rico is abundant, from El Yunque, a small but breathtaking rain forest to the many beaches surrounding the Island. Boquerón Beach and resort town, on the west end, is alive with colorful shops and entertainment. You can sit and sip on a Piña Colada in a rustic and quaint romantic setting enjoying sailboat silhouettes against incredible sunsets.

Rich culture, customs and history make Puerto Rico individual and a unique part of the Caribbean. It also houses many U.S. military installations and bases. They are widespread throughout the Island such as, Roosevelt Roads, Campamento Santiago, the Airbase in Aguadilla, Coast Guard base in San Juan are just a few among them. Arecibo, on the north coast, is home to the observatory said to house the largest Radar Dish in the world, transmitting signals into outer space in search of intelligent life.



Coast Guard surveillance in the waters around Puerto Rico is constant, military exercises on land or seas are not uncommon and the people often openly protest these kind of activities. There were demonstrations against the Lajas radar and the proposed relocation of the South Command from Panama to the island. Now the latest controversy is the U.S. intervention in the island of Vieques, a few miles of the south coast. This action taken by the U.S. Government has brought widespread protest. The peaceful and religious demonstrations have reached numbers more than 85,000 people carrying flags and religious signs. Over a mile of the Las Americas Expressway was filled with people protesting.

This posture by the U.S. military forces and Government, agreements or not, is totally uncalled for and violates not only the human rights of the people but their wishes for safety and a peaceful environment.

What of the people, what has it done to them? Do they want the U.S. to be so influential over their lives? Does Puerto Rico want to be a state or are there circumstances forcing a do or die situations?

American influence goes well beyond military installations in Puerto Rico. Just about any store that is found in the states you would probably find on this unique Island, of course, malls included. Puerto Rico is officially "A Free Associated State", a paradox per se, that the population as a whole cannot swallow themselves.

As for the consensus of opinion, back in the States, Puerto Rico is a bad word costing

the taxpayers millions of dollars. They are discriminated against by Americans, unfortunately they are the brunt of many distasteful jokes. For the most part the islanders call the Americans, Americanos or Gringos. They love to talk on their Cellular phone to their spouse or family member going through tolls in their Maxima or Ford Mustang and while shopping at Wal-Mart.

United States media never reports the huge amounts of money of private industry takes back to the States while paying substandard wages, thereby offsetting the millions claimed as a loss by the government. The infrastructure is poor, making matters worse. There are approximately a bit over three million inhabitants in Puerto Rico and about one and one half million vehicles. One small problem, they did not allow for enough parking spaces, except in the malls of course. The Utilities, Hospitals and highway systems are poor by American standards, specially the medical facilities. Sanitation such as sewers and public waste disposal is inadequate and poorly maintained.

Politics are a mixture of American corruption with a "Latin Flair". Police department, FURA (rapid deployment forces), Recursos Naturales (natural resources) are among many clones of US agencies. Puerto Rico's people are by law American citizens, having all the benefits Americans enjoy specially, Social Services and Social Security just to mention a few. However, by birth the people call themselves Puerto Ricans, somewhat a confused society.

Crime and drugs are abundant and growing, especially in the major cities, there seems to be no hope in sight. In August of 96 well over one billion dollars worth of drugs were confiscated. In the same period many execution style murders were reported throughout the Island. Family unity and bonds are very strong among this society. The increasing drug problem is undermining one of their most precious assets, their love of family and children.

Small Local businessmen are suffering the effect of major U.S. conglomerates and large department stores. The life style of the people is rapidly changing, leaving in its wake a poor clone of the American life style, a nightmare of sort with no feasible solution at hand.

By nature, the inhabitants of this plush island are expressive loving people with a strong sense of culture and tradition. This is responsible for their colorful art, unique cuisine, music of almost hypnotic rhythm and their individual way of life giving them a fitting place in the Caribbean. Spanish is the official language, endangered by the possibilities of Statehood and the School System.

Slowly, and by U.S. manipulation, these good people are changing into something they are not, nor can they ever be. Many of them have struggled long and hard to achieve independence and retain their language, customs and wonderful traditions. However; it has been to no avail, they are being lost day by day. The sense of pride as a free nation is only apparent in a few that still believe in the independent movement, a seemingly unrealistic dream without the help of the United States to ensure a smooth transition.

Why is it that the U.S. does not encourage Puerto Rico's independence by helping this Island nation through the transition? Instead, more American interest pours in while the people live in political limbo without a real solution or definition in sight.

No other nation in the Caribbean is in the position Puerto Rico is in today. America has brought modern technology, among a host of other amenities enjoyed by the islanders. At the same time, it has introduced all the evils of the American system to this small island without the basic infrastructure, knowledge or ability to cope with them, being completely misled.

Believe it or not, a large segment of this society is not even aware of what is happening; Sound familiar? In my travels I have covered the entire island finding many towns large and small where you see a Burger King in the corner and on the opposite side of the street, small hamburger or hot dog stand remind you of the poorest areas of the Dominican Republic. In fact, there are large areas of Cabo Rojo, a medium size "Pueblo" or town that resembles the village of Luperón in the Dominican Republic, one of the poorest towns of the country. The Dominicans have a legitimate excuse for this type of scenario, Puerto Rico does not!

Although located in the heart of the Caribbean the island is quickly moving away from what makes the Caribbean, "The Caribbean ". Instead, it is becoming over crowded, not with people, but with "Mickey Dee's" and a host of franchises and industries influencing the people, their way of life and the economy. They are becoming, if not there yet, a consumer economy as opposed to a producing one.

As Puerto Rico faces the new millennium, it is confronting many challenges. One of the most important issues to this tiny Island is political status. Not able to manufacture or produce a substantial national product, achieving an adequate trade balance, it is totally dependent on the U.S. Local and federal government employs a large percentage of the population, far more than the private industry.

Unemployment figures are high and pay scales are low. American influence has damaged the basic way of life in Puerto Rico in the final analysis, should it continue as it has it will irreversibly and adversely change this Caribbean community. Through tourism and other industries, this Island can achieve autonomy, although small in sizes, the people make up for the geographical measurements. Puerto Rico should make a decision to regain the identity and pride it has lost along the way.

In the eyes of most Americans Puerto Rico is a burden, costing a great deal of money in subsidization with little to offer, except that vacation we talked about at the beginning of this article. Some islanders view it as progress, dollars, citizenship and the benefits that go with it. Others see it as a colony, exploited by the United States and American private industry, while poisoned with a life style not natural or acceptable.

American taxpayers are not being educated to the realities and consequences of U.S. Foreign Policy abroad and the media does very little to shed light on the issues and problems of nations like Puerto Rico. Unfortunately, the majority of Americans have "Tunnel Vision" when it comes to foreign affairs. Actually, it is not their fault; it is the negligence of the Educational System, the corruption within the Government, the greed of the multi million dollar companies. Furthermore, the one-sided, manipulative reporting by the media are just a few reasons the American Public cannot see... **"The Other Side of the Coin"**.

http://www.revistainterforum.com/english/articles/otherside_pr.html

American values, the hidden truth

The "American Values" are numerous perhaps too many to cover here but we'll give it a good try. I think it is proper to start with the "Undeniable Right to Freedom", sounds good doesn't it?. First of all, are we "Free"?...Or, have we abused freedom?. Under undeniable right to freedom come a host of issues such as privacy, free press, political freedom, free enterprise the list is long and probably boring. First, the answer to above questions are, no and yes. As time marches on we are losing our freedom, an almost imperceptible evolution. Our Social Security number was implemented hopefully for different reasons;Was it indeed?

This SS number, now reminiscent of a concentration camp tattoo, is as far as I am concerned, private. However not so, it is now a way of not only the Government finding you but private industry as well. Just by punching a few numbers into a logical idiot your whole life is exposed, credit, tax debt if any, etc. Do you realize without that number you no longer exist;...Freedom, right?

Years ago the Seat Belt Law came into effect to my amazement. Don't get me wrong, I wear and believe in seat belts, I do not believe it should be law. The Seat Belt Law, although a good law, is an infringement on privacy and undermines freedom. If we were to get hurt by not wearing seat belts we would hurt ourselves and no one else, therefore, it is our right to wear them or not. Lots of people do not agree but in principle it is an invasion of privacy.

On a passage from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico known as the Mona Passage I received a call on my radio on board. The US Coastguard insisted on boarding my vessel in Dominican waters and inclement weather with seas of over 20 feet and breaking, for a..."Safety Inspection!!!!". No, I did not refuse, I should have though. The so called inspection was an attack on my freedom and safety, obviously with ulterior motives and great cost to the taxpayers. These boarding are frequent and many captains have complained for the same reasons, some call the US Coast Guard the "Water Nazis".

The department of HRS is another example of the "Ulterior Motive Syndrome". With the seemingly valid excuse of social help they are responsible for the now endanger species "Parents". This freedom stripping, useless machine can literally take your children from you on their word as they invade your privacy. There is a difference between "Child Abuse" and a sometimes much needed "Discipline". By indiscriminately interfering with parental authority, parent respect is lost and so is freedom. If we took the time to look at the many laws and regulations now in place it would be reasonably easy to depict the many that infringe on freedom.

What about the abuse of freedom? Have we taken freedom for granted and openly abuse it?

I'm afraid that unfortunately we have indeed abused freedom. Actually, we have desecrated freedom to new heights. Just because we have freedom of expression does not mean we have the right to pollute our children with, violence, sex and sick TV programming like, The Simpson's or Married With Children; What ever happened to

Cinderella?. The abuse of freedom has led us to a foreign policy that is quite questionable. When we interfere with other nation's sovereignty we are abusing our freedom simply by imposing our set of beliefs upon an independent Society. Who died and left us God anyway?. We simply choose the "National Security ", now wore out, excuse to achieve our goal, regardless.

Our interpretation of "Free Enterprise" is a classic example of freedom abuse. Advertising's open and subliminal manipulation is repugnant and an insult to the intelligence. Next time you are watching the "Boob Tube" turn off the sound, if you have a brain cell working I guarantee you'll laugh. "Free Enterprise" is becoming "Fraudulent Enterprise" as entrepreneurs abuse this precious freedom and stretch it to the limit. Do I need say more?;..I could you know.

Other "American Values" of less magnitude are open to scrutiny some are becoming an institution. Try "Keeping up with the Jones's", everybody claims they don't, but they do. Some could theoretically see the keeping up attitude as a stressful, useless aberration. Could it be that "Keeping Up With The Jones's" is but an excuse for our instilled sense of greed?

Family values with the help of "Woman's Lib" and HRS are mutating rapidly. No longer does little "Benjamin" comes home after school to a warm atmosphere and a loving, caring and inquisitive Mom. Instead he gets the key from under the rug, dashes in turning on the stereo full blast, hard rock of course. He quickly turns the corner and scoops Dad's X rated video simultaneously dialing his friends on the portable phone reminding them to bring the "Grass", the Party is about to begin. In the meantime Mom is absorbed in a very important meeting, taking place over a drink at a fancy bar near the executive headquarters, looking very sensual, her career depends on it, she is doing this for Benjamin's future of course. Daddy is working late at the office, right, and won't be home early enough to go to Benjamin's play at school ...who is he with?;Are you getting my drift?.

These are the now the predominant family values, yes values. Even though there are constant complaints don't let it fool you, they love every second of it, including Benjamin of course.

These so called values have infected and affected mankind over the past few years more than ever before. With the inevitable Globalization phenomenon, which I am sure, it is being used to the maximum to spread the values and much more the whole world is getting a taste of what these values are all about.

What they don't know back in the states is that many nations recent the constant intrusions and abuses the US Foreign Policy offers. Furthermore, the average citizen in the good old USA is not even conscious of what is happening. I would recommend that anyone that reads this article, instead of using the "Immediate Rejection Syndrome", takes the time to think about it and perhaps do a little research 'cause otherwise they would be totally missing..."**The Other Side of the Coin**"

http://www.revistainterforum.com/english/articles/otherside_values.html

The Voyage

The ultimate dream of a lifetime to some is "Sailing into the Sunset "aboard a majestic sloop in search of that elusive Utopian place many fantasize and long for. A great deal of books and movies intensify this deep inner desire for the challenging adventures of the sea and mysteries of "Far Out Islands".

Since childhood boats, especially Sailboats, have fascinated me. Throughout my life, I always managed one way or another to have and enjoy them. However, I never owned a sailboat, just "Stink Pots" as sailors call them, never venturing far from land. In the early nineties, I was very involved in the business of " Making Money ", like so many, giving little thought to daring adventures, let alone the thought of owning a sailboat, I was happy with my seventeen-foot open fisherman.



When I met Frances, my wife for a very brief period, she vividly described her two-week adventure aboard a sailboat on a voyage to Dry Tortugas. This awoke long dormant feelings reviving personal desires, which I had suppressed due to my business life and so called responsibilities. As time went on the desire for adventure grew, finally when Frances and I were divorced; I was fed up with my life and the "Rat Race ". Business became a horrendous proposition, getting up in the morning was now a real effort.

About this time I called a long time acquaintance, a British widow, I met years before as one of my clients. During our many conversations together, I discovered that she and her husband had enjoyed the art of sailing for many years. Although never in a large sailboat or at sea, doing her sailing on lakes and competing in what is known as a " Shark ", close relative of the Hobby Cat, just bigger. I could perceive her knowledge and love for the art of sailing and sensed the almost unnatural adventurous spirit she possessed.

Business became harder and dissatisfying, financial difficulties set in as my lack of desire and drive was becoming apparent to me and just about everyone I knew. There was nothing I could do the guilt was overwhelming. I knew it was well within my power to change matters; however, I did not want to.

Neats and I, although not being able to afford it, began actively to look in the market for sailboats. Our travels took us all over the state, in the process we considered many sailboats but none quite what we wanted. Meanwhile, the abandonment of my work continued, by normal standards irresponsible. After almost a month of relentless search we came across a broker in Daytona Beach, she strongly suggested we look at a sailboat that was listed; we hesitated, it was late, but finally conceded. Upon glancing at this unfamiliar contraption an inexplicable feeling overcame me, we decided to come on board and take a closer look.

After a few minutes, without a detailed inspection, I found myself making an offer I could not afford to begin with. Neats and I headed back home a little perplexed at such a bold move; along the way, she continuously referred to the boat as, "A Lady

with Character". The next day to my surprise and amazement the offer was accepted, no problem, "I'll mortgage the house", I said to my self. So I did, it was not enough so we will finance the rest, how is that for living on the edge.

Neats did not blink an eye; unknowingly we had just embarked on an adventure without the slightest idea of how profoundly it was going to affect our lives. "Attitude Adjustment" the vessel, was ours and no, we cannot take credit for her name, it was.....meant to be.

In the thirty days, or so, that followed we were busy fixing numerous things and adding a few pieces of equipment to our new acquisition. In the meantime business and finances were, well, on the way of going to hell. We docked "Attitude Adjustment" at a local marina sailing her a few times on weekend never out of sight of land.

Finally, I was forced to close my business, personally facing very difficult circumstances. I was loosing everything I ever worked for, including a substantial estate. Guilt and learned behavior were sinking in, I was very close to a nervous breakdown, not that I did not earn or deserve one. One morning Neats and I were enjoying breakfast in an out of the way small cafeteria, a few miles from my remote eleven-acre ranch. Out of the blue I said, "Why don't we leave and sail to the Caribbean and let's do it within two weeks max, she replied, " ...OK".

We packed our belongings stored them and hastily supplied the boat. Neats enjoyed a good job in the medical profession; she requested a leave of absence. By now I felt very irresponsible not caring about any consequences we might face. Regardless of circumstances and with little knowledge of such an endeavor plans and preparations went on. The proposed deadline for departure arrived, not giving a thought to weather, equipment or navigational skills we departed; keep in mind I knew very little about the art of sailing.

Down state, while in the Intracoastal Waterway we purchased a dinghy and a GPS, becoming aquatinted with this much-needed instrument that I had never seen before. We crossed the Florida Straits in late June, Hurricane season, on a course for the Bahamas.

Upon arrival at Port Lucaya, Grand Bahamas Island, the first thing I missed was my "Wheels". Accustomed to driving everywhere walking a mile, out of need, was a new and in a way a horrifying experience. While at anchor we met a couple aboard another sailboat, they told us of their experiences, I could not relate, my mind was still back in the "Rat Race".



They also looked kind of "Scruffy". Fortunately, we had a good supply of groceries on board, thanks to Neats; everything is expensive and hard to find in the Bahamas. As days progressed, we hopped from Island to Island anchoring in places few have had the privilege or opportunity to visit, some cays accessible only by boat and completely deserted. I had projected an E.T.A. for our destination, Puerto Rico, of approximately one-month: Wrong, not in a sailboat. I

began to realize just how little I knew not only about the sea, navigation and sailboats but the much-needed "Frame of Mind" that's required which I certainly did not have.

As we began to meet many other live aboard "Cruisers", through their stories and experiences the learning process began. I was still extremely confused and distraught, constantly thinking of the many problems that I simply left unattended back home. By now, I was developing a deep sense of guilt, "I shouldn't be enjoying this, I'm irresponsible and despicable", constantly saying this to myself aloud. To make matters worse, being perfectly honest, I was enjoying the experience and feeling physically better as the days marched on.

In the weeks that followed, we faced many challenges including unforeseen repairs, heavy seas, night passages, many perils and other experiences that would easily fill the pages of a thick book. Three months after leaving home, having negotiated the very difficult passage called the Muchoir; we arrived in the Dominican Republic. Anchoring in Luperon Bay, a small and extremely poor village, totally exhausted.

Now my re-education process had just begun but I did not know it. When first stepping onto the dock, after a long rest, I was overtaken by extreme cultural shock. My pre-programmed mental computer became overloaded, the senses were taken to the limit, never had I seen or experienced anything remotely resembling the conditions before me. For a minute I could have sworn I was in a remote African village, cows, donkeys, chickens, pigs, dirt roads, you name it. After checking with the local authorities, "The Comandante", I quickly returned to the safety of the boat to recuperate, calling her home for the first time.

It took a few weeks to begin to understand the people of Luperon, their way of life and how they behaved also to feel comfortable in surroundings few people in America could tolerate. Imperceptibly, learned values conflicted with what I was experiencing among the people of this small and primitive village.

Suddenly, looking "Scruffy" was no longer looked down upon; giving without the expectation of receiving was the norm. Poverty ceased to be an undesirable disease and sharing the little they had came naturally as breathing. Sincerity and the lack of defensiveness were a welcomed and shocking realization, try that in the States, especially in business. In that short period of time and without being consciously aware of what was occurring to me, an irreversible behavior modification process began or...an "Attitude Adjustment".



While at anchor there I began questioning certain values ingrained in the States that I continued to adhere to, whether they made sense or not. As we met and spent time with the locals, observing their ways and philosophy, the more questions I had and the deeper my confusion set in. Time and the use of it took a different meaning, what used to be important was no longer as important. However, the unsolved problems back home were still present, haunting me causing anxiety and worry. Deep inside knowing I could go back and resolve them, however I chose not to.

In Luperón we also met and became close to a hand full of boaters who were adventurous enough to beat the wind and waves arriving in this tranquil bay resembling a Swiss Lake and

surrounded by mountains. Short of money, with the constant preoccupation of unresolved matters at home, still mentally used to our lifestyle back in the States we prepared ourselves for the dreaded "Mona Passage" into Puerto Rico.

Now, close to six months at sea we left Luperón, on our way south, taking with us an almost indescribable experience and leaving behind people who touched our lives in such a way as never before, not ever to be forgotten. Little did I know that short period would shake the foundations of my values. After a long and extremely dangerous crossing we saw in the distance the coast of Puerto Rico, our destination, we were exhausted. Immediately following the formalities of customs in Mayaguez we preceded to Boquerón, a beautiful palm tree lined beach and village on the West Coast of the Island. Back to civilization and the establishments we used to patronize back home.

Six weeks later we departed for Fajardo, on the East Coast, hoping we could find employment, while at the marina, and perhaps arrest the rapidly deteriorating situation at home. As we rounded Cabo Rojo, just outside of Boquerón, we lost our Jib sail and our engine blew a head gasket, we crawled into Salinas, securing a slip at the only marina there, falling short of Fajardo by forty or so miles.

In the months that followed Neats and I flew to the States on several occasions in an attempt to unravel the mess without much success. I began to mass-produce resumes finally obtaining an executive position in San Juan, fifty miles away. I became absorbed with my work project giving little thought to what I had learned...or "dislearned".

When the time came to make a permanent decision, eight months later, requiring relocation to San Juan, I could not. No longer man-made realities made any sense, nor the society imposed parameters for behavior was I going to accept. I felt terrible giving up a prestigious position and the financial stability it provided. Instead I returned the boat to sailing standards and proceeded to sail back to Boquerón.

While in Boquerón, with the small amount of money we received from our primary residencies Neats and I, with little hesitation, decided to acquire needed equipment to make our home "Attitude Adjustment" more comfortable and self-sufficient. We could have conceivably moved back to land and re-joined a life style we both were used to, we chose not too regardless of our financial position.

On April of 1996, we sailed on a return voyage to Luperón and stayed until the middle of June before returning to Puerto Rico. As I sat in my cockpit, soon after arriving, gazing at the serene bay late in the afternoon, I was overtaken by a strong overwhelming peaceful and secure feeling. I felt content, secure, and safe and not threatened an unexplainable feeling of belonging.

With the little money we had left we purchased a large number of hand carved parrots from a most wonderful local artisan, making his home near Luperón, in order to sell them in Puerto Rico or abroad. When the time came to return to Puerto Rico I honestly was very upset, I did not want to leave, but I had no choice.

Now as I write this short essay I continue to struggle with my personal feelings. It is immensely difficult to forget what you have learned in a lifetime, good, bad or indifferent. The process of "dislearning" is even more difficult, but now in my opinion

very necessary. Our lives have changed forever and the used to be needs values and mores have been replaced with new concepts and values.

As I look back and recall the then way of life, I realize how fictitious it was in many ways. What started out to be a daring adventure into the unknown has irreversibly modified our values, most importantly our "Point of View". By our audacity, seemingly irresponsible, a fateful sailboat named "Attitude Adjustment "and the somewhat forcefully exposure by wind and wave to a new way of life, we are indeed experiencing... **"The Other Side of the Coin"**

http://www.revistainterforum.com/english/articles/otherside_voyage.html

Us government policy towards Cuba, events 1995

Taking an impartial look at US policy towards the "Pearl of the Antilles" or Cuba, the largest Island in the Caribbean with a population of more than eleven million people, mostly of Spanish and African heritage, many questions arise. Oddly enough we never hear much about this nation or its accomplishments, obviously not much is said about the suffering the people are experiencing. Seemingly forgotten by the US media, most Americans do not even realize it only lies ninety miles off Key West.



Published articles are usually disparaging towards Cuba's form of Government and economic conditions affecting the population. I often wonder if some questions, there are many, could or would be answered by the US Government and media directly and objectively. Maybe then the American public would finally become aware of perhaps some obscured realities and reasons for the existing attitude toward this neighboring Island that in the fifties was the leading tourist attraction of the Caribbean and what could have been construed as a US friend and most importantly, an ally. So, with that in mind here are just a few questions I for one would love to have answered.

After the longest and most devastating embargo in US history towards any nation on earth, now more than 38 years in force, reality shows that it is only adversely affecting the population, not the Government of this small Island; I have to wonder why it still persists. It seems to me the policy makers and US Government have not found a problem selling weapons to Iran, making numerous treaties with China, a communist regime accused of many civil rights violations, reestablishing relations with Vietnam, where countless American lives were lost not too long ago; The list could go on. However if we were to look at Cuba back in the early stages of the revolution and today, it becomes apparent to me the existing policy and attitude towards this nation is not justified, definitely not clear at all.

I am not aware of American lives being lost due to any aggression whatsoever by the Cubans upon US soil or American interest in the region. I have not heard nor read of any Cuban involvement in drug traffic any where in the region; Furthermore, Cuba unless in possession of nuclear weapons, can not be a military threat to the United States simply because of its size, population and history. To my knowledge, not one

recent report by the US Government suggests the existence of nuclear weapons on the island. What then, could it be an economic threat? That would be ridiculous. Back in the fifties Cuba was not by any means underdeveloped, holding a major role as a tourist attraction however, unable to economically compete with the US.

Well, maybe it has something to do with the exportation of Revolution or better yet "Ideology". This is a strong possibility, it seems to be the straw the US Government stills hangs on to after thirty eight years; Is it realistic by today standards?

Has anyone figured out yet that the useless Embargo only helps Fidel Castro and the regime he stand for stay in power?

When Mr. Castro visited the US soon after the Revolution that brought him to power, he made a point to address the discrimination issue then tabooed in the States. Now we have Martin Luther King as a national hero and many other illustrious black leaders including Mr. Jesse Jackson. Was that visit to New York by Mr. Castro the beginning of racial unrest and upheaval, creating problems for the American Government and other interest, or was it the beginning of the end for the K.K.K. and human right abuses towards the black and other minorities in the US? Soon after the revolution Mr. Castro literally closed the casinos in Havana, a city that was known for its splendor and nightlife, ending American underworld involvement in the Cuban Economy, such as prostitution, gambling etc. That action by Mr. Castro did not settle well at all in America back then for obvious reasons but, are we not overlooking the "Mafia" in Russia today?



While in the Turk and Caicos, a lovely set of Islands south of the Bahamas, aboard my 40' sailing vessel, a couple of years ago I became aware through my receivers on board of the imminent invasion of Haiti by US Forces. Oddly enough I also heard of the mass exodus of Cuban citizens from the Island following a statement from Mr. Castro to the effect that, "Any body that wants to leave can do so". Mr. Clinton then ordered Coast Guard vessels and other military units to look for and intercept these individuals who were leaving their homeland in whatever could float. Leaving towards what they thought was freedom, men, woman and children to the tune of over thirty thousand in just a few short days. Some twenty nine thousand were picked

up and sent to Guantanamo, US Naval Base on Cuban soil in the province of Oriente, to a hastily constructed make-shift detention center; this raises some questions.

Why were they picked up in international waters for the most part and taken to Guantanamo, with all the appearances of a modern day concentration camp at high cost to the American citizens? Why not take them to the mainland, process them as "Political Refugees" or immediately deported back to Cuba as economical refugees or undesirables? Haitian refugees reaching the coast of Florida are for the most part assimilated into American society, not taken to Guantanamo totally disenfranchising them, depriving them of self-respect and the undeniable right to freedom. What is the status of these twenty nine thousand Cubans today? Where are they? Can the US Government address and inform the American taxpayers of this "Human Rights Issue" and the fate of these unfortunate people now seemingly forgotten? I have heard very little since the incident took place.

Why punish eleven million souls needlessly because of obscure Government differences? Are there no accomplishments achieved by a society who endured a thirty-eight year embargo by the biggest nation on earth? Why don't we look and see. Cuba undeniably led the Spanish-speaking world in the Atlanta Olympic Games far surpassing any other Caribbean nation or the hemisphere, not to mention Europe. If a medal per-capita study were to be conducted Cuba could conceivably lead the world. Cuban artists rank among the best in the Latin world. I'm well aware of Cuba's significant contributions to such important areas of human development and culture. Medicine is another area in which the Cubans excel.

While in Puerto Rico, for a period of almost two years, I became associated in a professional endeavor meeting many individuals who had first hand experiences with Cuban medicine. Their personal accounts were impressive to say the least. Also, I might note, their infant mortality rate is approximately ten percent, placing Cuba among the lowest in the hemisphere. These are facts, not hearsay, and cannot be denied by any Government on the planet.



Cuba has achieved these goals without help from the largest nation on earth, on the contrary, while under relentless economic and political pressure from the United States. What has the US embargo and constant pressure accomplished? How has it improved the quality of life for the population of this Caribbean Island? Or ...has it? What is the real reason for such extreme, borderline inhumane policy to a neighboring country once a close friend? Has it not proven fruitless and counterproductive, depriving the inhabitants from perhaps a better quality of life?

While traveling the Caribbean I have met countless people from different Islands including many Americans who dared visit this beautiful Island lying just off the coast of Florida. Their personal experiences while in Cuba were extraordinary, all of them have regarded their visit as the "Best experience they ever had". Without exemption, they've told me of the hospitality, friendliness and sincerity found amongst the people and officials. All unanimously agreed that the island of Cuba has incredible natural beauty, culture and yes, very good medical attention. The very well known author of the "1995 -1996 Cruising Guide to Cuba" Simon Charles has several references as to the quality of medicine on the island. Why the inexcusable persistency to maintain a blockade that helps no one? Why increment sanctions as opposed to lessening tensions, beginning the movement toward cultural exchange and friendlier relations?

Not too long ago, while at anchor in the Bay of Boquerón, a most beautiful area in Puerto Rico, doing some repairs to my vessel I heard of the several intrusions upon Cuban soil by exile groups based in Miami, Fl. These incidents culminated in the downing of two aircraft by the Cuban Air force. Strangely enough the incident took place on or about the time Mr. Castro was making his presence known abroad rallying support for his country. This unfortunate tragedy led to more severe sanctions from the US against Cuba and a definite ill effect on Castro's efforts.

Why don't we look at the events a little more closely and perhaps have some questions answered? How would the US react if Cuban elements, originating from Cuba, violated air and maritime US space on several occasions in order to create subversion? How

would the US Air Force respond if Cuban planes "buzzed" Miami dropping anti Government literature, refused to leave air space or land their crafts?

I can tell you this much, I have been bordered by the Coastguard several times in the Caribbean Region for, so called safety inspections, on more than one occasion well within territorial waters of another independent Caribbean nation. Twice in inclement weather, not only endangering my vessel and crew but the lives of Coast Guard personnel as well, I have not dared refuse such boarding, nor have I met any other Captain who refused. I have met dozens of Captains with the same experiences.

The destruction of two aircraft, piloted by anti Castro elements, brought about a US posture I do not understand. Why didn't the US condemn the air intrusion, by the exile group, as an illegal act perpetrated on a sovereign nation? Better yet, why was it allowed to begin with? Did the US know about it before hand?

I seem to recall the so called "Flotilla", from the same organization, that violated Cuban waters prior to the incident resulting in the loss of two aircraft. This "Flotilla" was highly publicized by the media in the US and Puerto Rico. The group was met by Cuban gunboats and peacefully turned back without incident or aggression from the Cuban Navy. US Coastguard had full knowledge of said "Flotilla" and its purpose. The vessels were US registered; some documented manned by US citizens or Americans.



This expedition and infringement into Cuban waters was not covert and should have been considered an illegal and grave act against a foreign nation. This intrusion was allowed to transpire; however, not condemned after the fact. Why?

No form of Government on the planet is or was ever perfect, US included. The American taxpayers deserve real answers to crucial issues not a one sided view. The media has the responsibility of impartiality, or in essence ceases to be a responsible body of information serving an organized and civilized society. Instead they would only help serve political and special interest groups, keeping a whole nation blindfolded and misled.

I think it is a fair statement that in the case of Cuba the American populous has been, to say the least, uninformed, if not misinformed, about the real reasons for US policy toward this Island in the Caribbean. A nation such as the US who takes pride in human rights, opportunity, freedom and unbiased information should take a long hard look at the reality of events, and how the Government and informational sources handle them. The media should aggressively seek the sometimes and often hidden distorted truths, publishing them with clarity. Freedom of the press, and the responsibility of unbiased reporting is one of the founding stones of a free society. Only by the uncompromising desire to bring forth questions, publishing indisputable and objective, perfectly understandable answers, will the American people be served and see the...**"Other Side of the Coin"**

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