

“We Are Sailing for a Nuclear-free World and a Peaceful, Sustainable Future.”

Golden Rule Peace Boat Sets Sail from Hawai'i for California

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After 21 months in the Hawaiian Islands, the historic anti-nuclear sailboat Golden Rule has departed from Honolulu, Hawai'i for the West Coast of the U.S. The Golden Rule first sailed from California to Hawai'i 63 years ago, in 1958, on her way to interfere with U.S. atmospheric nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands, the site of 67 U.S. nuclear bomb blasts from 1952 to 1958. Under orders from the Atomic Energy Commission, U.S. Coast Guard stopped the boat from leaving Honolulu. The arrest and jailing of Golden Rule's captain Albert Bigelow, a retired World War II Navy Commander, and his crew of Quaker peace activists garnered international media attention and increased opposition to nuclear testing and nuclear weapons.



Golden Rule crew prepares to sail across the Pacific to San Francisco Bay. (Photo: Ann Wright)

Atmospheric nuclear testing was stopped by the U.S., the UK and the Soviet Union in 1963 with the signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty. Golden Rule crew member George Willoughby was among a delegation of Quaker peace activists that met with President Kennedy before he signed this historic treaty, banning nuclear bomb testing in the atmosphere, underwater, or in space (but allowing it to continue underground).

In July 2019, Veterans For Peace, who owns and manages the Golden Rule, sailed the 34-foot ketch from San Diego to Hawai'i, with the intention of proceeding on to the Marshall Islands, the original destination of the 1958 crew. But once again, the Golden Rule's voyage to the Marshall Islands was stymied, this time by COVID-19. Because of the global pandemic, the Marshall Islands, already beset by outbreaks of measles and dengue fever, remains closed to international boats.

While in Hawai'i, the Golden Rule team met with members of the Marshall Islands community who live in Hawaii, who shared stories of the severe medical problems and forced relocation of residents of several islands that were blown up or severely contaminated with radiation from the U.S. nuclear tests. Twenty-three nuclear tests were conducted by the U.S. on Bikini Atoll, and 44 on or near Enewetak Atoll. The largest nuclear weapon ever detonated by the United States, the Castle BRAVO test on March 1, 1954, yielded 15 megatons and contaminated the inhabited atolls of Rongelap, Rongerik and Utirik with deadly radioactive fallout.

During the 21 months that the Golden Rule was in Hawai'i, project manager Helen Jaccard and others spoke in over 100 events in communities in all the Hawaiian Islands, except for Ni'ihau, concerning the dangers of nuclear weapons and the growing danger of nuclear war. With its red (tan bark) sails emblazoned with a large peace sign and the logo of Veterans For Peace, the Golden Rule has become a familiar sight to many in the Hawaiian islands.

"We are sailing for a nuclear-free world and a peaceful, sustainable future," said Golden Rule Helen Jaccard. "What better way to bring a message of peace and sustainability than this beautiful sailboat with its storied history. It puts a smile on people's faces!"

"We are grateful to the many friends we have made in Hawai'i, who have shown us how their islands have been damaged by U.S. bases, military exercises and ongoing bombing," said Gerry Condon, former president of Veterans For Peace, and chairperson of its Golden Rule Committee. "We stand in solidarity with native Hawaiians who are practicing their traditional culture and defending the natural environment."



Golden Rule Crew (l. to r.) Malinda Anderson, Captain Kiko Johnston-Kitazawa, Michelle Kanoelehua Marsonette, and Nolan Anderson. (Photo: Gerry Condon)

Captain Kiko Johnston-Kitazawa of Hilo, Big Island, Hawaii, will lead the 4-person crew, including Captain Malinda Anderson of Kona, Big Island, Hawai'i; Michelle Kanoelehua Marsonette of Albany, Oregon; and Nolan Anderson of Seattle, Washington. They will be at sea for approximately 30 days and nights, arriving in the San Francisco Bay around the first week in June.

In the fall of 2021, the Golden Rule will embark on another ambitious voyage for nuclear disarmament and peace. The historic vessel will sail the "Great Loop," beginning in Minneapolis, proceeding down the Mississippi River to St. Louis, to the Gulf Coast, around Florida, up the East Coast, through the Great Lakes and down the rivers of middle of the U.S. back to the Gulf. The one-year-plus voyage will see the Golden Rule stopping for events in dozens of communities along the route, often where nuclear weapons manufacturers and nuclear power plants are located.

We are sailing for a nuclear-free world and a peaceful, sustainable future.

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[Gerry Condon](#) is a Vietnam-era veteran and former president of [Veterans For Peace](#).

Featured image: The Golden Rule sails by her farewell gathering on Magic Island, Honolulu, May 1, 2021. (Photo: Ann Wright)

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