

Here is my short essay I just posted on my facebook page acknowledging the 50th Anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy:

Where were you when you heard fifty years ago today that President Kennedy had been assassinated?

I was sitting in the Le Conte Hall Auditorium at U.C., Berkeley, waiting for my Physics Lecture to begin when one student asked the Professor why he wasn't canceling the class, to which question the Professor replied, "we have to go on living our lives as best we can..."

Then I heard the news that JFK, who inspired me to run for Student Body President at Nordhoff in 1961, had been shot to death.

Only a few years ago did I learn, in a book about the brilliant Physicist Robert J. Oppenheimer, that tucked away in a secure section of the third floor of the same Le Conte Hall, in the Summer of 1942, the breakthrough calculations were done by the key physicists of the soon-to-be-named "Manhattan Project" proving that it was possible to make an Atomic Bomb.

How ironic for me to learn this after having lived through JFK and Nikita Khrushchev going to the brink of nuclear war in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Edward Teller, known as the father of the Hydrogen or Thermonuclear Bomb, was also on the faculty at U.C., Berkeley, and decided that same year to teach Beginning Physics to the Undergraduates--the sign-up line during that pre-computer-scheduled-classes time stretched clear across campus and down Bancroft Avenue.

Now under the Nunn-Lugar law the U.S. is buying back Russia's (and the former Soviet Union's) nuclear missile warheads and using the radioactive material to run our own Nuclear Power Plants (Swords to Plowshares!)

What I most liked about JFK was his speeches challenging us to go to the Moon before the Soviet Union did, and in yet the most profound irony of history this "nation first" impetus was turned on its head when the Apollo 8 Astronauts turned their cameras back towards Earth and photographed for the first time in living color our beautiful precious illuminated sphere against the black void.

From that distance no national boundaries could be seen, and ever since many of us cannot help but look at the Whole Earth, both literally and figuratively, in all the work we do.