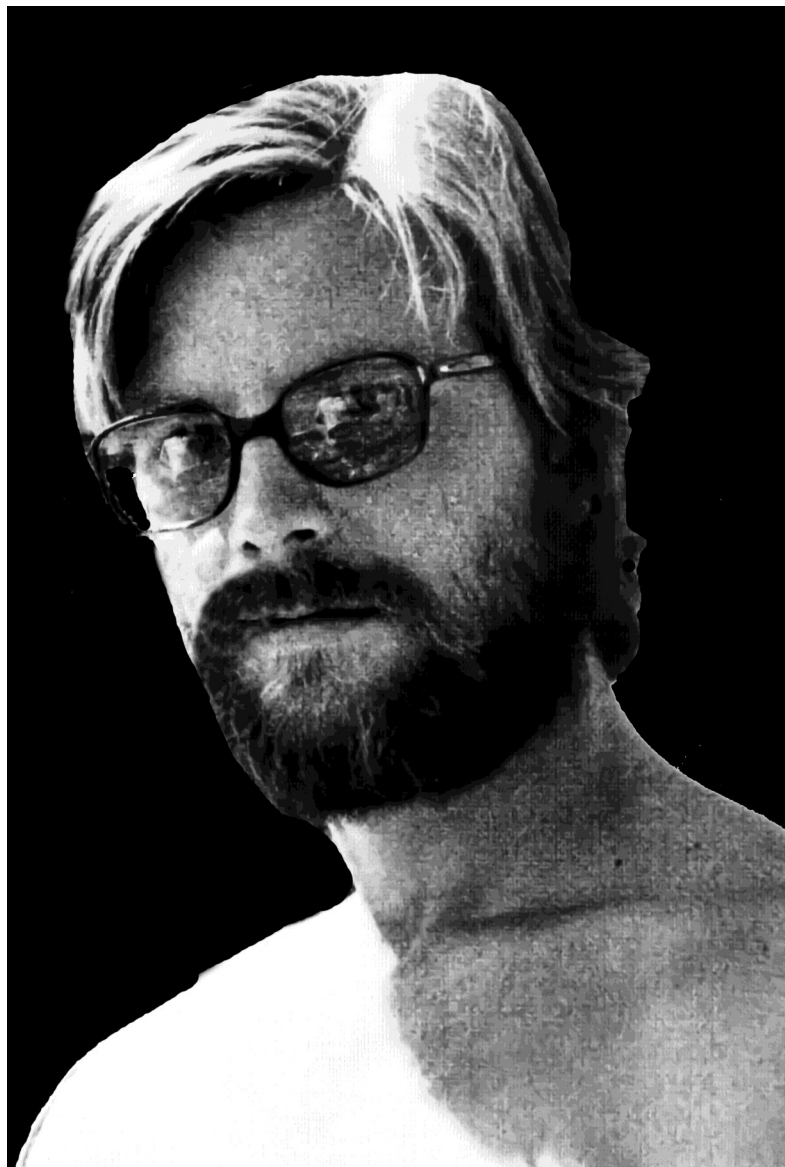


Memories of Years Past
by
Bruce Legendre

Food for Work 1972



The rains failed in the years between 1969 and 1971 in Afghanistan and there was widespread famine and with the widespread incompetence and corruption as many as 100,000 people or more died. Moosa Shafiq became PM in 1972 (young American educated technocrat) and things improved. So call in the Junketeers (as Nixon called us). Food for Work guys arrived in Kabul in Feb 1972 (after a night in Rome and Beirut) and were put up in a lovely hotel in Paghman on the outskirts of Kabul for some intensive Farsi Lessons...then some of us were off to Kandahar for further instruction and training.

After some weeks in Kandahar, Joe Wollmering and I ended up in a small village with little to do except learn how to read Arabic, improve our Farsi and practice with villagers. Back to Kabul for final assignments; some guys were cut out for various reasons and sent home but there were still enough of us to cover most or all of the Provinces.

I was assigned to Sheberghan (the end of the bitumen road in NW Afghanistan) on the Turkmenistan/Uzbekistan border where a large contingent of Russians lived. In the year and a half I was there, they avoided me like the plague, thought for sure I was CIA and no doubt the KGB was there to keep an eye on everyone. Too bad the Putin KGB Dopes are still in charge in Russia. In 1978 the Bactrian Gold was discovered just a few Kms out of Sheberghan from the time of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom. Had I done my research I might have done some prospecting myself with the Metal Detectors available at the time. But mea culpa -I was ignorant of the history and former greatness of the area I was found myself. More on this later.

The first day I presented myself to the Governor of Jowzjan with the very basic Farsi I had acquired and I understood enough to hear him say to his assistant, "What am I going to do with his foreigner; he doesn't understand Farsi?"

So I played the strong quiet type for the first month or two...nobody spoke English which is of course the quickest way to learn a language and there were no foreigners around. After a couple of months the Modeer Engashufamahal (Provincial Head Engineer) was explaining to me how a road contract we had awarded to a Feudal Landlord (who would then organize his workers, as many as 500) wanted more than the 8 Kgs of US donated wheat per day per man (I forget why) so the payment had to be extended. And I asked in Farsi, "But won't the road become longer than it is?" And he responded, "Ah, now you understand Farsi". Which in truth meant I had the vocabulary of a 4 year old. I could never understand all of what the men were saying in the tea houses and around the evening meal...etc but I got the gist. Expressions like "Hortagee derog na mega" (Foreigners don't lie) and Rishwa Hordi (You took a bribe) were common as well as some great swearing phrases to do with the anatomy of a donkey. The biggest insult for an Afghan was: "Zan asti" or you're a woman. Never saw any of them, all hidden away from prying eyes. The only experience that was in any way sexual occurred after an evening meal out in the boomdocks hosted by the local Feudal Landlord who had arranged for some musicians and a dancing boy with long hair and makeup who did a poor Mic Jagger impersonation. Mildly amusing but the Afghans sitting around the perimeter of the mud walled room were interested in ways the LGBT community would have found admirable.

I understood from the start that I was in charge because of my western face. (Foreigners don't lie...before Trump, obviously) Afghans would work for the Food for Work Program because I was there and they would probably be paid. If an Afghan was in charge, well chances of seeing any of their salary would be severely diminished. The way poor Afghans were bashed by soldiers and police if they confronted authority made justice a potentially rare commodity.

I was informed two Lorry Drivers carrying wheat (we got 2000 tonnes from memory, US AID) from the provincial Capitol (Shebregan) to the outlying towns (Sar I Pul and Sancharak) had been attacked and the drivers shot during a night run, so we only travelled during the day. For the duration of 1972 it was an old Russian Jeep owned by the Provincial Engineer with a Pashtun Driver who was in charge of keeping it serviced and running and to his credit, it never failed us on the battered roads between Shebregan and Sar I Pul (a half days drive) and further out where there were no roads. The Engineer in the front, me in the back breathing dust and my four assistants already in place either in Sar I Pul or Sancharak. Dr Whakil (Minister without Portfolio) was in charge of the whole show. He was well respected by Afghans and Westerners alike and he made sure we got variety; I had a Pashtu Driver, two Hazaras and a Tajik. If I had any problems I would go to the Governor and ask him to sort it out or I would go to Dr. Wahkil; this always worked.

Once we were driving down a gravel river bed to a village to judge the merit of a new project and came upon a Kochi Camp (Nomads dressed in Black that tended their flocks in the backblocks- a million or so of them in the early 70's) and they had enormous Kochi Dogs, part Wolf, that were posted around the camp and were ferocious. This dog attacked the Jeep...literally it ran straight into the front of our moving vehicle like a Medieval Knight on Horseback might ;down the riverbed and smashed into the front. I have seen the shepherd boys attacked in an open field by a single Kochi dog and the trick seems to be to drop down half way and swing your 6 foot shepherd staff in 360 degree circles above your head. I have seen this deter these dogs, I am not sure why.

One of the only visitors I ever had (I was at the end of the bitumern road- all dirt after Shebregan to Herat) was Jim Baines from Maimannah. We went to Ahkcha together to review a Project and on the way two of my three Afghan Assistants in the back seat (The Tajik and one of the Hazara) started bickering and fighting so Jim (riding shotgun) turned around and grabbed the Tajik by the collar and shook him and yelled at him to stop. The Tajik was suddenly confronted with this blonde headed/bearded , bespectacled pale head screaming into his face. End of arguing youngsters. I liked his style. Jim was used to disciplining young lads as he was a public school teacher from memory. He was good company. It was Ramadan and when the canon boomed (a Mullah would hold a white and a black string at arms length and when he couldn't discern the colour of each...Boom! went the canon)_and the fast was over. You had to rush to the restaurants to get a feed before it was all gone. Kabuli a la Amoeba.

The whole time I was there one engineer from Sweden showed up and reviewed some of our projects: A retaining wall in Sar e Pul, roads and wells. Most of the wheat went to subsistence farmers/ grazers who would get gravel from nearby riverbeds, take it to the road and tip it in. Some used donkeys, some camels and some used their long Afghan Shirts with the gravel carried in the mid lower part of the garment. I suspect these roads were found to be convenient and useful for the Russians in the 79 invasion.

Wells were another good project for the villages that had little or no potable water. We paid them 8 Kgs of wheat for each vertical meter. After they finished I would measure the depth, ensuring they had hit the water table and calculate their pay. One old Afghan in his 70s dug a 40 plus meter well and used the 320 kiloes to purchase a child bride. All the Afghans I knew were engaged to their 1st cousin as their parents could rarely afford the Bride Dowry or conversely the Bride Price. So their parents were 1st cousins and they would marry first cousins, apparently a tradition that has occurred for sometime in the Islamic World as Muhammad had married Zaynab bint Jahsh his 1st cousin.

At the time of being totally embedded with the Afghans and everything was "enshallah" this and "enshallah" that; I was probably a bit aggravated and bored at the inaction, lack of initiative but in

hindsight I was privileged to be totally engaged with Afghans on a ground level; travelled, worked and slept with them (usually as guests of the feudal landlord) and admired their non materialistic lifestyles that had been imposed upon them over their long history. And after several months I found that I had become an "Inshallah" kind of guy myself. I remember John Loomis calling into say good day once. John played a mean harmonica and was always the life of the party. I had been sitting in the back of a Russian Jeep by myself for several hours whilst my Afghan Counterparts were off doing whatever and I responded to John's queries with an "Enshallah" attitude which must have freaked him out because he departed abruptly.

All this Afghanistan Experience courtesy of the US Taxpayer. To have been born a baby boomer in USA was to win the lottery of life. A bit like our Italian Friends who ran their Mediterranean Empire for 600 years and now are relaxed with the attitude of "well we were in charge for a long time, now it's your turn." That would be us, the Yanks and like the Romans we are a society of Laws, Engineering and Militarism. From my travels around the world, it is my belief someone or a group of someones must maintain order in the World and as much as the Yanks stuff it up, who else is there? The Russians? Chinese? Europeans (too busy killing each other for 30 centuries) No I am afraid it falls to the New Romans.

The public baths were always interesting. One could get an Afghan haircut there for a few pennies which due to lice infestations meant shaving the head, the armpits and the crotch. Some of the remote villages we visited (on horseback or jeep) had no running water, electricity, nothing; just totally self sufficient from the outside world. People lived simply, and grew or raised what they required to survive. God knows they got no support from Kabul and the wealthy listened to the shortwave radio in the evenings. Afghans told me that when they prayed, they were content but when they missed prayer, they became unsettled and angry. Such simplicity. In the middle of the day, a small rug layed out in the middle of a field and a man humbles himself before Allah. Muhammad's Genius in my view was the call to Prayer 5 times a day over the loud speakers or from a human voice from the minaret (constant religious reminders hammering the unconscious mind), the monthly fast at Ramadan (awareness of group sacrifice and solidarity) and finally the Haj (millions circumambulating the Ka'ba at Mecca, mass reassurance of the veracity of one's faith). And of course there is no racism in Islam; Black Africans and White Serbians greet each other as equals. One of the great anomalies of history was the smuggling out of China, silkworms by the Nestorian Christian Monks who brought them to Constantinople just before Muhammad was born...hence the withdrawal of the Roman Legions from the Persian Gulf/Arabian Peninsula which had protected the ancient silk route for centuries. How Muhammad would have done clashing with the Roman Legions? He depended on the wealth of the Caravans he raided and stole from to finance his army which consolidated the entire Arabian Peninsula just before his death.

On a short break, (inertia was the key word with the Afghan Managers in Shebrehghan) to Mazar E Sharif and Balkh-which was totally destroyed by the Mongols in 1220 after 2500 years of history-and watched local boys fossick for coins and artifacts in the mud ruins. And then off to Samangan to visit Brian Johnson who showed me the ancient Buddhist ruins. Afghanistan was heavily invested in Buddhism from 300BC up to the Arab Invasions; a brilliant culture of art, literature, and religious Philosophy that I would have probably enjoyed to a greater degree had I been assigned to Shebrehghan at the time of Christ although when I contracted TB, Amoeba, Giardia and the rest...there would have been no medication. Crashed at Brian's Place for the night then back to work at Sheberghan until the XMAS break arrived and there was too much snow to work.

So XMAS break 1972: went to Kabul and headed off to India through the Kyhber Pass (we had to pay tribute so the Tribes wouldn't hold up the bus) and went to Delhi (saw Museums' Ashoka three headed lion Logo everywhere); the British Archaeologists under Colonial rule found all this out for the Indians who had no idea about this part of their history, then to Kathmandu, Burma, Bangkok and down to Goa where all the hippies were running around naked waiting for Timothy Leary to arrive as he had escaped from Prison and was on his way, but one of his mates ratted him out.... Hung out with Ted Emerson (yes Ralph Waldo's Progeny) and his girlfriend who was a world traveler and had some interesting folks in her background.

Back to Kabul then made my way back to Shebrehghan through Kandahar. Stopped in Kandahar (the best sweet pudding-Fernee) and struck up a conversation in English with an Afghan Teacher who spoke several languages, more than the usual two or three most Afghans spoke. (Farsi, Pashtu, Tajik, Uzbek and maybe a bit of English). But this chap spoke Hindi and Urdu as well and was well read on history of India and SW Asia and so we were chatting and he asked me where I had been. "Well Delhi, Calcutta...etc" And he asked had I attended the Museums and seen the Ashoka Three Headed Lion Pillar which is on all the Indian Rupee notes and was I aware Ashoka (3rd Century BC Emperor of India) administered Kandahar/Alexandria and had his edicts written in Greek as well for the Macedonians that had remained? And what did I think about the Greek/Buddhist Influence in art, religion, government..etc that flourished from the 4th century BC to to the 7th century AD... and on and on... And of course I had no clue. In fact the Shebrehghan Hoard of 21,000 Gold Pieces was found in a burial mound in the late 70's not far from where I was working. Had I known I would have invested in a Metal Detector and seen what I could find for the Kabul Museum. He shrugged "you have money and go everywhere but you understand nothing" Well he wasn't being rude, just factual but I was humiliated and thereafter wherever I have travelled on this planet, I made a point of reading the history and background so I know what I am looking at and thanks goes to the little impoverished school teacher in Kandahar/Alexandria where the Great Alexander himself once stood. Although I am no fan of his sexual appetites. He was an omnisexual; man woman eunuch whatever...

Glad to leave Kandahar/Alexandria on to Herat and a quick detour through Mashad, Esfahan, Shiraz and the Persepolis then back to Shebrehghan. I have always admired the Persians, a distinct Indo European people, not Arabs, who had the first world empire under Cyrus the Great. He easily defeated the Egyptians by having live cats pinned to the shields of his infantrymen which totally freaked out the Egyptians with their reverence for cats. The Persians are very sophisticated people and I enjoyed their company so I was shocked when they acquiesced to the Ayatollah and that crew of Mullahs. Totally unexpected. I only hope the young folks of Iran depose the Clerics as they did the Shah and the young Chinese need to get out on Tiananmen Square once again.

As I remember US AID took over the Food For Work Program and sent up an old 1950 vintage International 4WD which seemed to stop and go all right. It was now April-May 1973 and we were all recalled back to Kabul. I was riding shotgun in the front seat, just my driver and myself. Well just before we got to the top of the Salang Pass Tunnel -13,000 ft- (highest tunnel in the world at the time of construction), I told the driver to stop so I could get some fresh water to drink from the

melting snow. The Hindu Kush (Persian for It Kills Hindus) winds its way through Nepal and India and ends up in Afghanistan where the Afghans had a brilliant system of Karezes. They would bring the water down from the foothills of the Himalaya (shallow water tables) to the floodplains for irrigation by sinking a vertical hole every XXX Meters then teams would go down the shafts and dig out horizontal drives connecting the vertical shafts for many miles. Karez diggers were obliged to dig for the remainder of their productive lives and their sons, grandsons...etc had to be Karez diggers as far as I was informed. Well all this was destroyed by Genghis Khan. He devastated Afghanistan and left a fort of 1000 men wherever necessary. Thousand in Persian is Hazore and so they are today the Hazaras and are still not assimilated or particularly liked by the Pashtuns and others. Being Shia in predominantly Sunni Afghanistan also does not help the Hazara achieve social parity even though they have been in country since the 13th century.

Anyway after a soothing long awaited drink of cold fresh uncontaminated water... Afghanistan is appalling for Amoeba Dysentery, Worms, TB, Giardia—of which I had had them all. To quench one's thirst on a hot summer's day it is hot tea; the boiled water does the trick. But before I got back in the car I had a feeling something was not quite right so I got in the back seat and we proceeded. After driving through the crest of the tunnel (the top of the pass is tunnelled because of avalanches, snow and ice) we began to descend and very quickly the driver turned to me ashen faced; no brakes, no hand brake, nothing. It was a 3 speed transmission on the column and there is a trick you can do with the old style standard non-synched transmissions to get them into 1st gear with a double clutch, but try to describe that in Farsi in a few seconds...as the old International is now beginning to pick up speed; in second gear with the clutch out... so I leaned over the front seat and grabbed the gear shift and tried to slam it into first gear; smoke blew out of the transmission and now the car is swerving from side to side. And the steering wheel is uncontrollable, so I threw myself on the floor of the back seat and seconds later the car went into the steel posted cliff side of the tunnel. I got out unscathed but the driver's head was under the firewall of the passenger side and his legs were broken and he had lacerations on his face. The back seat took the weight of my forward motion body and it was angled in from the center. I dragged him out of the car which was totaled and now traffic has stopped on both sides as we were blocking the road. Some men got out of a bus and taxi and easily moved the car to the side of the road; then got back into their vehicles and left. No one wanted to help. So I shirt collared a taxi driver and told him he must take us to Kabul and I would pay whatever. But his passengers said no they couldn't be inconvenienced. For those of you unfamiliar with Afghan intercity travel—rather than take a bus 5 Afghans will split the bill and take a taxi. So now I am getting angry and said "Whoobe Musulman nahasti". You are a bad Muslim. Well that did it. ...No Afghan will take that off a foreign non believer, So we got a Cab and my driver put his head on my lap in the back seat moaning "Allah, Allah" all the way to Kabul. Our drivers were meant to do two things only: Drive and maintain the vehicle. Obviously my guy was an Enshallah kind of guy.

Back in Kabul they kept us all Food for Workers in limbo for several months...so we went to the Embassy Swimming pool and played volley ball and also baseball; pretty much played tourist in Kabul during the summer of 1973. We were a bit of a rowdy crew; split into different groups based on friendships and previous attachments to each other. A couple of Jewish NYC girls who had been on an Israeli Kibbutz became part of our group for a month or two; went to Bamiyan with Paul Bitter and myself and later to the Kabul hospital with Hepatitis where the Afghan doctors were keen to perform a full physical examination which we vetoed and instead consulted with the foreign Doctors who informed me the infection rate was 100%. Later the girls got a ride to Europe with a Frenchman who had driven over in a VW Minibus but unbeknownst to the girls had his fuel tank filled with Afghan Hash and of course the Afghan Dealer had informed his mates at the Herat border where

they were busted (required a huge bribe to return to Herat) and whilst the Tank was being removed in Herat, the Border Police had tipped off their Herat counterparts so they were busted a 2nd time for the remainder of their valuables. Some folks require the return of Che and his firing squads. Well they finally made it back to NYC, thank Moses. It was a time in the world when mostly young people were making their way from Western Europe, USA and Australia/NZ to India, Nepal, Afghanistan, the Levant and SE Asia...business was booming for the retailers and there was relative peace everywhere except of course for Vietnam and SE Asia thanks to LBJ; old men sending young men out to die. Today it's a mess in SW Asia and the Middle East and N Africa but for a brief period there was an exchange of cultures , ideas and people and we were fortunate to be part of all that.

As mentioned earlier I went with Paul Bitter and our Jewish Friends to Bamiyan to see the Giant Bhuddhas, a part of Afghan History that few Afghans would know anything about. On the bus I found it always better to sit on the roof with the luggage on the mountain side so you had a chance to jump off the roof rack on some of those hairy switchback turns with vertical falls; especially as some of the drivers would make pit stops to hit the old Hashish Hookah. Now gone, destroyed by ignorant Taliban, the Giant Buddhas exemplified the greatness of Afghanistan under the auspices of Indian Empire. Carved into the cliff face probably in the 3rd to 5th Century AD there would have been numerous Monasteries and thousands of Monks. The Great Stupa of Nagarahara outside of Jalalabad was 300 feet in height. Brian Johnson took me to a Buddhist Stupa when I visited him in Samaghan. Islam means submission and unfortunately entire histories seem to be repressed. Ask an Afghan Taxi Driver in Sydney or Melbourne or NYC about the glorious Afghan past during the Buddhist period and you will get a blank response. The Indonesians know little of their Hindu/Buddhist past, the Pakistanians...etc A pity.

Alexander died in 323. His Empire was held together by his force of will and charisma. In 321 , the Empire was finished and the Indian Emperor Chandragupta (Ashokas Grandfather) had assimilated Afghanistan into the Empire; his 60,000 Infantry, 30,000 Cavalry, 8,000 Elephants and Chariots were enough for the Macedonian General ,Seleucus, to back down. Kabul, Herat, Kandahar and Ghazni all became part of the Indian Empire.

Anyway time to go. We had a meeting, all the Food for Workers, and we were asked who wanted to leave as support for the Program had been diminished. I was the first to stick my hand up. There had been a coup d'état on 17th of July 1973 by the army commander-Daoud-who successfully ended 200 years of royal rule and King Zahir Shah (who was in Italy at the time getting eye surgery) abdicated on August 24th. So the progressives were out and any hope of transparency at any level was kaput. Daoud was a virulent anti-communist so he got a hit on the head and the Russians invaded followed by the Mujahideen, the Taliban and finally the Yanks. Who is next?

I got some severance pay (and \$5 a day was more than enough to live well in the India) and headed east to Kashmir and trekked through the Himalaya for several weeks getting fit for Nepal trekking. Kashmir was bustling with tourists; Srinagar was lovely and the Himalaya is always lovely; got to 15,000 feet on the way to Amanarth Cave. Enough, off to Nepal to catch up with some Food for Workers.

When I got to Kathmandu a whole mob of food for workers were there. Brian Johnson and young Kevin had had a crack at K2 in Pakistan and other experienced ice and snow climbers were there; also Nelson Chase, Tom Grove, Young Kevin, with the Sufi Beard, , Jim Poplock, Charlie Arnold and Glen Rogers . Every morning we would trundle off to the Pleasure Room for Breakfast, enjoy some music, fresh baked bread and whatever else was on offer, all very pleasurable I assure you; then off to the bazar to get boots, crampons, ropes...etc. We decided to take the hard way to the Everest

Base Camp along the Tibetan Border. One of the local guides said it was dangerous; a steep moraine and high altitude with no help to be had.

Well we started at 4000 ft and walked for 10-12 days sleeping in villages where we would get a roof and a meal for \$1 or so. Jim Poplock had a knack for languages so he did most of the yaking. When we got above the timber line we bought a goat from a Sherpa Family and Glen Rogers butchered it and with a few offsidars prepared a lovely roast goat meal on the outskirts of the village. The Tibetan Sherpas would wake at night and light a fire to warm the room and make a mug of Tibetan Tea in which they would add flour and salt; never got used to that. One of the Sherpas agreed to take us over the pass with his Yak so we could carry a few extra provisions. As it was we each had some museli and baked soya beans and jerky with us for the trip over the Pass. Each man carried his own gear. On the first night after departing from the village our Sherpa Guide opened the doors to a small temple and invited us to sleep inside but we had to increase his salary which we had already shook hands on and we thought that this guy was going to be trouble, wanting more and more as we continued to get higher and higher. I remember Tom Grove being particularly miffed but I doubt the chap understood the English Tom used to display his displeasure. Any way we fired him and we slept out in the open. Another day or two we reached the base of the Tesh Lapcha Pass. We had arrived on a glacier after navigating a Moraine and camped at 17,000 feet. . Tesi Lopcha (19,100 ft) was within sight but one of us was developing altitude sickness and had to be escorted quickly asap back to lower altitude. So we took a full day to discuss who was going back and who was going forward. The sun was out and we were all in our underdongs (lovely high altitude rays) but basically none of us wanted to return... a few more hours up the ridge and at the top of the pass you would see Tibet and Mt Everest in the distance. We had intentionally chosen this harder route rather than the standard tourist trek up to Everest Base camp. We were aware that a couple of guys had actually perished recently attempting the pass without the proper acclimation. One had to drink a lot of water and stay hydrated even though you weren't really thirsty. And this meant little sleep at night, just up and down peeing; sleeping on a glacier is no fun if you don't have the right gear and none of us had that gear.. So we put out boots and underwear and socks and anything else we could shove under the sleep bags to try and build up some insulation. So the discussion was at times heated as to who should go and who should stay. Brian remarked later , "Well it seems we didn't know each other for dogshit". Brian never pulled a punch. But in the end it was resolved, the sun went behind a peak and within a minute or two the temperature went from sunbathing in the raw to the water in camp freezing.

Early the next morning I got up and stuck my head out of the tent and saw Brian s head stuck out of his tent next to me. There were avalanches the previous day and now a snow storm...the snow falling horizontally, it looked ominous. . Brian said "Maybe someone is trying to tell us all something". I agreed...we all agreed and we all jumped out of our bags and broke camp and got down to lower altitudes asap. So none of us saw Tibet but as Nelson remarked, "there were lots of things to do and places to go in this wide world " and I was heading off to Goa with some of the Food for Workers.

Back to Kathmandu each at his own pace...I was the slowest being a Louisiana lad....I believe Nelson and Brian made it in record time. Charlie Arnold and I did a Meditation Course that the Tibetan Lamas put on and we happily went through the streets of Kathmandu singing the pep songs.

After Nepal a few of us went down to Goa and laid in the sun, eating seafood and tropical fruit. I headed off to Ceylon and the others dispersed all over the world. We received word from some of the Food for Workers who had gone home: "Don't come back to USA unless you have something specific in mind to do"

And in India every day you see something to blow your mind, the USA could wait.

In Delhi some months later, over a cup of coffee a WT (world traveler) told me the Aussies were handing out Permanent Residence to Blokes who knew how to do something. So down to my last \$500 (either make my way back to NYC or east to Australia) I went over in my shorts and t shirt with a beard and sandals and was interviewed. "Who are you what are you?" I was asked. " I just finished up a 18 month program in Afghanistan supervising provincial rural development programs". "Oh Yes we could use a bloke like you", and bang got my Aussie Residency on the spot.

I landed in Darwin in Sept 1974 and on Dec 25th Cyclone Tracy came through and wiped the town off the map so I moved to Perth. Where Lo and Behold I bumped into Tom Groves and Jim Hicks in Perth . Had a beer and Tom said he was going to have another crack at Tesi Lopcha, that 19,100 foot pass in Nepal that had defeated us. Later the next year I got queries from Tom's Twin Brother as to his whereabouts and I informed him as to what I knew. A bit later I heard Toms family went to Nepal and with the help of a Nepali Policeman discovered poor old Tom had been murdered for his money in a mountain village where trekkers stay overnight. Very sad and shocking news.

Australia is where I still live today. I have been prospecting since 1983 and managed to make a living out of it. Got two daughters and two grandchildren and the Yanks protect us so all is good under heaven.

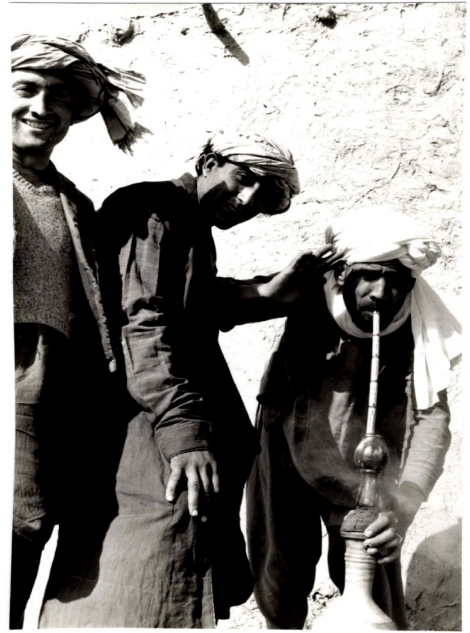
Sorry about all the exposition; I obviously read too much of Norman Mailer Waffle as a young lad.

Like to hear form the other Food for Workers now...it's been almost 50 years, what are you waiting for?

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PAUL BITTER and FRIENDS



THE BOYS
TAKE A BREAK



BEHIND THE MOSQUE — GARDEN THRIVES



SKANCHARAK WITH MY AFGHAN ASSISTANTS



THAT OLD INTERNATIONAL WITH NO BRAKES



JOHN LOOMIS AND FRIENDS

NEPAL TREKKING 1973



KEVIN & JIM
WASH DAY



GLEN & GANG CLEAN UP



BRIAN, TOM. & NELSON



TOM & BRIAN



NATIONAL PASTIME



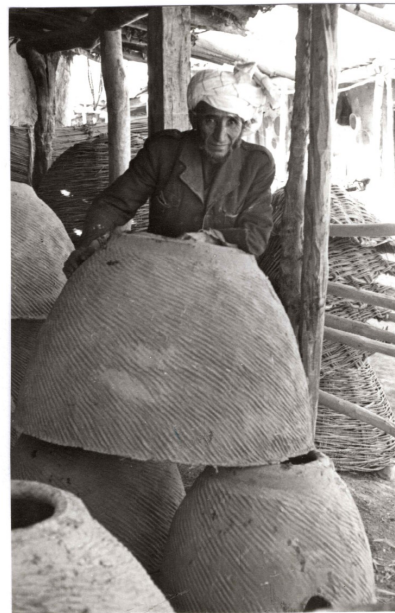
OPEN FOR BUSINESS



RUSH HOUR IN SHAHREGHAN



THE BEST MELONS ANYWHERE



BREAD OVENS
FOR SALE



*SHEBREGHAN GOLD ARTIFACTS 21,000 PRICELESS OBJECTS AT TILLYA TEPE
FROM 2000 YEARS AGO*

*IN 1972 THE AFGHANS STRUGGLED TO MAKE A BOX OF MATCHES THAT
WORKED*

Bruce Legendre 1972 –1974

Story: Memories of Years Past

Food for Work

After a year in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka & Indonesia I found myself in Australia in late 1974; got a job on an oil rig in the Timor Sea (out of Darwin) and put together some travel money then back to Indonesia , the Philippines and finally settling in South Korea/Japan for a couple of years teaching English for \$300 a month which was enough to pay the rent, eat and go dancing (the 70's Disco Period) on the US Army Base in Seoul with my Afro-American Brothers who knew how to "Party". There was a 11PM Curfew which worked out nicely; you started early and finished early.

Back to Australia in 1977 for several years then finally went back to NOLA in early 81 after a 9 year absence. There was a Recession (the early Reagan years) so back to Australia in 1983 where I have been ever since. Got involved in Gold Prospecting in Western Australia and today I still spend most of the Winter in the Goldfields looking for drill targets for anything except fossil fuels. Of course these days (Pandemic) I am locked up in Melbourne waiting for the all clear to return to WA.

Got married in 1988, 2 Daughters and 2 Grandchildren.

I try to get back to USA over the XMAS break to see my Mom (97) and Sisters who have all moved from NOLA to Colorado. Earlier this year after a lovely visit (Colorado is one of the reasons to fight for the USA), Jannine and I hopped onto a Boat in Miami and through the Panama Canal back to LA. We just got in front of the Wuhan Disaster.

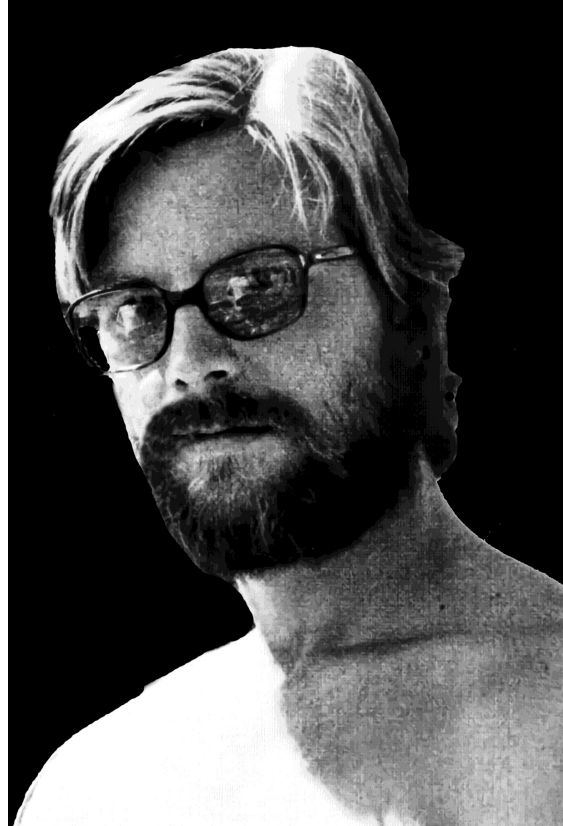
Down Under is like the Eisenhower 50's for those of you who wore coonskin caps (Davy Crocket) and watched Roy Rogers on TV. We have almost no murders and strangers still smile at each other on public streets. I grew up in NO-LA (New Orleans) where everyone had a gun under the drivers' seat and in the bedroom. Here's hoping the Yanks will sort out some reasonable gun laws one day.

Panama Canal

Completed in 1915 and not a pump is sight, all gravity operated; brilliant engineering under Teddy Roosevelt.



Bruce Legendre –1972 –1974



The Author with a rough head but a great BMI.