



Saturday my friend Chris Bosch, a first-order wood butcher, and I shingled an old Model "A" garage in the greater Knappa-Svensen area. I love fall shingling. The tang of fresh cedar shingles pulls my nose quivering into the crisp air. I feel like an old beagle set out to run foxes when I taste that cedar perfume cutting through a stand of fall-turning red alder trees.

The morning started off in hoo-hah fashion. At first light our client leapt onto the roof. Post-haste he came bumble-stumbling down the mossy roof, sashaying and two-stepping toward the eaves like Buster Keaton, crumpling like a gut-shot goose into the pucker bushes below.

Roofers have a colorful, checkery history around these parts. Jesse French, Storm Smith, Bob "The Kid" Parker (aka "The Mad Roofer"), and Ed Klever are names that come to mind. Roofers show up at jobs armed with six-packs of Colt 45 Pounders, a carton of Marlboros, and a dozen glazed donuts. They shun rain gear, drink their beer like babes guzzling mother's milk, sometimes whuck a few projectiles off the eaves to intimidate people below. Roofmen know they're job site Kings of the Mountain, cavemen with sly gar smiles. Roofers stir up the neighborhood. Roofing crews look like extras from the film cast of The Longest Yard. I love that.

One old roof shingler gave me the basic tenets lowdown years ago:

"Shinglin's simple. Butts (the thick edges) go down. Tips go up. Never line up two cracks at the same time. Nail 'em twice and forget 'em. Them's the rules."

Roofing is brutal, arduous work. Stories abound: Lee Skinner once tore shingles off a church roof in Seaside and put on a new roof, waited two weeks for the bill to be paid, pulled a fit when the check failed to arrive and removed all the new shingles. That night it rained hard. Next day the check arrived in his mailbox. Storm Smith one morning packed up a bundle of shakes on his shoulder to a roof, somersaulted backwards off the roof clutching the shakes, landed in a huge pile of rusty-nailed shingle tear-off, got up, and climbed back onto the roof. A doctor shingling his roof up the Columbia River apiece tied himself off with a rope to the ridge, slid, tangled the rope around his neck, and hung himself. Jesse French has been known to carry two bundles of shingles up a roof all by himself just to show his crew what shingling's all about.

I like this roofing story from Vic Olson: "One real thick, foggy mornin' my buddy and I were shinglin' up on Clatsop Plains. We were shinglin' along huckley-buck. Well, along about lunch time the sun come out. All of a sudden the roof caved in and the whole Mary Anne tumbled down to the ground. We'd shingled out 6 feet past the edge of the roof! That Goddam fog was so thick, them blasted shingles just sat on it! When the fog cleared away, down she flew."

Just last week some roofin' High Times transpired down our way. An O.S.H.A. official visited a rooftop job site. The young roofer tippy-toed stealthily off the roof and removed the ladder! The chagrined O.S.H.A. guy found himself stranded on top of the roof!

Chris and I had a great day in Svensen. We listened to Townes Van Zandt, Steve Earle, and Guy Clark, great roofing music, indeed. We told stories and conjured old friends. We discussed the ins and outs of shingling.

I believe in hand nailing cedar shingles using galvanized shingle nails. Stapling shingles with an air gun on a roof is for mama's boys. A guy who would staple shingles probably eats Garden Burgers, drinks lattes, and drives a BMW.

I love busting out my Grandpa's old Plumb shingling hatchet. I have affixed at least a million cedar shingles with that beauty. The handle is faired and spoke-shaved to a slim profile, a fire-cured hickory wonder. I know every knick in its blade, each grain in the sweat-cured handle. A cunning little gauge measures the shingle course length.

With a square of #1, straight grain, pencil-grade red cedar shingles and that hatchet, a day of roof shingling is a sweet experience. Throw in a little sunshine, a farm-house lunch, a good friend, and a man feels like God pasting feathers on a duck's back. Whoeeee! Ain't life grand, boys?

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The first party was out on Hamlet Road. Larry was living out there at the time and had a nice piece of property. "At first we wanted to do it Hawaiian style but decided it would be a lot easier to get burlap sacks than banana leaves, so we did it medieval style. I remember being scared shitless that it wouldn't be done cause it was the first year and we'd never done it before" (Peters, Larry). It was originally called The Pig in the Pit Party, but the name has since been shortened. It's a pig roast and this is the general procedure for cooking a whole pig:

First you need a lot of wood, more than a cord. The gathering is being done all year now, but the first year at my house I got the wood off of my property. Dig a pit four feet deep, maybe 6x4, get a fire going and burn it really hot so you get a nice bed of coals. Then we rub the inside of the pig with rock salt and garlic, put in the other meats and sew it up with dental floss. Wrap it in a sheet that's been soaking in wine, then in burlap and then in chicken wire so it's easy to remove from the pit. Find a big spruce limb and lower it into the pit. Lay down sheet metal, this protects from dirt and helps create an oven effect. Cover with dirt and cook for about 16 hours. (Peters, Larry)

The party has grown every year. The first year there was no live music, just some pork and a potluck. The second year they had the Reverend Gary Small and the Deacons. The third year was moved to Nehalem, and some local artists, Richard Cranium and the Phoreheads jammed on, and onto, the porch of Dean Bonde's house. The fourth year they had an actual stage for the performers, and there were three bands: Bond Street Blues Band, Kid Siegel and The Money-makers, and The Crackpots.

This year was the best yet, three bands, plentiful supplies of pork, a sweat lodge, gorgeous weather and close to 200 people. This was the first year where a system of contribution was established. You could buy a button with the party logo for \$15, in this way contributing to the cost of the pig, the bands, and the food. There were iron-on patches of the official emblem and, in the words of Darrin, "It was pretty cool to parade our dinner around town" (Peters, Darrin). Yes, this year the pig was displayed in the 4th of July parade in Cannon Beach. A cage was built and put in the back of a flat bed truck with some hay bales and Turpentine Willy, (the pig), replete with his own princess, got to meet the town. I remember Darrin saying that it was probably the first time a pig was going to return to Reed and Hertig after being taken away.

"The pig is grown in our community. It's fed on spent grain that's left over after beer is brewed at Bill's tavern, raised at a local farm until it's big enough, and then slaughtered at Reed and Hertig," (Peters, Darrin). It's always a lot of work for the person who owns the property where the gathering takes place, and after the third year in Nehalem The Pig Party will have a new locale next year. However, the sense of community will not have change.

"When we celebrate, we reaffirm certain values and ideals which give meaning to our lives...the positive social effects of celebrating may be a major force which holds a community together" (Jones 82). Hopefully the party will go on for years to come, but in the words of Kirk Anderson, "If things are good, they get too good and they're not fun anymore" (Anderson). So, we'll try to keep our heads about us and not let things get too out of control and as long as the party goes on, I'll always return. Part of me will always be here on the coast and the Pig Party will always remind me of home.

From the Lower Left Corner

Victoria Stoppello

War Between Evil

Mr. Bin Laden, I've been thinking about you ever since September 11. I believe there's something that connects us all as human beings, and I've been struggling to understand your values, motives, and actions. I've read that you have strong fundamentalist religious views. You have good company in the US. Many people who feel "my country right or wrong" bolster their position with the belief that God has chosen their particular brand of faith as the one, true path. I can understand your anger with the hypocrisy in the Muslim world, but like our fundamentalists, you seem to use a very special reading of your sacred texts.

I read fairly widely and my mind is open to alternative perspectives, so I'm aware of the things the US government has done that have brought great hardship to people in the Muslim world, especially the Middle East. When I was offered a job in Israel 30 years ago, I was warned that as a non-Jew, I'd have few civil rights. So I've been aware that Palestinians have few rights there, but didn't do anything about it, not even write my congressman.

I've also been aware of the great disparity in wealth in most of the world. A college acquaintance once referred to Mexican villagers as poor but happy. I viewed this as a rationalization for the fact that less than 10% of the population of Mexico controls 90% of the wealth, yet again I did nothing. These numbers probably apply to most Muslim countries as well.

Because I worked with students from the Middle East in the early seventies, I learned that a system of higher education was poorly developed in those countries. If you had talent and wanted to serve your society, your best option was to go abroad for an education. I enjoyed first hand exposure to people from fascinating cultures, never thinking about the long term consequences of enabling other governments to neglect the educational needs of their populations.

I've been aware that the US government, my government, was a major behind-the-scenes player in the overthrow of democratically elected leaders who didn't want their countries remaining de facto colonies. The most telling example was the CIA's role in the assassination of Salvador Allende in Chile, probably because US-based copper companies wanted to continue controlling Chile's copper.

I've never lived in a colonial condition, unless you count the big timber corporations owning the majority of land in the Oregon county where I grew up. However, in the US we have many compensations. Unlike people elsewhere, I don't have to worry that a family member will disappear because he was acquainted with the "wrong" people, or made a critical remark at the wrong time.

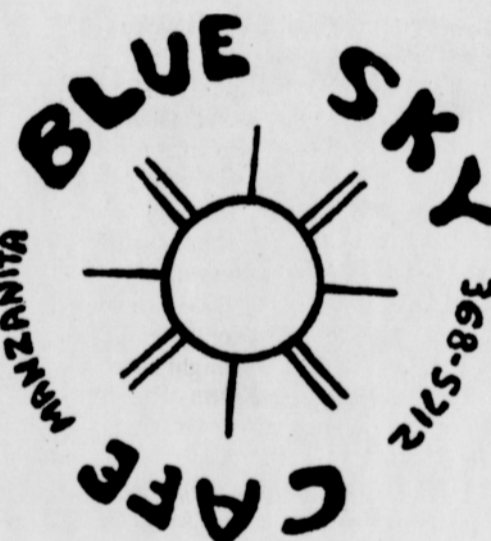
We in the US believe we don't have a secret police, but of course, we have the FBI, the CIA, and the NSA, agencies which have budget items even unknown to Congress. But again, I don't know all they really do, and haven't bothered to find out. I know our press ignores a lot of things. I just found out the trial involving the FBI bombing Judy Bari's car is about to begin. Ms. Bari was accused of being an eco-terrorist because she spoke at rallies bringing together mill workers and environmentalists. A bomb went off in her car and the FBI said she did it to herself...but other facts came out later. It appears that when you go up against big corporations anywhere in the world, you'll come under the scrutiny, and maybe attack, of various arms of the US government.

Which brings me to the objects of your attack, or I should say, the attack you inspired, for it's quite possible that this is all the result of a Pandora's box you opened: the forces are out, and you can't get them back even if you wanted. Your adherents destroyed the WTC and damaged the Pentagon, two symbols of America which do not represent my values. I'm very sad about the people who died, but the activities taking place on the upper floors of the WTC are foreign to me. In fact, they're probably more foreign to me than to you; after all, you're the millionaire, not me. You're the person who was raised in wealth and privilege, not me. A lot of people killed were janitors, clerks, delivery boys and firefighters, not the power mongers of US capitalism.

You may think you're involved in a holy war that you hope will bring millions of converts to your cause while destabilizing the flow of oil from the Middle East, but it looks more like a vendetta to me. After all, only a short time ago, President Reagan described you in a photo op as a "freedom fighter" akin to the founders of the American Revolution. Maybe this is all about unrealized expectations, wounded ego, and losing a good-paying job with the CIA—and the thousands who died on Sept. 11 were like unlucky bystanders at a mid-town restaurant with checkered tablecloths.

Victoria Stoppello writes from Ilwaco, at the lower left corner of Washington State.

Unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us. - Woodrow Wilson



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