

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

The Twelve Anchors

Part I - Never doubt the tenacity, dedication and loyalty of our wonderful American women! Lt. Cdr. Laura M. Cobb left us to go Home to our Supreme Commander on September 27, 1981. After researching her history, I think it would have been a blessing to have met and known her. Laura Mae Cobb of our United States Navy Nurse Corps served during World War II. She received numerous decorations for her actions during the defense of Manila and her 37 months as a POW of the Japanese, during which she continued to serve as Chief Nurse for eleven other imprisoned Navy nurses, the "Twelve Anchors". These military nurses during this action were often referred to as the "Angels of Bataan".

Laura Mae was born in Atchison, KS, May 11, 1892, moving to Mulvane, KS shortly after her birth. Graduating high school in Wichita, she taught school briefly before going to nurse training program at Wesley Hospital in 1915 and graduated in 1918.

Cobb then joined the US Navy as a nurse that same year. She served in the Navy until 1921 and at the Canacao Naval Hospital in Manila at the end of World War I.

She then went to work in civilian hospitals in Iowa and Michigan for the next three years. In 1924 she returned to the Navy working in several Naval hospitals to include Washington, D.C. for ten years.

Cobb requested overseas duty and in April of 1940 she was transferred to Guam and while there she received a commendation for "continuous duty for forty-eight hours, during which she repeatedly risked life and limb in her efforts to insure the safety and comfort of the patients" during the typhoon of November 3, 1940. February, 1941 she returned to the Philippines as the Chief Nurse at Canacao Naval Hospital in Manila. When the Japanese attacked the Cavite Navy Yard on December 10, 1941, Cobb and eleven other navy nurses remained with the wounded in Manila until the US Military there surrendered to the Japanese on January 2, 1942.

She and the other nurses were housed with US Army nurses who had also been captured at Corregidor. The were housed at the Santo Tomas school in Manila for the duration of the war along with a great many Allied citizens who had been imprisoned. The nurses ran a makeshift hospital there for the civilian detainees, suffering the same deprivations as the other prisoners. They were liberated by United States Army forces in February 1945.

Laura Mae Cobb received the following known decorations for her valiant service during World War II: Bronze Star Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, POW Medal, American Defense Medal with star, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two bronze campaign stars, WWI Victory Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Presidential Unit Citations with gold star, Philippine Defense Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal with two bronze campaign stars, Philippine Independence Medal, Philippine Presidential Unit Citation.

Next week: How she earned these awards.



"Concerns over COVID has shut down the whole country, but it sure hasn't slowed down the political bickering!"

The Veterans' Corner Scott Drummond USCG Veteran



Collateral Damage

I have lived and worked in all of Georgia's regions and every one of them was home to good people and bad. I'm convinced that the more you travel, the more you discover that no city, state or region, and no country on earth, has a monopoly on the good or the bad, the ignorant or the sophisticated.

Some of my best Georgia memories were formed in the coastal plain, and some of the best people I've ever known lived there. As director of operations of an outdoor experiential education program, I was sent to South Georgia to set up a base for mounting out river trips for adjudicated youth.

For several years we were guests of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources at their facility on the Horse Creek Wildlife Management Area, which sits on 8000 acres along the Ocmulgee River between Lumber City and Jacksonville, Georgia. From that location we supported canoe trips of over 300 miles down the winding brackish waters of the Ocmulgee and Altamaha Rivers to the coastal town of Darien, Georgia, not far from Brunswick. We carried motley crews of teenage boys, black, white and brown, and all with criminal records, down that river corridor. No one was more motley than the staff who worked with us, young men and women from all over the country, of every color, race, creed and religion.

No matter how presentable you are at the beginning of a month-long river expedition, in an amazingly short period of time you look and smell like someone who lives in an alley in a cardboard box. I'm telling you this to make a point. We had many adventures, hardships and triumphs, and all along the way we were dependent on the good will and support of little towns like Hawkinsville, Abbeville, Jacksonville, Lumber City, Hazlehurst, Baxley, Jesup and Darien.

We worked closely with the police and sheriff's departments in the areas where we traveled, and some of those departments volunteered time to spend with the boys, and they always had our backs in an emergency. We were often overwhelmed by the generosity of local citizens and businesses and churches that donated food and supplies. There were simply too many examples of generosity, support and compassion from the little Georgia towns of our travels to be listed here, but one good example of the kind of support we received happened when the river flooded and a canoe capsized near Hawkinsville, GA one February. After rescuing the two boys and mitigating against hypothermia, we had to make an emergency landing at the first campsite we could find that wasn't underwater. The next day volunteers from Hawkinsville risked their own safety to come upriver in their personal boats to escort our group down a rising river that had escaped its banks. It's not pertinent to the story of generosity and compassion, but for the purposes of this discussion, I want you to picture the scene when a group of "bubbas," the iconic white southerners that the media is so fond of portraying, went out of their way to rescue a bunch of black teenagers and a group of river rats.

We talked a lot about race in our programs. Racism was something that most of the kids had either experienced or practiced at one time or another, and we knew that for many of our graduates it would be an issue when they returned home to start a new life. If it did happen again, we hoped there would be a difference, and that difference would be in the awareness that things like racism and prejudice are exceptions and not rules.

Most of our adjudicated kids had learned to see themselves as victims, victims of our culture, of the system, of their family life or lack of it. Victims don't need to bother making better decisions because the deck is always stacked against them. We tried to teach them to begin rebuilding their lives with the knowledge that every choice has a consequence, and if you want a better life, you must make better choices.

Politics has always depended heavily on victims. If you can convince any group of people, black, white or brown, that the deck is stacked against them, they are easier to manipulate. Outrage gets votes, and tragedy is an opportunity to groom outrage. The theme has been repeated throughout history ad nauseum. We grieve for the family of the young man slain recently in Brunswick, GA. It was a tragic and senseless killing and it appears that justice was reluctant to appear. We have no intention of detracting from its import, however, when we acknowledge all the other tragic, senseless and hateful killings that did not make the national news.

In the month of April, there were 52 murders in Chicago. The political narrative did not choose to remind us again and again of that tragedy. No one commented on the race of any of the victims or the racial motivations of the perpetrators. No headlines shouted, "Hunted and Killed in Illinois." A purely factual headline might have reported a man shot in Brunswick, GA. A tragedy used to groom outrage for profit or political gain, however, reports that a black man was hunted and lynched in "Georgia." There is no denying that racism still exists in this country and, in fact, all over the world. If every human on earth was the same race and identical shade of blue, we would still invent ways to divide ourselves. This, however, is no excuse.

When injustice occurs, we should speak out without hesitation. Too often, however, our pixelated "outrage" is a signal of both our own virtue and our capitulation to the political narrative that has been created. Nevertheless, to capitalize on a tragedy in order to groom outrage is unconscionable. To promote the continued fracturing of the public into red versus blue and to attempt to paint a political party, a region or a state with the broad brush of "racist" for political gain is unconscionable. This time it's the left, but the right has done the same many times as well, and the pendulum swings.

I wanted to share a story from the Georgia I know to stand as a counterpoint to the narrative that has been created out of a tragedy for political gain. Many of you know that same Georgia and prefer that the reputation of our state not suffer any more collateral damage in another endless election cycle.

The Middle Path By: Don Perry onthemiddlepath.com

COVID-19 and Agriculture

COVID-19 has disrupted our lives and caused a change in the way we go about our lives. Today I want to talk about the impact that it is having on agriculture. Every one of us must eat, making agriculture one of the most important sectors of our economy. Agriculture is the number one industry in Georgia. It contributes over \$70 billion dollars to Georgia's economy annually. One in 7 Georgians work in agriculture, forestry, or a related field. COVID-19 has certainly disrupted supply chains and affected the way that agriculture operates.

Farmers are still hard at work. COVID-19 has not changed that. And as long as people need to eat, farmers will continue to be hard at work to meet that need. What has been changed is the supply chains to get food from farmers to your plate. Over the years, Americans have become more and more removed from the farmer that puts food on their plate. To meet the increased demand for food, complex systems to get the food from farmer to plate have arisen. I'll try to explain some of these food chains, and what you can do in response.

The meat industry has been hit hard, as you can tell from what's available on the shelves at the grocery store. Most meat goes through a handful of processing plants. If one of those plants has to close due to infection that has a cascading effect on the availability throughout the country. There is also an effect on the farmers because, the product that they had planned to ship may not have anywhere to go if the processor has shut down. Holding onto livestock longer means more costs for a farmer to feed. Distribution centers for produce may be forced to temporarily shut down if they have personnel with COVID-19. These shutdowns can also create a cascading effect throughout the country.

You have probably seen stories of farmers dumping milk or other products. That's because there has been a major shift in where Americans purchase agricultural products. Products are still being produced, but the demand to bring products to schools, hotels, restaurants, and other places has been reduced or eliminated. That means in some cases, the product has to be disposed of at a loss.

So, what can we do? Unfortunately, in the imperfect world that we live in, there are no perfect answers. Grocery stores will continue to have produce and meat, but not in the quantity that we have grown accustomed to. The best thing that you can do is to buy locally or regionally grown/raised as much as possible. Talk with your family and neighbors about buying an animal 'on the hoof' and taking it to a local processor. Some of our local farmers have stores at their farm. That way you can buy directly from the farmer, and have fresh products. Shop at the Farmers Market. Products sold at the farmers market come straight from the farm. You can also start your own garden. If you have questions about how to do that, ask me. There are few things more rewarding than eating produce that you have grown. If you have questions about where to find local agricultural products contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Watching and Working Jacob Williams



Letters to The Editor

Overreach

Dear Editor, For all you folks out there who feel the burden of government overreach these days, imagine what the power hungry bureaucrats have in mind if "climate change" regulations are enacted! Your everyday lives will be highly regulated, your small businesses will be subject to the whims of a D.C. policy wonk, and your personal freedoms will surely be eroded... and it won't be just temporary! Just something to ponder during these crazy times; don't fall for the hoax! Kevin P. Cannon

An Imperfect Science

Dear Editor, In response to a recent letter titled "Should We Listen to Science" the question is - "Which scientist?" As we have learned with the scientific modeling during this coronavirus pandemic, modeling is an imperfect science. There is so much that goes into these prognosticator's guesses. What is the source of the data, which selective data is inputted, how much data is gathered, is the data reliable, and how many years is the modeling done? All of this can be skewed to come up with a desired result. In regards to climate change, another question is: who is paying the scientists? Are they paid by our liberal universities? Are they paid by our liberal bureaucracy? This all factors into the results that our resident climate change alarmist uses to scare the readers into believing that hundreds of thousands of innocent people will die due to climate change. His scare tactic is also supported by expert scientists such as Al Gore, John Kerry, Robert De Niro, Jane Fonda, and the new rising star, 17 year old expert Greta Thunberg. All of this is supported by our willing left-wing media and politicians.

The answer to your question is "NO," we should not listen to these scientists. Bill Scott

The Mask-Shamers

Dear Editor, Wearing masks in public is not a silver bullet against getting coronavirus. When the issue of masks first arose, health experts worried that people would develop a false sense of security about wearing them. They'd feel invulnerable and not take other precautions such as social distancing and washing their hands frequently. What they didn't count on was the "busybody factor." Give someone an opportunity to feel more virtuous than their neighbor and they'll grab it every time. It has become entertainment these days to express one's moral superiority by calling out fellow citizens for failing to wear a mask when going to the grocery store. It is true that masks will protect against inhaling droplets that are expelled when someone coughs or sneezes. But it won't protect you from the coronavirus if it's airborne or lying on a surface that you touch. The virus can easily penetrate between the fibers of any mask and no one can do much of anything about surface contact with the virus. So mask-shamers beware. You have absolutely no standing - moral or otherwise - to defame those who are not wearing masks. Tim Groza

Pandemic Dietary Deviation

EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT! A Masked Brawl erupted in the toilet paper aisle at the local Ingles Grocery." I half expected such a headline to usurp this column a few weeks ago. Thank goodness it didn't.

For many years band members of The Eagles avowed they'd never, ever reunite for a concert. Maybe old wounds healed or money ran low or maybe both but their first comeback concert tour was titled "Hell Froze Over". John and I partook of what has come to be known at our house as the "Hell Froze Over Meal." Sensing a possible fresh meat shortage, John was advised it would be in his best interest to expand and hone his palate.

With a hunk of animal flesh, French fries and perhaps chopped iceberg lettuce with 1/2 bottle of Thousand Island, eaten only because he was told he needed something green, he was a slop-happy porcine. Easy to feed but a big yawn for which to cook. Yes John, french fries are technically veggies.

I'll take to my grave how I persuaded him to at least try butternut squash. The surprised expression on John's face was much as the grin on Mikey's face upon discovering he did in fact like Life Cereal. Hey, Johnny likes butternut squash. Well, in for a penny, in for a pound. I tried patties made from canned salmon on the unsuspecting little darling (John, not Mikey). Served with corn and green peas, John declared the meal a hit. "Next time we have this, let's try that tomato gravy with it." John had rendered me speechless. No small feat.

If you've never had Old-School Tomato Gravy, don't scoff at it. It's an old Appalachian recipe and it is indeed delicious with salmon patties and hot biscuits.

Health, Happiness, Hope around Towns.

Around Towns Dale Harman



GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

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