

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Swim Call

...Aboard USCGC Kimball: Submitted by Ron W, USCG: We share one of the most amazing events many

**The Veterans' Corner**  
**Scott Drummond**  
 USCG Veteran



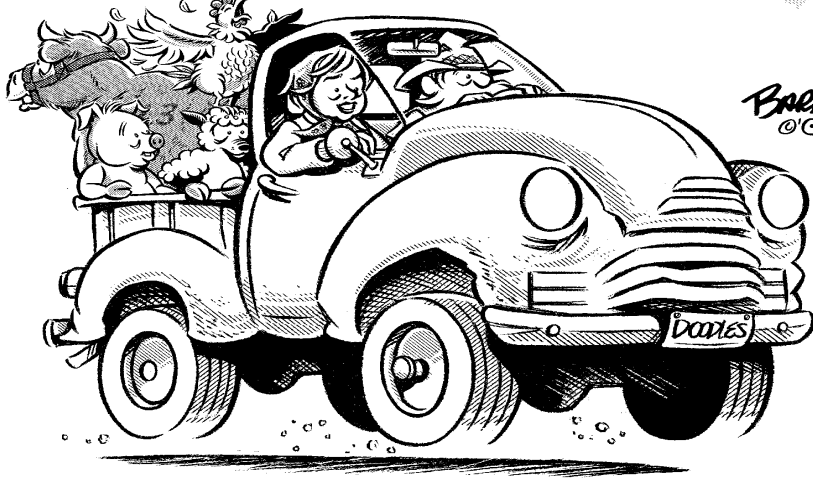
of us have ever experienced at sea: Completed operations for the day, no vessels around for miles, weather was perfect, we were a zillion miles from land. We had not been off the ship for weeks, were at that point where every day feels like "Groundhog Day," and were looking for something to break up the monotony. Swim Call! We had a fully vetted and tested plan we've used before, conducted safety briefs, established communications between various stations, launched our small boat with extra crew and a dressed out swimmer and stationed 50 yards off the ship, set an armed shark watch, opened and manned the Rescue Station, and put an accountability system in place. It was perfect! THEN! Bridge personnel reported "Shark!" over the radio. Right out of a Hollywood movie, a 6-8 foot shark surfaced at the Rescue Door, swimming toward 30-40 people in the water about 30 feet away. Everyone on the Flight Deck had a bird's eye view. A review of video shot by a crew member reveals it was likely a Long-Fin Mako or Pelagic Thresher Shark.

ME1 Cintron, our shark watch, was on the Flight Deck and immediately locked on target...literally! Our animal-lover Chief who wants to save every animal she finds yelled "Shoot it!" While some crew went for the Jacob's ladder on the Fantail, others went for the open stern notch at the ship's stern, and a large group swam for the small boat. ME1 Cintron fired a well-aimed burst right at/on top of the shark to protect shipmates just feet away. It turned away for a few seconds then turned back. We kept directing people out of the water while keeping a clear line of sight on the shark. ME1 fired bursts as needed to keep the shark from his shipmates with amazing accuracy. The shark would wave off with each burst but kept coming back toward our shipmates. No panic like the 4th of July scene from JAWS, everyone realized what was happening, they moved with a purpose! Everyone stayed focused and worked the problem. The small boat quickly looked like a vessel overloaded with SAR survivors. Others threw heaving lines to shipmates in the water and helped them aboard via the stern notch. The only injury was a small scrape OS3 Berk suffered while climbing aboard, scraping his opened jaw shark's teeth jaw tattooed knee!

We have hundreds of years at sea between all of us and no one has seen or heard of a shark actually showing up during a swim call. This goes to show why we prepare for any and everything. We just didn't think it would be a swim call shark attack! BRAVO ZULU to ME1 Cintron who likely saved one or more of his shipmates from a shark attack!! It was a team effort with everyone doing their part to work the problem. This is a sea story each of us will be retelling for YEARS!

*Semper Paratus*

**IF LIFE'S COMIN' AT YA FROM EVERY SIDE, AN' IT'S MORE THAN YOU CAN BEAR—DON'T BE FLUSTER'D, DON'T YA FRET, GET THEE TOTH' FAIR!**



## Dull as a Fro

Science fiction has always adumbrated science fact, and in the 21st century the gap between the two is narrow. Medical technology saves lives that would have been lost even a decade ago.

Automobile engines run 100 thousand miles without a major repair.

We tinker with the very source code of our human operating system and peer into what we believe are the fundamental building blocks of reality, at least until we discover something even more fundamental.

Yet every time I walk into places like the old Sautee Store down in the Nacoochee Valley, I have to wonder whether we took a wrong turn somewhere on the path that brought us to this time of fear and confusion.

The student of history will remind me that humanity has a long resume of the same; of war and famine and pestilence, of climate change and mass migration, of tyrants and barbarians, horror and death in times when it was rare to live more than 40 years.

But for me, the period of time during which the Sautee Store and others like it thrived represents an optimum period in the history of our technology.

The store began operation in 1872, and it was in its heyday during one of those bubbles of peace and prosperity, relatively speaking, that the US enjoyed between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of WWI as the industrial age literally gathered steam. It was a locally owned business that served the needs of the community, both physically and socially. Just about every community in Georgia had a store like this, and many survived until the age of information and outsourcing and big box stores took the life from them.

We like to visit the Sautee store every year or so to recharge the memories.

The old part of the store hasn't changed much since I was a kid begging my mom for change to put in the nickelodeon. There are brands on the shelves there today that I remember seeing in my grandparents' attic, and some of the farm tools in the store are almost identical to the "antiques" the grandparents were still using when I would help out in the garden.

No, I'm not that old, but my grandparents' generation saw no need to buy a new manufactured tool when they could continue to maintain something hand forged and of proven reliability.

For me the time when this store and others like it were in their prime was an optimum period in the history of our technology.

Just about everything in those stores was something you could understand, or repair, or make yourself.

Human nature doesn't change, but in retrospect it seems that when this brief bubble in time popped with the onset of World War One, greed and war got a firm grip on the reins as the driving force behind technological advance. Our maturity and integrity have always lagged behind, but at the end of this period, science and technology ran far ahead, and continue to do so.

Now our entire economy is geared to condition us to consume more stuff. We replace instead of repair, and our gizmos are so complicated that even the experts only understand parts of them.

You can't even work on your own tractor because its full of "intellectual property," and our refrigerators spy on us and conspire to get us to buy more things.

And war? A glance at some of the recent pictures of the Taliban occupying Kabul should put things in perspective for Americans addicted to our distractions. Witness a Stone Age culture armed with modern weapons at the end of two decades of blood and treasure poured into pounded rubble. The payoff? Defense stocks continue to thrive, and our bad chess players played at thwarting Russia and then China in a game where they were never in danger of suffering the consequences of their mistakes.

Our empire builders could have learned a lesson or two from the Romans, who extracted tribute from their conquests, and consolidated their gains in ways that actually benefited Roman citizens.

Compare this to our own oligarchy in its "nation building," which was always a cover for other intentions. If our oligarchs truly cared about humanity, imagine the "nation building" that might have helped Haiti on our own doorstep at a fraction of the cost - Haiti, pounded into rubble by nature much more efficiently than by bombs, though without any profits for American defense contractors.

It's right there in front of us - no, not the tragedy in Haiti, which is on the back page behind Britney Spears' latest struggle, but the end of the game in Afghanistan. It's the next political football between the republicans who started it, the democrats who continued it and the president who fumbled in the end zone.

The ruse stretches out behind us at least as far as the "nation building" war in Vietnam.

But we're too distracted, too divided to see it, distracted by our desires and enraged by the politics of pandemic, pigment and pronouns.

Distracted? Perhaps I'm being kind. We're too dull. "Dull as a fro," my dad used to say before I learned to sharpen a knife properly.

Dull as the fro that hangs on the wall at the Old Sautee Store. Dull as a tool designed, not for sharpness or finesse, but for brute force division.

**Outside The Box**  
 By: Don Perry  
[worldoutsidethebox.com](http://worldoutsidethebox.com)

## Fire Blight

Many folks have apple trees in their yard, and they are a great addition to any landscape. They have beautiful flowers in the spring, and then in the late summer you can pick the apples or let them feed wildlife. One of the biggest diseases that people have on apple trees is fire blight. This disease can spread rapidly through your apple trees. This year I have seen more of it around than normal. So let's talk about fire blight and what you can do to prevent it from taking over your trees.

**Watching and Working**  
**Jacob Williams**



Fire blight is a bacterial disease, which separates it from many of the other diseases that we see which are fungal. The scientific name of the bacteria that causes fire blight is *Erwinia amylovora*. You will see the effects of it on blossoms, leaves, shoots, branches, fruits, and roots. It can affect other plants in the rose

family. This includes pears, plums, cherries, and spirea among others. These plants are not as common, so they don't get as much attention. A unique example is Bradford pears. They have some natural resistance, but they still can get fire blight.

Fire blight will normally enter the tree during bloom through the blossoms. Once it gets into the current season's growth, it will move into older growth. Some of the symptoms that you'll see are blighted twigs that have become water soaked. Young twigs, branches, and leaves will die at the end and look like they have been burned. The branches may bend at the end forming a shepherd's crook. The dead leaves remain on the branches.

Once an apple tree is infected with fire blight, it will spread throughout the tree. It is spread from infected trees to healthy trees by rain, wind, or contaminated pruning tools. It can overwinter in the tree and cause an ooze out of cankers in the spring. That ooze will attract insect that carry the fire blight to other trees.

If left untreated fire blight will kill an apple tree. So what can you do about it? The first step is to prune out infected growth during the spring and summer. Cut the infected branches out 8 inches below where the damage is. Dip your pruning tools in a 10% bleach solution between each cut to avoid spreading the pathogen. It is also important to spray your apple trees every 7-10 days with either copper hydroxide or streptomycin when leaves begin to emerge through bloom. Copper hydroxide can start to burn leaves as they get larger. Sprays are not 100% effective especially if you have a warm wet spring. Avoiding heavy nitrogen fertilization will help reduce infection during the summer.

Finally, plant apple varieties that have natural resistance to fire blight to ease the challenge. A couple of varieties that have natural resistance are Arkansas Black, Golden Delicious, Liberty, Yates, and Winesap. A few varieties that are highly susceptible to fire blight are Fuji, Gala, Granny Smith, Pink Lady, and Empire.

If you have questions about fire blight contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

## Perspective

"What a stunning dress you're wearing. Is it a Ralph Lauren?" Would the international fashion designer and abundantly rich man have had the eminent acclaim and success had he used his given birth name, Ralph Lifshitz? His talent and drive would have been the same but, "Are you wearing an original Lifshitz?" might not have had quite the same ring as "Are you wearing an original Lauren". The dress my friend was asked about was not from The House of Lauren but it did her justice and she returned the favor. They were both stunning. How she came by the dress and how many clams were shelled out for it, is one of those take-it-to-the-grave secrets.

Picture it. London, 1922, Mr. Izod, an exceptional, detail-oriented tailor with a love and appreciation of fine fabric, set up a clothier shop. His uncompromising workmanship and eye for exquisite design so impressed Edward, Prince of Wales, that in 1930 he commissioned the tailor as the Royal household shirt maker. David Crystal, an American yank, procured the Izod brand name and across the pond it sailed. Over the years mass produced polo-stye shirts, now mid priced, bearing the Izod logo and layered coloring, became the rage for male highschool hotties and jocks. Never mind that button holes weren't bound so as never to ravel as they once were, a guy could "pop those collars", sport an ad on the pocket and feel like a king. Besides. chicks loved a man in an Izod.

Cheerleaders and the entire preppy crowd carried prize possessions and a quarter for a phone call, in John Romaine hand bags. These all leather purses were well made, fashionable and anybody who was somebody owned at least one. As mainstream demand and production increased the quality and price lessened ever so slightly as did the prestige. After all, who wants an item that many can now afford?

Most people want to blend with their contemporaries. (Sort of like homogenized milk) and I was no exception when I was younger. Age has given different outlooks. When bell bottom pants were popular, I wore them (Authentic Liz Clairborne) to be cool. They did not enhance my less than tall stature. It looked like I was walking on my knees. By the time hip huggar pants were being worn by everyone from ministers to dog groomers, I knew not to try it. Now how should I say this? My deed didn't come with enough real estate between the low waist and remaining descent. In fact I could make a plumber envious.

These days it doesn't matter if my clothes are labeled from The J. Edgar Hoover Collection or Big Bird's Spring Creations. Just tell me if it comes in petite.

See You Around Towns!

**Around Towns**



**Dale Harmon**

## Letters to The Editor

### Re: The Black National Anthem

Dear Editor,  
 "Lift Every Voice and Sing," widely recognized as the "Black National Anthem," was written over 120 years ago by James Weldon Johnson.

The NFL has announced it will play the Black National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," before each game in the 2021-22 season as part of a \$250 million investment towards social justice.

The league will also continue many of the social justice initiatives implemented last season, including featuring messages of antiracism and unity on helmets and the field, and communicating to fans through signage and public service announcements, per reports by Front Office Sports.

We have not had liberty and justice for all. Blacks were brought here to be slaves and have NEVER been treated as equals. We, as a nation, must go the extra mile and make things right. That is social justice. This anthem is doing something extra for them, not "dividing the country" as you accused. We do not have "liberty and justice for all." We are already as divided and as full of hate as I, at 75 years old, have ever witnessed. This is part of an attempt of many to do the right thing and bring us all together!

**Jim Grazias**

### Mixed Messages from the Government

Dear Editor,  
 So you've got the vaccine because the government told you to get it or forced you to get it. Joe Biden even told us it was our patriotic duty to take it to protect yourself and to protect others. And now even after you get the shot the surgeon general is telling us to mask up, even when outdoors. This latest message marks a stark reversal from May when the CDC said fully vaccinated individuals could ditch the masks and get back to life as normal. Why the mixed messages? Because, we are told, people taking those experimental vaccines are now coming down with the covid virus. Some are getting very sick and even dying. In some countries with high vaccination rates they are seeing big spikes in covid cases. According to the CDC, three quarters of the new covid cases in Massachusetts had already been vaccinated. Now we know that virtually everything the government told us about the covid vaccine was wrong. And we are told to "follow the science" which seems to change every day. If the Biden administration would have admitted early on that the vaccine was not adequate to stem the tide of infections we would be much better off right now. Most of us know that medicine can be complicated and we can handle the truth. What we can't handle is to be lied to relentlessly and shamed if we ask questions.

On July 8th Dr. Fauci was asked if the vaccines would work against the Delta variant and he pretended to know what he did not know. The answer he gave was "yes it does." So now they are punishing us for the disaster they made by mandating the wearing of masks everywhere we go. And the CDC is now considering lockdowns and the delaying of school openings. How many times will the government get it wrong before we stop respecting their recommendations. The lockdowns are not the answer to a failing vaccine. And we know that forced masking has hurt kids and damaged society.

This is crazy. How long will Americans put up with this?

**Tim Groza**

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