



The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter *October 2022*

Open Invitation – if you volunteer in St. Augustine, we'd love to have you join us in Palatka, and if you volunteer in Palatka, we'd love to have you join us in St. Augustine.

Upcoming Epic-Cure Events and Fundraisers

Please mark your calendars.

904 Now & Urban Asado Masters of Fire

October 16, 2022

Tickets available at www.asadolife.com.

They have an ensemble cast of Northeast Florida's finest chefs.

The Second Annual Epic-Cure Golf Classic

October 17, 2022

The Ponte Vedra Inn & Club – Ocean Course

Dinner and Open Bar Reception follows at the Surf Club Patio

200 Ponte Vedra Blvd, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

www.birdease.com/EpicCureGolf

**** If any local businesses would like to donate an item to our silent auction, please contact cheri.clark@epic-cure.org. ****

Amazon Smile and Epic-Cure: If you are an Amazon shopper and do not have a charity you are supporting with your purchases, please consider choosing Epic-Cure and login to Smile.Amazon.com when shopping. One percent (1%) of all purchases goes to support the charity you choose.

Open House Happy Hour: Tuesday 10/25 from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm at the St. Augustine warehouse. More to come on that soon.

Volunteer Appreciation Costume Party: Sunday 10/30 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Palatka warehouse. Please rsvp to support@epic-cure.org.



Operations

It has been a long time in the works, but our three freezers in Palatka are operational. Their operation increases our cold storage capacity by 22,500 cubic feet. That translates to 72 pallets (144 if stacked 2 high).

With our two generators coming online in October, we will be a fully functional emergency management food bank. As we grow into our capacity in the Palatka warehouse, we transition into being both a food bank and food pantry. A food bank is a non-profit that safely stores food that will soon be delivered to local food programs, like food pantries. A food pantry is a distribution center where families can receive food. In 2022, we have transitioned to being both a food pantry and a food bank.

So far this year, we have provided 76,701 pounds of food to other food pantries and soup kitchens.

We also had the experience of transitioning into a temporary soup kitchen after [Hurricane Ian](#). Tuesday before the storm, we finished up seven distributions in St. Johns County and evaluated our inventory. With the impending storm, we did not think we would get much more food to distribute. Thinking of potential power outages and flooding, we decided the best way that we could serve our community would be to temporarily operate as a soup kitchen, preparing hot meals for people affected by the storm.

Thankfully, the storm passed with less damage than anticipated, and the food started coming in Friday morning. Our team leader volunteers jumped into action and set up three drive-through distribution sites on Saturday.

With the help of the Elks Lodge donating the use of their kitchen, The Floridian Restaurant, Jeff Gatlin and his team at Jimmy Jam Foundation, and lots of volunteers, when it was all said and done:

- Friday, we served 120 hot meals.
- Saturday, we served 400 hot meals.
- Saturday, we provided free groceries to 124 families in Crescent City, 88 families in San Mateo, and 162 families in St. Augustine.

Team:
Floridian





Team:
Elks Lodge





That's a lot
of chicken!

Thanks so
much Jeff
and Team
Jimmy Jam



Drive-
Through
Distributions





Young students from the [Veritas School Garden Club](#) in Lincolnville have a new project called [Growing to Serve](#). A Compassionate St Augustine initiative, guided by a very enthusiastic Arthur Colbert, and in conjunction with Epic-Cure, these kids are helping to get fresh food from two plots in the Lincolnville Community Garden directly to those in need. Their guiding principal is: "What we grow, we give to others." A few weeks ago, they harvested over twenty pounds of sweet potato greens, which were delightfully sweet and tasty, and went directly from the garden to Epic-Cure for delivery to those in need. Next week, they will harvest the actual sweet potatoes.





Veritas
School



Russ Scott

Volunteer Spotlight by Janet McNabb



It's a typical busy Tuesday morning in the St. Augustine warehouse with boxes of frozen meat, dry goods and produce being delivered, off-loaded, and sorted for later distribution. Russ Scott has arrived in his SUV filled with boxes from the Hwy. 210 Winn Dixie. Since he and Kathy live near there, it's "his" territory. He has organized at least ten people to help with that pickup. That's his specialty, finding more and more volunteers. Sunny calls him a Super Recruiter! He's



always on the lookout for potential volunteers. He finds them on the golf course, at Trivia, and in the neighborhood. He's good! Today he arrived with a new person who immediately started to help sort produce. Score one more.

He also drives the 16' and 26' Epic-Cure trucks.

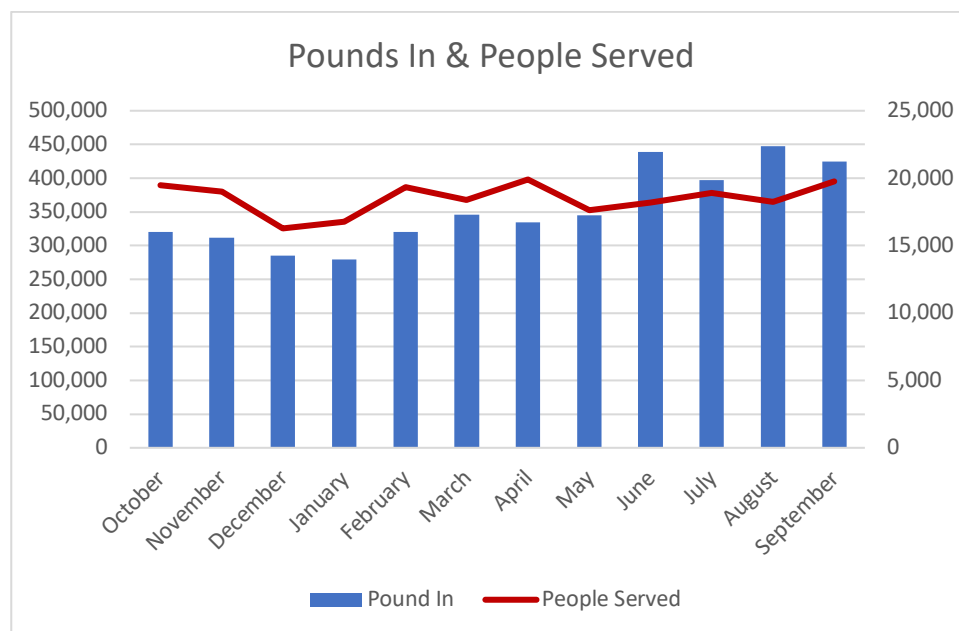
Originally from Boston, he was in the Air Force for four years working with computers. Later his business was in banking in Pittsburgh for 30 years. After he retired, he and Kathy moved to Lake Oconee, GA where they enjoyed the golfing community. About five years ago they followed their son to the St. Augustine area.

He continues to enjoy golf but also loves to be active in the community, having helped with Habitat for Humanity, and is currently volunteering with St. Johns County 2nd Alarmers (fire fighter support), and is running for an elected office on the St. John County Airport Authority Board, Group 1.

He says, "Of all the volunteer organizations I have participated in over the past several years, nothing has given me more satisfaction than Epic-Cure."

We agree and are so happy to have you as a very active participant, Russ! Thank you for your outstanding work.

Here is our PIPS (Pounds In & People Served) graph:



Notes on the graphs: Just a slow, steady progression upwards. The week of the storm affected both pounds in a people served. With the increase in resources in Putnam County we are adding a new permanent distribution every week in Melrose.



Sustain U.

English Muffin Pizzas at The Arc of St. Johns – notice the Epic-Cure t-shirt. These kids love to volunteer at the warehouse. They are incredibly hard workers and have become an integral part of our team on Tuesdays.





Awareness:

- This is large and bold for a reason...

An easy, impactful way that you can help us is to please ...

Save And Drop Off Your Grocery Store Plastic Bags.

You will help reduce waste by allowing us to re-use them.

You will be saving us money by reducing the number we have to purchase.

FYI – we have not had to buy plastic bags in over a year thanks to you all. Before, we were spending about \$150 a month on bags. Great job everyone!

Transparency:

Anyone who wishes to see *Epic-Cure's financial statements* need only ask.

- Our CPA-Audited fiscal year 2021 financial statements have been released and are available upon request.
- Please email your requests to Sunny Mulford: sunny.mulford@epic-cure.org



The Geopolitics of Food – Part 1

And now for something completely different ...

Events since March 2020 have us thinking about the world differently. We have experienced a global pandemic where governments sang in harmony – of not in unison – with debilitating social, economic, and political policies that led to paralyzing fear, looming anxiety, food insecurity, and what may prove to be the beginning of the end of globalization. The weakening of globalization and the retrenchment of the world’s only Superpower – the United States – has created a more volatile world, one inviting dictators to act on their most heinous instincts. One has moved to war and threatened the use of nuclear weapons. That same dictator has exacerbated the supply chain disruptions to which we have regrettably grown increasingly accustomed. His bellicose bravado has only increased the pace of the regionalization of supply chains – that is, the de-globalization of the world’s economic infrastructure – its “pipes,” so to speak. This impending breakdown of globalization is forcing a reorientation and, in places, a de-industrialization of now less connected economies. This trend is the central principal that organizes this paper on the Geopolitics of food, which has held an important place in economies and nations since ancient time.

Why Bother?

Good question, no? We need to understand the geopolitics of food to understand what is at stake. What is at stake if there is a shortage of spare automobile parts? Well, your car may be in the shop for days or weeks, and that is inconvenient. A shortage of oil would be rather disruptive, slowing trade over time and perhaps seeing people subject to freezing temperatures in the winter.

But, if there is a shortage of food, then people die.

More governments have failed due to famine than because of war, disease, and political infighting combined.



Food is perishable. It can rot in just days or months, faster than it can be replaced. Corn needs six months to grow. Hogs take about six months to ready for slaughter (much longer if raise “free range”). It does not take that long to starve to death. Food is fleeting, but hunger is not.

A Changing World, But a Little Historical Perspective First

Let’s start with wheat. Wheat is a weed. It grows quickly and at different times of the year. There is hard red winter wheat, hard red spring wheat, soft red winter wheat, hard and soft white wheat, and durum wheat. It is easily hybridized to grow at different elevations.

And, wheat has truly changed society. It grows with little care, freeing people to do other things, to invent things, and differentiate labor. We had time to tend to cows, enriching our diets with milk and cheese. More calories and less work meant that wheat eaters could conquer non-wheat eaters, fueling empires (ancient ones, like Mesopotamia), feeding expansion.

The Industrialization of Agriculture

These empires – built as they were on wheat induced conquering – found their end with the industrial era and the synthetic inputs it brought to agriculture: fertilizers¹, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides. These inputs quickly doubled yields for good agricultural lands and, importantly, more than quadrupled those of poorer agricultural land. Additionally, the geographical footprint of agriculture grew exponentially and changed the balance of power.

Steel and electricity became tools of industrialized agriculture. Hydraulics expanded the reach of agriculture by pumping water up hills and out from aquifers. Desalinization created fresh water from salt water. Now, food could be produced on previously barren lands.

¹ Fertilizers are important to geopolitical concerns, as Russia and China are the world’s largest fertilizer producers. We will come to this topic in a subsequent installment.



Refrigeration and other storage technologies meant that meat could last weeks instead of hours or days. In short, the industrialization of agriculture meant that perishability could be managed, and more people could, therefore, eat throughout the cycle.

The American Order

After World War II, The Americans knew that containing the Soviet Union (USSR) – a moral imperative that was key to the peaceful coexistence of nations – required a “bribe.” To create a coalition of nations that could help keep the USSR contained (NATO), the Americans made the seas safe for all. Trade flourished. The Americans ended conquering and banned imperial expansions. The American Order created the conditions of the real “green revolution,” as all industrial technologies in the agricultural realm could be imported from nearly anywhere and implemented almost everywhere. With industrialization, the American Order benefitted 3 billion people in Asia, moving them from food insecurity to food security. Asia was not the only place where this immense improvement in living standards occurred.

Greater Variety of Foods

As a result of the industrialization of agriculture and the American Order’s guaranty of safe transport over the earth’s seas, serious specialization was made possible. Higher calorie and nutritional content crops like corn, soy, lentils, and oats became increasingly prevalent. Rangeland shifted to animal husbandry creating more protein at lower costs for the world’s growing middle classes to consume. Irrigated lands (hydraulics) were increasingly used for orcharding.

All of this led to a massive expansion of food production of all types. Wheat was still essential but more likely to be planted on land that – before the Industrial / American Order – was likely to have been useless for agriculture.

The American Order cultivated widespread economies of scale. Every micro-climate could and did produce the very thing that it could best produce. Consequently, each such region could trade for other needed items (food and



otherwise) more effectively and cheaply produced elsewhere. The markets were made global by the American Order.

Diets changed. Specialization maximized yields. Safe seas encouraged trade. More time was available for more industrialization and urbanization. More affluence resulted. People could eat more and better foods from places farther and farther away. Using the Asian example again: the shift was from rice to wheat and a new, massive surge in the demand for pork.

Industrialization and the American Order have underpinned a seven-fold increase in worldwide caloric intake since 1945 (the beginning of the American Order). It allowed many geographies that formerly could not support large populations to support them. Populations in North Africa grew more than five times since 1950. Iran's population is up more than six times since then. Saudi Arabia and Yemen: up more than tenfold. All of this came about because bulk food shipments from other continents or hemispheres became possible ... became common!

In sum, industrialized agriculture changed the where and how of what was possible. The American Order changed the reach of what was possible. And, mass displacement from specialization changed the what and variety of what was possible.

In 2020, 11.5 billion acres were under cultivation, more than at any other time in history. The global value of crops in 2020 was \$8 trillion, or about 10% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the single greatest value of any component of global GDP.

Why Bother, Redux?

The goods of efficiency and rising living standards globally have been achieved. But, what happens if the mechanisms of global trade shift a bit? Could this highly interlinked system be disrupted? Would that disruption – supply chain disruption – be material? Might world agriculture unwind and lead to potentially massive contractions of production, variety, availability, and reliability of foodstuffs?



Might we fall back to the pre-industrial past? If we do, and we already know that without food people die, would we fall back to pre-industrial populations?

That's why we are bothering. It matters a lot. We will next look at the geopolitics of food in the context of geographies to see if we can determine which peoples might be doomed and which might thrive.

A quick personal note: I ran through a lot of history, all too quickly and, at times, potentially incoherently. I hope I have not confused the reader in the process). I am happy to discuss this with anyone who has an interest. - KM

A quick personal note: KM would love to discuss with anyone who has an interest. If enough people are interested, we can set up a geopolitics discussion night. Email support@epic-cure.org if you would like to attend.
- SM