

February 5, 2014

A treat today. Nothing about the creeps in government. (Well, the cartoons are here. But otherwise public narcissist free zone)

Fresh off Seattle's big blowout Super Bowl, John Tamny congratulates Pete Carroll the NFL's greatest failure. The ups and downs of Carroll's career are quite a story. *Pete Carroll's Seattle Seahawks thoroughly mauled the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XLVIII, 43-8. The win squarely places Carroll in an elite circle of all-time great football coaches.*

Most would give anything to have a Super Bowl win on their resume. In Carroll's case, he's not only joined the fraternity of Super Bowl winners, but he can also claim two national titles on the collegiate level at the University of Southern California (USC). A few more quality seasons in the NFL likely punches Carroll's ticket to the NFL's Hall of Fame.

Notable about the ever ebullient Carroll is that he wasn't always considered a winner. At one time he was very much seen as unsuited to the head coach's role; so much so that he was unemployed. Carroll's path to football's elite was a checkered one, and it speaks to the wondrous, life enhancing value of failure as the driver of future success. Put plainly, when we shield individuals and businesses (think the bailed out banks and carmakers) from their errors, we perpetuate what makes them mediocre while robbing them of the knowledge that would make them successful.

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Congratulations to Pete Carroll, the NFL's greatest failure. His past errors made tonight possible, and they're a reminder to us all that mistakes made are only bad if we don't learn from them. ...

Two Sunday's ago, the [NY Times' Business section](#) had an interesting and surprisingly funny profile of an irreverent Greenwich, CT real estate broker, Christopher Fountain.

As he drives his white pickup truck past the manors that crowd the hills and meadows along Round Hill Road in Greenwich, Conn. — a town that has long signified what it means to be rich in America — Christopher Fountain snorts.

One of the gaudy estates is owned by a hedge fund kingpin now residing in prison; others belong to a real estate investor just coming out of prison and an investment adviser who steered his clients and their billions to Bernard L. Madoff. Then, to cap it off, a guy in an 8,000-square-foot mansion is charged with crushing his wife's skull in with a baseball bat.

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Believe it or not, Mr. Fountain actually makes a living brokering mega-mansion real estate deals to these so-called schnooks, among others.

And his blog, [For What It's Worth](#), has attracted a cult following among those he lampoons — the financial titans who can afford to plunk down \$5 million or more on a house but who nonetheless seem to appreciate his scabrous take on Greenwich residents' run-ins with the law, debt-fueled implosions or plain old bad taste.

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The essence of his complaint — that decades of easy money and ceaseless greed have created a glut of unsalable houses that will remain a blight on his hometown for many years — highlights one of the more curious anomalies of today's explosion in asset prices. ...

How about a shark you never heard of? It grows to 20 feet and sometimes eats moose! [Wired](#) has the story of the Greenland shark. And if you follow the link there is some video of one of these animals in the St. Lawrence River estuary. Me too!? The 'estuary' is actually the Gulf of St. Lawrence which is the world's largest river estuary and is the outlet for the Great Lakes.

*Say hello to the Greenland shark (*Somniosus microcephalus*), also known as the gurry shark, grey shark, sleeper shark, or by the Inuit name *Eqalussuaq*. It's the second largest carnivorous shark after the great white, but luckily for us it lives in deep Arctic waters where it rarely encounters people.*

The Greenland shark has a sluggish look, with a thickset, cylindrical body and a small head with a short snout and tiny eyes. They're one of the more unusual sharks out there, in appearance and behavior.

Read on to learn what sets this slow-moving giant apart from other sharks.

1) They're rarely observed and somewhat mysterious. The first underwater photos of a live Greenland shark were taken in the Arctic in 1995, and the first video images of a Greenland shark swimming freely in its natural environment were not obtained until 2003.

2) They like it cold. Greenland sharks are native to the North Atlantic waters around Greenland, Canada, and Iceland. They are the only true sub-Arctic shark and the only shark that can tolerate Arctic temperatures year round. They prefer very cold water (-1°C to 10°C). In the summer, they tend to stay in the ocean's depths where the water is coldest. In the winter, they make a vertical migration to the surface layer, which at that time is colder than the water on the sea floor. ...

Forbes

[Congratulations To Seattle Seahawks Coach Pete Carroll, The NFL's Greatest Failure](#)

by John Tamny

Pete Carroll's Seattle Seahawks thoroughly mauled the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XLVIII, 43-8. The win squarely places Carroll in an elite circle of all-time great football coaches.

Most would give anything to have a Super Bowl win on their resume. In Carroll's case, he's not only joined the fraternity of Super Bowl winners, but he can also claim two national titles on the collegiate level at the [University of Southern California](#) (USC). A few more quality seasons in the NFL likely punches Carroll's ticket to the NFL's Hall of Fame.

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Most readers are familiar with his story, but Carroll's first stop as a NFL [coach COH -2.9%](#) was with the New York Jets in 1994. Though his only team there started out strong, and was in the hunt for a playoff spot right up to the 12th week of the '94 season, a fake spike by Dan Marino of the Miami Dolphins led to a heartbreaking loss that the Jets seemingly never recovered from. The Jets finished the season with a 6-10 record after which owner Leon Hess, impatient for a winning season late in life, unceremoniously fired Carroll.

Carroll was quickly snapped up by the San Francisco '49ers as their defensive coordinator, and after two very successful seasons got his 2nd NFL head coaching chance with the New England Patriots. The Patriots had reached the Super Bowl the year before under Bill Parcells, and with expectations perhaps unrealistically high, Carroll was fired after three seasons despite reaching the playoffs twice.

The NFL is notorious for recycling fired coaches, Carroll clearly could have found employment as a coordinator fairly quickly after his stint with the Patriots, but he was out of football until being hired by the USC Trojans in 2001 as their head coach. What must be stressed here is that Carroll was not the first choice of the Trojan athletic department, let alone their rabid fan base.



Head Coach Pete Carroll

Bill Parcells famously once observed that “You are what your record says you are,” and to Trojan fans Carroll was damaged goods; surely the latest USC coach who would fail to return the traditional power to its former glory. Carroll, ever the competitor, felt differently. As the New

York Post's Steve Serby recently observed, most stopped believing in Carroll, but Carroll never stopped believing in himself. He saw in USC an amazing brand that with the right coach, could be revived to its former greatness.

His first season at the helm didn't begin terribly well, but by season's end his first Trojan team throttled cross-town rival UCLA. Though the Trojans lost their bowl game, there was cause for optimism.

In Carroll's second season the Trojans, after early season losses to Washington State and Kansas State, took off. They won the rest of their games, crushed Iowa in the Orange Bowl, and they finished the season ranked #4. Many felt USC was at a national champion level by season's end.

Carroll's success made USC the place for top recruits around the country, and THE story in college football for the next several years. USC won the AP national title after a Rose Bowl win over Michigan in his 3rd season, won the BCS Championship in season 4 after a monumental drubbing of Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl, and then the Trojans came within two yards of a third straight title in Carroll's fifth season.

Carroll's teams in the years following theoretically declined somewhat, but decline for arguably the best coach in USC history was a couple more top five finishes that included two Rose Bowl wins. Carroll had reached the top of college football, as had USC.

Interesting about his time in Los Angeles, the popular explanation for his otherworldly success was that his "rah-rah" ways suited him well at the collegiate level, but clearly didn't fit an NFL that he'd put in his rear-view mirror. After that, Bill Belichick had transformed a New England Patriot team previously coached by Carroll into the USC of professional football.

Carroll, near as this writer can tell never lashed out at the damning of him with faint praise by sportswriters, but the competitor in him must have been *seething*. That the sporting commentariat was so dismissive of his NFL coaching skills, not to mention the competitive fire that propelled him to stupendous heights at USC, surely had him eager to prove his myriad doubters wrong. What made him thrive at USC would most certainly drive him to try the NFL again.

This is important because his stupendous collegiate success happily forced a reappraisal of his time as a NFL head coach. Figure the Jets had been perennial losers under Leon Hess. Carroll could no more be blamed for one season in that dysfunctional organization than could future Hall of Famer Belichick for his 36-44 record with the Cleveland Browns and owner Art Modell.

Looking at Belichick's record with the Patriots, the reappraisal of Carroll forced somewhat of a rethink of Belichick's time there. Carroll had two playoff teams followed by a 7-9 team before being fired, but Belichick hardly turned the Patriots around right away.

Indeed, his first Patriots team was 5-11, and then he began the following season 0-2 before a Mo Lewis hit that nearly killed Drew Bledsoe led to Tom Brady coming off the bench. Say what one will about Brady now, Tom Brady wasn't Tom Brady out of the gate as evidenced by him beginning the 2001 season on the bench. While Belichick thought enough of Brady for him to be

Bledsoe's backup, until Bledsoe's injury even Belichick had no idea of the immense talent sitting on his bench.

But with Brady at the helm, the Patriots fortunes changed substantially. Belichick went from being a coach who could only win as a defensive coordinator to a head coach who would be a first ballot Hall of Famer. Still, he couldn't win with Bledsoe at quarterback, and with Carroll having reached the playoffs twice with Bledsoe, it suddenly became apparent that he was perhaps a much better coach than his pretty stellar NFL record (most coaches would consider two playoff berths in seasons a success) initially revealed.

After the 2009 season Carroll was hired by Paul Allen's Seattle Seahawks, won a playoff game in his first season, missed the playoffs his second, won another playoff game in season three, and then in his fourth season he won it all.

What's important to remember is that failure made Pete Carroll. He learned from his time with the Jets that the organization and owner one coaches for matters. The Jets had a culture of losing that ran all the way up to the person writing the checks. With the Patriots, Carroll similarly learned that the organization matters. Though now he's easily one of the most savvy owners in the NFL, the Bob Kraft who hired Carroll in the '90s is not the Bob Kraft of today. Like Carroll, Kraft too has learned from early mistakes.

Carroll learned from being at USC that a culture of winning does matter, and during his time there he developed a keen eye for talent that has served him well in his third stint in the NFL. Carroll has said that absent the organizational structure offered him by Allen that he would not have taken the Seahawks job.

Happily for Carroll now, he's once again a Super Bowl winning coach who has ascended to an elite echelon of coaches. Talented as he always was, it was failure at the NFL level that forced him to prove himself on the collegiate level, and it also provided this intensely competitive man who had been dismissed as pro-coaching material with the fuel to prove everyone wrong.

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Congratulations to Pete Carroll, the NFL's greatest failure. His past errors made tonight possible, and they're a reminder to us all that mistakes made are only bad if we don't learn from them. Carroll did, and the man who many once said couldn't successfully coach in the NFL is staring at a very clear path to the league's highest honor, the Hall of Fame.

NY Times

The Gadfly of Greenwich Real Estate

by Landon Thomas, Jr.



The home of Dominick DeVito on Round Hill Road in Greenwich, Conn. Mr. DeVito, a builder and renovator of large homes, returned to real estate work after his release from prison early in 2013.

As he drives his white pickup truck past the manors that crowd the hills and meadows along Round Hill Road in Greenwich, Conn. — a town that has long signified what it means to be rich in America — Christopher Fountain snorts.

One of the gaudy estates is owned by a hedge fund kingpin now residing in prison; others belong to a real estate investor just coming out of prison and an investment adviser who steered his clients and their billions to Bernard L. Madoff. Then, to cap it off, a guy in an 8,000-square-foot mansion is charged with crushing his wife’s skull in with a baseball bat.

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And his blog, [For What It's Worth](#), has attracted a cult following among those he lampoons — the financial titans who can afford to plunk down \$5 million or more on a house but who nonetheless seem to appreciate his scabrous take on Greenwich residents' run-ins with the law, debt-fueled implosions or plain old bad taste.

Indeed, Mr. Fountain would seem to spend as much time selling schadenfreude as houses.

The essence of his complaint — that decades of easy money and ceaseless greed have created a glut of unsalable houses that will remain a blight on his hometown for many years — highlights one of the more curious anomalies of today's explosion in asset prices.

Though the Federal Reserve's policy of rock-bottom interest rates over the last few years has revived the value of many of the nation's subdivisions and sent stocks soaring to historic highs, it has prompted only modest interest in the over-the-top Greenwich mansion, a classic emblem of quick riches.

Mr. Fountain likes to point to the prominent Greenwich characters in the public spotlight as part of the problem. Topping Mr. Fountain's list of homeowners are Raj Rajaratnam, the hedge fund executive now serving an 11-year prison sentence on charges of insider trading, and Frederic A. Bourke Jr., co-founder of Dooney & Bourke, the high-end handbag accessories store, who has just been imprisoned for bribery and whose house is on the market for \$13 million.

He also likes to skewer Walter Noel, a founder of Fairfield Greenwich, the investment firm that raised more than \$8 billion for Mr. Madoff and subsequently became the target of investigations. Mr. Noel's 175 Round Hill address is just across the road from Mr. Bourke's home. The estate of Steven A. Cohen, whose hedge fund pleaded guilty to insider trading charges in November, is six miles east of Round Hill Road.

Mr. Fountain includes in his gallery plenty of lesser-known people pushed into bankruptcy after overreaching, borrowing millions to build 15,000-square-foot houses that no one wanted to buy.

Mr. Fountain's contention that the legal and financial troubles bedeviling Greenwich big shots have contributed to this slump — a view that is hotly disputed by his more established competitors — is more anecdotal than scientific. Still, the numbers are stark.

According to Trulia, the real estate website, the average price per square foot of a four-bedroom house sold in Greenwich in the last three months was \$442, down 40 percent from a year ago and 11 percent from 2009.

Mr. Fountain says that more than 43 houses are on the market for at least \$10 million — many of them unsold for more than a year.

What will it take to sell them?

"My rule of thumb now is divide the asking price by two," he said. "Although the owner's ego always makes that very hard to do."

Mr. Fountain began to vent on his blog about two years ago.

"I'm sure Greenwich attracted some nefarious characters back in the '50s and '60s, but the past decade has seen just a parade of sad sack crooks," Mr. Fountain wrote in a cri de coeur about how the 100-acre pastures and graceful mansions of his youth had been replaced by garish castles squeezed onto four-acre lots.

This was especially true, he felt, of Round Hill Road. "The road, to me, represents all that is sordid in our modern business world, money-grubbing poseurs putting on airs, until the handcuffs are slapped on."

It is tempting to dismiss this as an old-money lament from someone who missed out on the past decade's asset boom. While Mr. Fountain's father rode the train into Grand Central every morning to a Wall Street job at White Weld, a white-shoe investment firm that is now defunct, his own career path has been rockier.

After practicing law in Bangor, Me., Mr. Fountain returned to Greenwich, where he spent most of his time defending small investors suing big Wall Street banks over dubious investment advice. He quit his job in 2000 after publishing his first book, ["The New Millionaire's Handbook: A Guide to Contemporary Social Climbing."](#) But his writing career stalled, and in 2001 he beat a retreat to selling houses. At the age of 60, Mr. Fountain has had three careers over the last decade and now rents a modest farmhouse in North Stamford, Conn., about 10 miles from Round Hill Road.

Nevertheless, his outbursts over new-money excesses in Greenwich have struck a vein, attracting readers who, Mr. Fountain says, include not just bankers and local real estate mavens but also followers in Europe and Asia. Cliff Asness, the billionaire hedge fund manager, has commented on the blog, and Mr. Fountain's taste for Greenwich gossip makes him all the more appealing.



The home of Michael DeMaio, who has been charged with beating his wife there with a baseball bat.

“Fountain is great,” said a defense lawyer for a legally encumbered Greenwich resident who has come in for punishment on the blog. “He is really catnip for all of us.”

One investment banker who recently used Mr. Fountain to sell and buy a house appreciates his forthrightness.

“If he thinks the house you are trying to sell is worth \$1 million and not \$5 million he will tell you,” said the banker, who spoke on condition of anonymity because his firm did not permit him to speak to the press. “Plus, his blog is hilarious.”

Much of it consists of his rightward-leaning libertarian and politically incorrect rants in which he mercilessly sends up — in equal measure — what he sees as the big-government vanities of the Obama administration and the arrogance of those who think they have arrived just because they could secure a \$10 million mortgage.

With his raspy growl of a voice, his pickup truck and his trusty bow and arrow, which he deploys when deer-hunting season rolls around, Mr. Fountain might be as close as Greenwich comes to a redneck. And even if it is all a bit of an act, the shtick — selling real estate requires self-promotion of one kind or another — has been great for his business.

“The hedgies love me — it’s amazing how successful you can be if you tell the truth,” he said. “Last year was great, but it really kicked off when I started going on about Walter Noel and Rogues Hill Road.”

Still, in the competitive Greenwich market, where 1,000 people out of a population of 61,000 are licensed to sell houses, there are those who wonder if Mr. Fountain's footprint is as big as he contends. While the \$20 million in sales that he and his business partner generated in 2012 put him in the top tier of the local broker pool — 2013 was a harder slog, he says — some rival agents say his presence was hardly felt in previous years.

They also reject his assertion that the market for big-ticket houses is in terminal decline.

"It really bothers me when he talks about the market like this because it is just not true," said David Ogilvy, the longstanding dean of the mansion market in Greenwich, who also has suffered his share of [pokes](#) on the blog.

To prove his point, Mr. Ogilvy ticks off his firm's sales in recent months: \$13.4 million, \$14.5 million, \$24 million.

But other real estate agents say large houses often sell for far less than the asking price these days.

"This is still a buyer's market," said W. Harry Pool, a longtime investment banker turned real estate broker at Halstead Property in Greenwich. "If you want to sell your \$10 million house, you really have to have the best \$10 million house out there."

When he is not hunched over a laptop or in pursuit of deer, Mr. Fountain spends most of his days cruising around town in his pickup.

"I mean this is insanity — it's just a garish pile of bricks," he growled in the fall, as he drove past yet another 10,000-square-foot, slightly worse for wear and quite empty house. Like so many of its ilk, the house had been slapped together in a few months by a highly leveraged speculator; unable to pull in the \$9 million needed to clear his debts, he had to surrender it to the bank.

And who signed off on the mortgage? "Patriot Bank, of course," Mr. Fountain said, spitting the words.

Of the many that have suffered a whipping from Mr. Fountain over the years, few have been subjected to as much sustained abuse as Patriot National Bank, the small regional lender that is based nearby, in Stamford, and bankrolled some of Greenwich's most egregious mortgage disasters.

"Patriot was in a pretty bad place when we took over," concurred Michael A. Carrazza, whose investment firm, [Solaja Capital Advisors](#), rescued the bank in 2010 and restored it to good health. About one-third of the bank's loan portfolio, he said, consisted of nonperforming loans belonging to those owning high-end houses in and around Greenwich. Many of the loans went to highflying Wall Street titans, but a surprising number were directed to other borrowers, like Jianhua Tsoi, an acupuncturist and aspiring artist, who borrowed \$40 million to build at least five houses in and around Greenwich, few of which he was able to sell.

Another Patriot borrower was Dominick DeVito, a builder and renovator of big homes who, when he took up residence on Round Hill Road in 2005, had already served a term in prison for real estate fraud.



"The road, to me, represents all that is sordid in our modern business world, money-grubbing poseurs putting on airs, until the handcuffs are slapped on," Mr. Fountain said.

After a profitable run, he became overextended, borrowing \$6 million from Patriot in 2006 to build and flip his most spectacular house yet.

When the market collapsed, Mr. DeVito's bankers got cold feet, shut down his credit line and took possession of his nearly completed house. In 2009, he was sent to prison again on mortgage charges related to his earlier real estate activities in New York.

That Mr. DeVito — an Italian-American kid from the rougher side of Eastchester, N.Y., and with no college education — would end up on Greenwich's most prestigious thoroughfare is in itself a bit of a curiosity.

"I mean I was a paint contractor," said Mr. DeVito in an interview last year, as he took in the swimming pool, the rolling green hills and the white picket fence from the front porch of his house. "Now I am on Round Hill Road?"

Since his release from prison in early 2013, Mr. DeVito has jumped back into the real estate game with a vengeance — plying the back roads of Greenwich in search of unloved mansions that he might snap up, tear down and sell for a profit.

"I am done with the banks, though," he said. Instead, he is looking to rich people in Greenwich to put up the cash, with profits to be split down the middle.

"I mean," he said with one of his signature, flashing white grins, "it's not rocket science, is it?"

For the Wall Street types, however, headline-grabbing failure is harder to brush off.

Consider Joseph F. Skowron III, known as Chip, whose \$8 million house is on 16 Doubling Road, just a few miles east of Round Hill Road. A hedge fund investor, he was caught in 2011 doling out envelopes of cash in return for nonpublic stock tips and was sent to prison for five years. Once worth around \$20 million, he left behind a wife, four small children and a garage once full of high-end sports cars.

Having already paid \$7.7 million in fines to the United States government, Mr. Skowron was ordered last month to pay \$24 million in past wages — beyond the \$10 million he has already paid to his former employer, Morgan Stanley.

When a guy named Chip, with a dimple in his chin and a luxurious home on the edge of the local country club, commits and then admits to an egregious financial crime, the knives come out quickly.

“How warped can a guy get just to accumulate a 10-car collection of speedsters and a big Greenwich house,” wrote Mr. Fountain on his blog late last year, no doubt exaggerating the number of cars Mr. Skowron owns. “He now has plenty of time to ponder that question. Chump.”

Peter Tesei, the town’s first selectman, is quick to point out that a vast majority of Greenwich’s 61,000 residents are citizens in good standing. But even some of those have their pasts. And perhaps no one is better qualified to add a bit of heft to Mr. Fountain’s thesis than David A. Stockman, who was the budget whiz kid of the Reagan administration.

In his 712-page book, [“The Great Deformation,”](#) Mr. Stockman argues that the relentless money-printing of the Federal Reserve has created a pernicious cycle of greed and excess.

“This is just not sustainable — the bubbles are getting bigger and the busts are becoming more traumatic,” Mr. Stockman said. “And with each subsequent reflation the wealth and income is flowing into a smaller set of hands at the very tippy-top of the economic ladder.”

Mr. Stockman speaks from experience.

In the 1990s, he was a top executive at the [private equity](#) shop Blackstone and erected a 15,000-square-foot estate in the gated Greenwich community of Conyers Farm.

When the debt bubble burst in 2007, [Mr. Stockman](#)’s final private equity play — a car parts supplier — failed spectacularly. Federal prosecutors charged him with fraud but withdrew the case two years later.

In 2012, Mr. Stockman put his [trophy home](#) — with its 11 bathrooms, swimming pool and tennis court — on the market, asking \$19.75 million.

Weak as the market was, the listing was removed — and Mr. Fountain is not surprised.

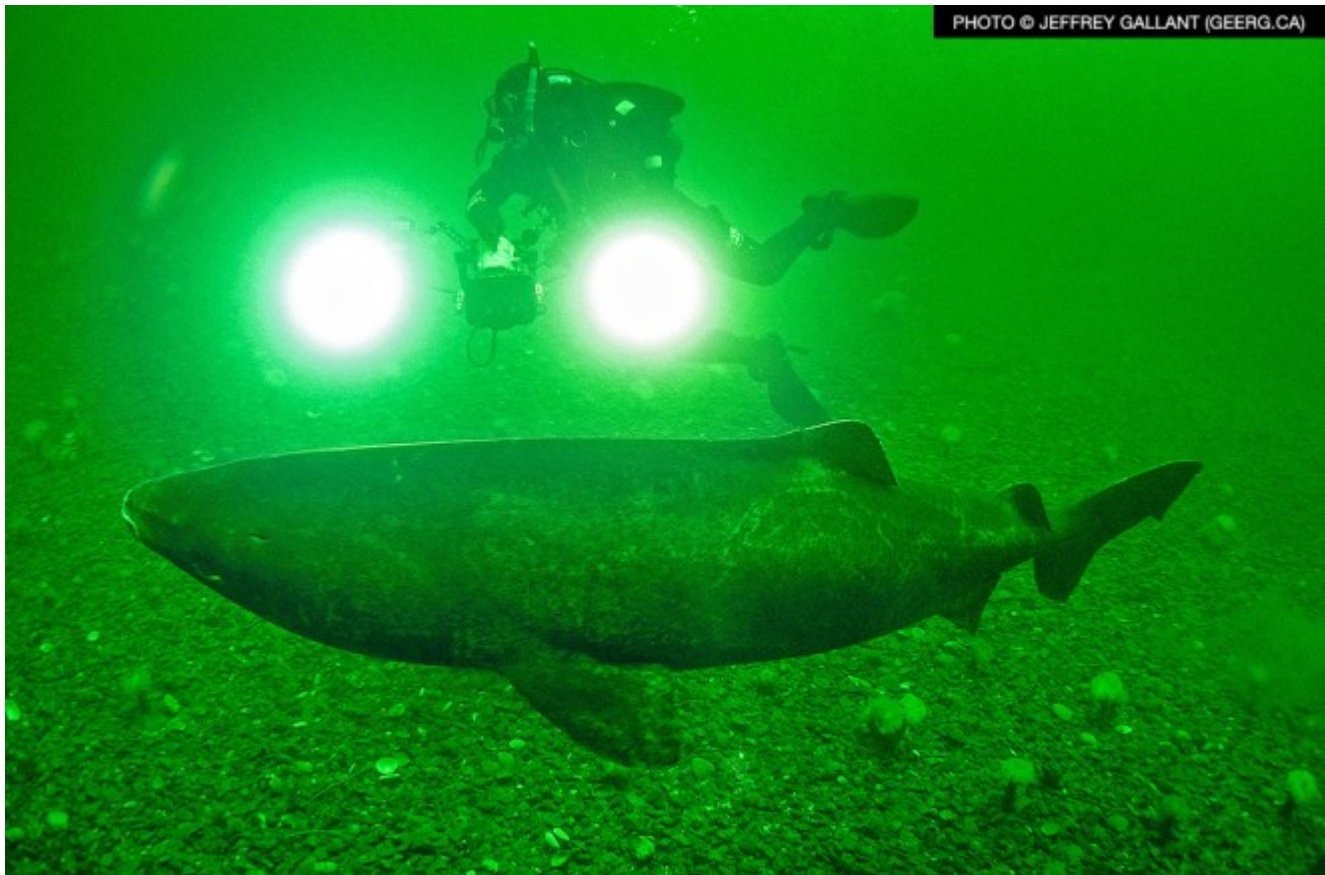
“For \$9 million, it’s a nice little house,” he said. “But these types of houses don’t age well. There is just too much horse crap out there on the polo fields.”

Wired

The Creature Feature: 10 Fun Facts About the Greenland Shark

This Toxic Shark Eats Moose, May Live for 200 Years

by Mary Bates



Greenland shark in the St. Lawrence Estuary, Quebec, Canada.

Say hello to the Greenland shark (*Somniosus microcephalus*), also known as the gurry shark, grey shark, sleeper shark, or by the Inuit name Eqalussuaq. It's the second largest carnivorous shark after the great white, but luckily for us it lives in deep Arctic waters where it rarely encounters people.

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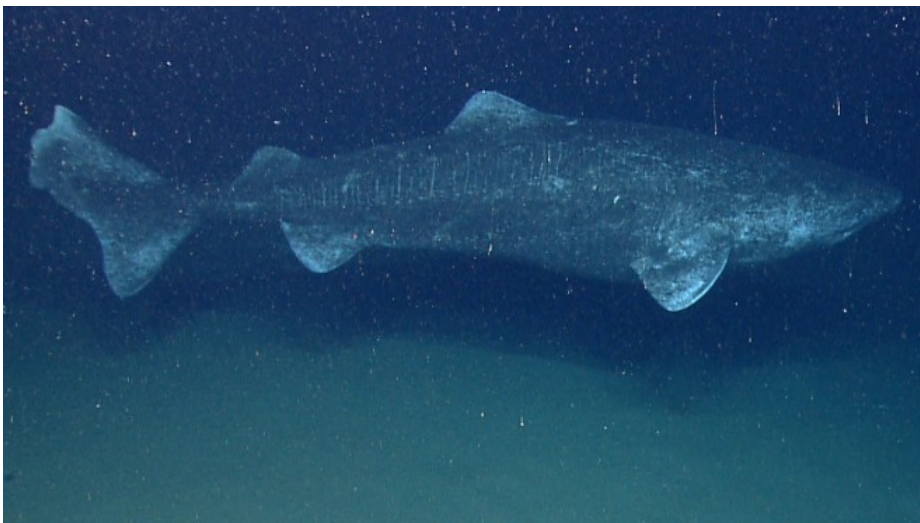
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make a vertical migration to the surface layer, which at that time is colder than the water on the sea floor.

3) These sharks can go deep. Greenland sharks have been observed at the water's surface all the way down to 2,200 meters deep. They are sometimes seen resting on continental shelves and slopes at these great depths.

4) They rival great white sharks in terms of size. Greenland sharks are one of the larger sharks out there, capable of growing to more than 20 feet long and weighing up to 2,500 lbs.

5) Eyeball parasites are common. Some populations of Greenland sharks are commonly parasitized by the copepod *Ommatokoita elongata*. This parasite latches on to the shark's eye and destroys the corneal tissue, rendering the shark partially blind. Luckily for the shark, light rarely penetrates the deep waters it prefers and so it relies on other sensory systems to get around and find prey. While over 90% of Arctic Greenland sharks sport this parasite, less than 10% of the Greenland sharks observed in the St. Lawrence are hosts.



6) They're not picky eaters. The Greenland shark is an opportunistic predator that will eat just about any meat it finds, either dead or alive. They eat a lot of fish and there is some evidence that they ambush sleeping seals, but some scientists believe they are primarily scavengers. Some strange things have been found in Greenland sharks' stomachs, including the remains of polar bears, horses, moose, and in one case an entire reindeer. A few months back, some passersby saved a Greenland shark that appeared to be [choking on a chunk of moose](#).

7) Their teeth are designed to cut out plugs of flesh. The teeth on the upper jaw are narrow, pointed, and smooth, and anchor the food item as the lower jaw does the cutting. The teeth on the lower jaw are larger and broader and curve sideways. By swinging its head in a circular motion, the shark can cut out a round plug of whatever it's feeding on.

8) Greenland sharks go for a 'slow and steady' strategy. Also known as the sleeper shark for its sluggish pace, the Greenland shark is one of the slowest swimming sharks in the world. They average a cruising speed of 0.3 m/s (0.76 mph), but are capable of short bursts of speed.

9) They might be very long-lived. Some estimates put the life span of Greenland sharks at over 200 years. Where does this number come from? One study found the sharks grow about

0.5 to 1 cm a year. A Greenland shark that was captured and tagged off Greenland in 1936 was recaptured 16 years later. In that time, it had grown 6 cm longer. If we assume a constant growth rate, that would make a mature 7 meter shark over 200 years old. If that's correct, the Greenland shark may be one of the longest-lived vertebrates on the planet.

10) Their flesh is poisonous. Greenland sharks contain high levels of trimethylamine oxide (TMAO; it helps regulate their osmotic pressure and also acts as a natural antifreeze). During digestion, TMAO breaks down into trimethylamine (TMA). TMA causes intestinal distress and neurological effects similar to extreme drunkenness. Eating too much can even lead to convulsions and death. Early settlers of Iceland and Greenland figured out a way around this. Greenland shark flesh can be eaten with no ill effects if it is prepared correctly: the meat must be buried in the ground for 6 to 12 weeks, exposing it to several cycles of freezing and thawing. After this the meat is hung up to dry for several months, and finally cut into bite-sized cubes. The end product, Hákarl, is a delicacy.



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-Peggy Noonan, Wall Street Journal