

## Swimming Lessons for Dog Paddlers

Written by Alex Baer  
Wednesday, 04 April 2012 18:10

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Good thing we evolved a sense of humor. It's one of the few abilities we have to keep our heads from fusing into a solid mass, helping abort a sort of core-meltdown from ingesting too much stress and anguish, from having too-heavy a heavy-metal pedal on our national vanities and insanities.

Best advice, aside from music, when that scary alarm goes off in your head, threatening a core breach, find something to smile about, fast: scare up some toothsome, mental-health treats, pack your hot circuit breakers in dry ice, spring for some cool ones with and for your endorphins.

No need to founder or flounder around in the flotsam and jetsam of modern life all day, not when there are these soothing waters around here: anyone who dares to *go jump in the lake* automatically gets free swimming lessons from Evolution, no matter if novice, dog-paddler, or pro.

First up, a car that has outlasted almost everything: a Mercury Comet Caliente, not normally known by car buffs as being a hot car. It is vintage 1964, driven for 48 years by a Florida grandmother, age 93, now parked, having gone 576,000 miles -- the car, not the grandmother. Rachel Veitch said she had to give up driving March 9 when she became legally blind, the former nurse adding she's adjusted and taken it all in stride.

The car's been through 18 batteries, eight mufflers, and three sets of shocks -- absorbers, that is, not counting the pretty good shot to the rear-end, in a 1980 collision. The car has also outlasted three marriages.

Her car is not the world champ on mileage, with that honor going to a New York state Volvo 1800 S model, so say the Guinness World Records people, with that car claiming nearly three million miles. However, given Cuba's de facto time warp regarding cars, with many old, American, battleship-class cars kept alive by need -- and by restrictive import and sales laws -- there may be many high-mileage, *high-smileage*, heavy-weight contenders there as well.

And, from the mobile to the immobile, we move on to two or more cases of mistaken identity:

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The first, a four-foot-tall statue, thought to be of ancient Greek origin, dating back to 600 years BCE, an artifact of priceless historical value. Its discovered location might have given more pause in such pronouncements, as it was found in a sheep pen northwest of Athens last week.

Upon closer examination, archeologists backtracked, saying they'd found molding marks and traces of bubbles: translation, it's a forgery, of a statue located in the Acropolis. Two men have been charged, trying to sell it for -- spin the money wheel -- half a million Euros, 417,000 British pounds, or 662,000 American bucks.

From adventures in greenbacks to adventuresome green-and-black snakes: In Scotland, a woman called the SPCA after spotting a fat, five-foot-long snake in the attic, lounging atop a box. Animal rescue worker Karen Hogg arrived with her gear, finding the caller "very distressed." After a look-see, mystery solved: It turned out to be a draft-stopper, one of those long, stuffed tubes people use at the foot of their doors to keep cold air from rushing inside. It was a snakeskin design, green and black, sporting a long, red-felt tongue.

Office Hogg said it looked very snakelike. Given hundreds of snakes collected from building and properties, there was no cause to believe the call to be anything but real. Just a couple weeks earlier, a foot-long corn snake was found in the middle of a Scottish street, thought to be an escapee from someone's collection, or just very, very lost.

There is a photo of the fake snake and an audio report at the link below. In attic-light, you catch a glimpse, what do you think? You be the judge.

The offending, pythonesque, snake-skinned draft-plugger now resides at the SPCA's offices, and has been named Sid, and not Monty -- a missed opportunity if ever there was one.

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Comet: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-17603598>

Volvo: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jimgorzelay/2011/12/09/cars-that-can-run-for-over-20000>

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[0-miles/](#)

Cuban cars: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-15710861>

Fake statue: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17596144>

Fake snake: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-17596214>

**Your treasure-hunter's reward, for reading this far down, a pair of mistaken-identity tales.**

This is a sweet and surprising story -- a very Susan-Boyle-esque splash into our lake of good cheer: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=ZsNlcr4frs4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ZsNlcr4frs4)

Should you need a refreshing memory-refresher, here is the original stunner with Susan: <http://www.break.com/index/susan-boyle-stuns-crowd-with-epic-singing.html>