

Opinion

A community forum for viewpoints from around the world to your backyard

The Clinch County News

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TALL TALES

By Lem Griffis

While down in Jacksonville a few days ago, I went up in an elevator. There was a tall drunk fellow standing in front of me smoking a long cigar. He poked me in the eye with the wet end of that cigar trying to hit his mouth. He got to fumbling with his suspenders and finally succeeded in buttoning on to my pants. When the elevator stopped, he staggered out. His suspender flipped a button off my pants, it struck a lady on the ear. Just at that time, a small boy bursted a balloon. The lady screamed "mercy, I'm shot," and fainted. A doctor got her revived up. Then she said "doctor, with a bullet through my brain, do you think I will ever have my right mind again!"

Truthly yours,
Lem Griffis

Our letters to the editor are intended to be a free and open forum for local and area citizens to comment on items of general public interest. If you wish to write a letter to us, please type it or write legibly, double-spacing preferred. Letters are subject to editing for length, good taste and newspaper style. Subjects of a personal nature are generally not acceptable. Endorsements of political candidates are also not acceptable during a campaign. All letters must be signed but names may be withheld under certain dire circumstances. Please include a daytime phone number and address. You can also e-mail us a letter at clinnews@windstream.net, or visit our website at www.theclinchcountynews.com.



More about bold, bowled, bulled, or bald peanuts

A couple of weeks ago in this space, I offered my services for spell-checking signs at roadside food stands.

This week, I'm revisiting that topic, sort of – breaking down the different variations of shacks, stands, and tents I've visited in search of the perfect peanut.

Driving the backroads of Georgia is like frolicking through Peanut Xanadu – a new nutty concoction around every corner, sold to you, most probably, by a halfcocked nut.

Being a zealous legume lover, I don't make a trip over 100 miles without at least one stop for some roadside peanuts – my favorite being boiled peanuts. One thing that has struck me about these brief junkets is the different varieties of peanuts available here in the South. All have very similar characteristics to the boiled peanut, but are branded or marketed differently from shack to shack.

Some examples I have sampled, with my own short reviews:

• **Bold Peanuts:** Seeing this sign scribbled on a rickety

fruit stand in southwest Georgia, I was expecting something zesty and exciting. But I found them to taste rather tame compared to boiled peanuts. Don't let the clever phrasing fool you.

• **Bowled Peanuts:** The sign, etched in red ink, or perhaps blood, intrigued me. Are these peanuts merely served in a bowl, or are they prepared by bowling them over with something? Or were they prepared by actual bowlers? My answer: Served in a sack and wet. Intrigue became disappointment.

• **Bulled Peanuts:** The name scared me, but I'm always game for a new goober. I asked the man sitting in the lawn chair why they were called "bulled peanuts." He responded with, "Ya ain't from round here, are ya boy?" In the faint distance, I heard a banjo, and ran to my car. Scary, indeed.

For the record, the

peanuts were wet and served in a sack – sort of like boiled peanuts.

• **Bolied Peanuts:** I saw the sign, scrawled as if written during an earthquake, and immediately wondered what "bolied" meant? Could they be Indian peanuts? Or maybe they were "bolied" around as part of their preparation?

They came in a plastic bag and were wet – like boiled peanuts, only tastier. I recommend highly.

And if anyone knows the recipe for bolied peanuts, or how one bolies, please let me know.

• **Bolid Peanuts:** When I saw this sign, I thought that maybe they meant to spell "Solid Peanuts" and just made a mistake. I quickly dismissed that absurd notion and pulled over. They weren't solid at all, but rather wet and flimsy, served in a ziploc bag with a boiled egg, or,

perhaps, a bolid egg. Too salty for my tastes.

• **Boild Peanuts:** This dish was served from a shack on old Highway 41. I figured the name "Boild" indicated they were cooked for a shorter period of time than regular boiled peanuts.

I was right. They were somewhat wet, but simply too hard for my liking.

• **Bald Peanuts:** Could the name imply that these peanuts were without a shell, or some exotic variety without a dimpled outer casing? No and no.

Served in a ziploc bag, hot to the touch, they looked, felt, and tasted just like regular boiled peanuts, only hotter.

• **Boiled Pee-Nuts:** I skipped this shack, located in north Georgia along Highway 441. Any nut that includes "pee" in its name, or its preparation, is not appetizing to my finicky palate.

So, take it from your resident peanut fancier: Just stick to boiled peanuts. The rest – no matter how slickly marketed – are pale imitations.

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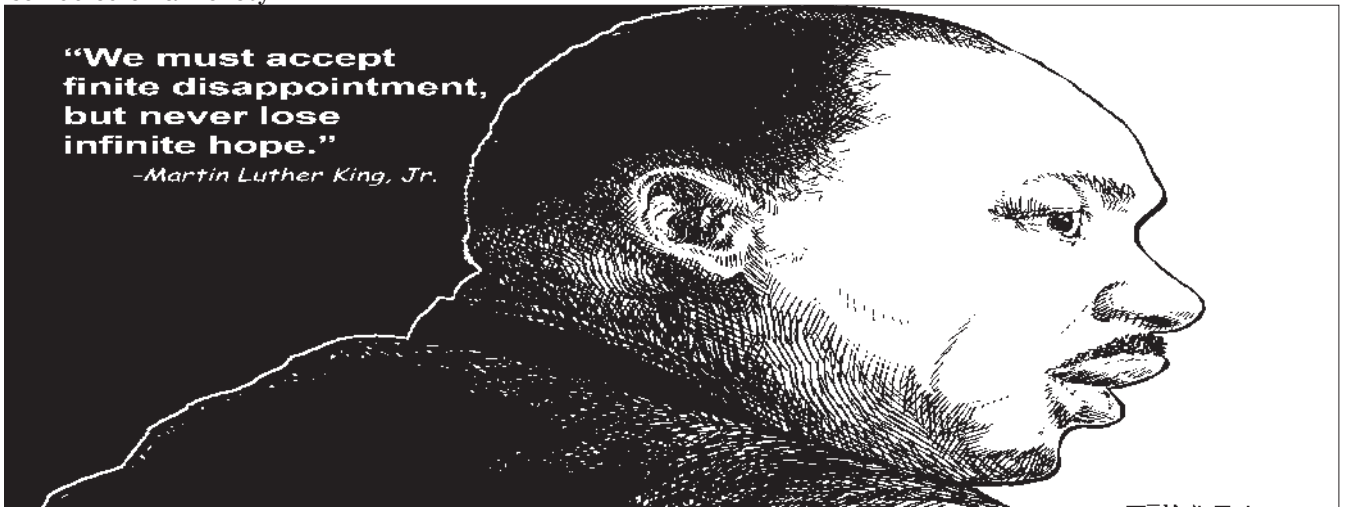
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EDITOR & PUBLISHER



"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.



The Coke Club

Although I'm too young to join the Coke Club, I had a delightful visit with those fellows one Friday afternoon. Ten were present for the full session. Two others stopped by.

Earlier that day I'd asked Cecil McGraw when James Woodward would be presiding over a meeting. James is their CEO - Chief Entertainment Officer. A few hours later we were sipping sodas at McDonalds in Vienna.

When I expressed my certainty they had countless stories worth sharing, Cecil responded with a sly grin. "We have plenty that shouldn't be told," he confided.

Joviality is essential for membership, but it comes easily. The laughter of old men is contagious. Fortunately, no restrictions are imposed on how many times a good tale can be repeated.

James had shared one of those dated stories with me several months ago. During a six-week Alaska adventure he and Charles Stephens undertook in 1992, they went to a small diner for supper one night. James asked the waitress about the stuffed jalapeno peppers on the menu, pronouncing jalapeno with a hard j. She smiled, asked where they were from, then politely explained, "In Alaska we pronounce the j like an h. We say halapeno."

"How long will you Georgia boys be in Alaska?" she inquired. "We're

not sure," said James. "Probably until Hume or Huly."

One of the members thought their club name was ROMEO, for Retired Old Men Eating Out. James, however, said that's an Albany group his brother belongs to.

The Coke Club was established in 1998, but has no written documentation of organization or meetings. They don't keep minutes for legal reasons. Cecil is approaching 30 years of retirement with Georgia Power and has been with them the whole time. James and Charles are also charter members.

Kenny Calhoun wasn't present, but was acknowledged as a reliable source of local lore from days of yore. He reportedly has total recall plus remembers events which happened long before he was born.

The late James Pass was recognized for earlier contributions. While fishing at Lake Blackshear with David Brigman, also deceased, a flock of geese passed over and left a horrendous deposit on Jame's head. He said David showed no sympathy, that he was only worried about his boat.

When David Brown and Mike Joiner dropped by for a brief chat, the subject of age was raised. David, a retired educator, shared that a young lady recently told him he had taught her great-grandmother. That's

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sobering, considering he's younger than the club's senior members.

Marion Hall brought up a long-ago prank coordinated by James Woodward and Jim Braxton. Their businesses were located across the street, providing each a clear view of a strategically-placed empty barrel placed outdoors at Woodward Auto Parts. They would stare curiously into the barrel then jump back, like something struck at them. After they left, others would cautiously peer into the emptiness, mystified by what they had missed.

Someone mentioned crates filled with empty drink bottles being stolen from behind Woodward Service Station. James connected a big horn to a battery and set a tripwire. When the culprit unknowingly activated the horn, police happened to be nearby and caught the man. Such tales help demonstrate how James quickly attained the rank of CEO.

Tidbits of quaint history are preserved by the group. James mentioned Sheriff's Willie King's checkerboard style display that included a small sample of wood from every type of locally grown

tree. The family doesn't know what happened to the unique collection.

Sheriff H. C. Johnson was remembered for his success decades ago in capturing moonshiners. One still was found inside a sawdust pile. Sawdust remnants in a car trunk containing home brew had given him a clue.

As I was leaving, Charles Stephens told me about another Coke Club which assigned numbers to their standard jokes to save time. Instead of retelling familiar stories, someone would call out a number. A new member at his first meeting looked over the list and found one he considered perfect. "Number seven!" he said enthusiastically, but no one laughed. "Don't feel bad," said a veteran club member. "Not everyone can tell a joke."

It's beyond my ability to capture the camaraderie of the Coke Club in a column. So I'll close by thanking those fellows for their friendship, a delightful visit, and reminding me of a blessing easily taken for granted. The laughter of old men is contagious.

Neil Joiner is a syndicated newspaper columnist from Dooly County.