

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

One day while out turkey hunting I found five turkey gobblers setting on a limb. I was puzzled for a short time how to kill all these turkeys at one shot with a rifle. Then I decided to split the limb. So I aimed at the limb and fired, sure enough, I split the limb and caught all five of the turkeys by the toes. I dashed up there, reached down for a stick to kill them with. Picked up a rabbit, threw him down and killed 12 quail. After I got my turkeys killed, I started tracing the bullet. I came to where it went through a deer and killed him. I kept tracing, not so far when I came to where it went through a bear and killed him. By that time I was getting tired but decided to make a few more steps and the bullets had gone through a tree – it was a bee tree – and honey was flowing out on one side, flap jacks on the other. I stopped there, got dinner, and on my way home I met up with that same bullet. It has a drop of sweat on it hunting another bear.

Truthfully 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.



Cats know when the suckers live inside

I grew up in a household that collected cats.

Every so often, my mother would come home with a stray, or as word got out in the Feline Nation, they would wander up to our house and camp outside, knowing suckers lived inside.

Thus, I'm used to cats, know cats, and have developed a healthy respect for them as a species. They simply live their lives the way I would if given the opportunity: Do nothing, lay around, seek interaction only when I want to, and eat and drink to my stomach's content. And occasionally bathe using my tongue.

Currently, we have two "outside" cats -- Jackie and Sadie -- who decided to join our family about 10 years ago. I rarely notice them, they occasionally kill pests/varmints, and they only notice me when they're hungry -- a comfortable arrangement for all parties.

But our first "family" cat caused a little more of a stir.

My wife found a kitten in the middle of a highway, bloodied and

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scrambling for life. She pulled over, with our (then) young daughter in tow, and darted between traffic to save the kitten. By the time I got home that evening, my daughter had already narrowed the choices for her first pet's name: Yo-Yo or Uncle Gary.

Slighting her Uncle Gary, she chose Yo-Yo. After an animal is named, you are legally obligated to keep it -- or so I was told.

We soon found out that Yo-Yo, like most cats I've known, was psychotic. Yo-Yo found great joy back then from jumping on unsuspecting people while hiding in the oddest of places -- like my pants pocket.

Shortly after Yo-Yo came to our home, I received a frantic phone call from home.

"Len, you have to come home now! It's the cat," my wife told me while I was at work.

"What's wrong with the cat?" I asked with visions of something horrible, like him being

run over or eating the pork loin I was planning to eat at lunch.

"Just come -- now! Hurry!"

Then I heard some commotion in the background, my daughter screaming something, and my wife hanging up the phone.

"Wow, this must be serious," I thought to myself. "I better get home quick."

I did, after I scanned the Internet for a while, then went by the local convenience store to peruse their new inventory of hats.

Once home, I was led to the office area, where some work had been done on the floor. My wife then pointed to an open air-conditioning vent. The vent, about four inches wide, went down into the floor and didn't have a cover because of the work that was in progress.

"He's in there," my wife gushed, wrought with worry. "Yo-Yo's in the vent and he won't come out. You need to go

get him out."

I looked down in the vent. My wife, or daughter, or both, have scattered some kitty litter and cat food in the vent in an attempt to lure Yo-Yo from his hiding place.

Knowing cats and their wily ways, I wasn't too concerned.

"Don't worry about it," I said assuredly. "He'll come out after a while."

My carefree attitude toward this "emergency" didn't seem to comfort the female feline neophytes of the house, who said they feared Yo-Yo "would die in there."

They then proceeded to walk around the house, yelling into the other vents, hoping Yo-Yo would hear them as he explored the inner workings of our HVAC system.

While they were wandering around the house fretting and hollering, I looked back at the vent. There was Yo-Yo, calmly licking his coat, not a care in the world.

I then went back to work.

Yes, indeed, suckers live inside.

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The Open Gate

As I approached the traffic light in downtown Vienna in September of 2025, a truck pulling a horse trailer stopped in front of me. A message, perhaps a quote from Mr. Ed's stable, was printed across the back. "Live like someone left the gate open."

That bit of humor reminded me of Dude, a mammoth-sized dog of unknown ancestry. He rode shotgun with our son from California to Georgia during the early part of the Covid pandemic. Seth, Dude, and a chihuahua named Louise slept in their rental vehicle, only making a few essential stops.

Dude decided to live with us, but for a while refused to stay inside our fenced backyard. We thought he had an amazing jumping ability until we caught him climbing over the chain link fence, a possibility we had not considered. He could have traveled the world once he reached the other side, but chose instead to patiently wait at our

back door.

The big fellow had been accustomed to indoor living on the West Coast. It took him a while to understand that our rules were different. He eventually adjusted and became a beloved part of our family, then died too young and broke our hearts. That horse-trailer advice reminded me of Dude, because even if we had left the gate open he would not have ventured far.

In a way that's a good thing. He knew where he wanted to be and wasn't tempted by open gates. Sometimes, though, we can be too cautious and miss out on opportunities.

Yogi Berra said, "When you get to a fork in the road, take it." His humorous quip perhaps contains a bit of subtle wisdom. We don't always take either fork, choosing instead to stay where we are and linger in indecision. Or we turn around and retreat because the road less traveled can be scary. Like a fork in the road

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we never take, we shy away from the open gate.

Some gates are no doubt best left closed, but I'm thinking today of those which are promising. There are a lot of reasons we may be reluctant to go through them. Fear is one that can stop us in our tracks. It can cause us to do nothing or to make half-hearted attempts.

One way I've found helpful in dealing with fear is to ask, "What's the worst that could happen?" I think I heard that from someone giving pointers on public speaking. I've made a few talks over the years and almost always get nervous, so sometimes I ask myself that question. It reminds me that the worst that can happen is not all that bad.

The truth is the audiences I've spoken

to have all been friendly ones. Even if my mind went blank or I lost my notes, the people would have been understanding. None would have called for tar and feathers.

In a nutshell, here's my thinking. If you come to a fork in the road, make the best choice you can then go for it. If you're fearful about tackling something you know is worthwhile then ask yourself, "What's the worst that could happen?" That can help you decide whether to rev up the engine or hit the brakes.

And if you don't remember anything else from today's ramblings, I hope you'll hang on to a little bit of horse sense which Mr. Ed would have surely embraced. "Live like someone left the gate open."