

# Opinion

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

## The Clinch County News

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**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.**

## I'm dumber than a wake of buzzards

A while back, a local woman alerted me to a lot of ibises nesting in some trees in our county. And by a lot, I mean thousands. She called it a "rookery."

As a self-proclaimed expert in English, I then assumed that a rookery was the collective noun used to describe a group of ibises. Boy, I were wrong.

A rookery is a colony of breeding animals, generally birds. A grouping of ibises is either a "congregation," "a stand," or a "wedge."

I found this out by researching collective nouns associated with animals, and was startled by my ignorance. Regular reader(s) of this column probably weren't. For instance, for years, I had referred to a group of gerbils as a "bunch of gerbils." I was way off. The proper term is "horde of gerbils" (which sounds much more intimidating). The more correct animal collective nouns I learned, the more dumbish I felt.

In an effort to feel better about my intellect, I have concocted an animal collective noun quiz for my readers. At the end are the correct answers (no cheating, please).

I wish you nothing but failure.

## Len Robbins

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER



Below, choose the proper collective name for each group of animals:

- Apes.
  - A planet of apes.
  - A shrewdness of apes.
  - A mute of apes.
- Hummingbirds.
  - A charm of hummingbirds.
  - An aerie of hummingbirds.
  - A gam of hummingbirds.
- Hens.
  - A cackle of hens.
  - A brood of hens.
  - A plump of hens.
- Jellyfish.
  - A smack of jellyfish.
  - A generation of jellyfish.
  - A mischief of jellyfish.
- Camels.
  - A company of camels.
  - A flock of camels.
  - A kindle of camels.
- Rattlesnakes.
  - A chine of rattlesnakes.
  - A weyr of rattlesnakes.
  - A rhumba of rattlesnakes.
- Starlings.
  - A school of

starlings.

- A murmuration of starlings.
- A covey of starlings.
- Goldfish.
  - A glint of goldfish.
  - An aqua of goldfish.
  - A charlatan of goldfish.
- Emus.
  - A spit of emus.
  - A mob of emus.
  - A skein of emus.
- Lizards.
  - A lounge of lizards.
  - A clan of lizards.
  - A leap of lizards.
- Woodpeckers.
  - A rookery of woodpeckers.
  - A descent of woodpeckers.
  - A bloat of woodpeckers.
- Tigers.
  - A tyranny of tigers.
  - An ambush of tigers.
  - A courage of tigers.
- Buzzards.
  - A bait of buzzards.
  - A gut of buzzards.
  - A wake of buzzards.
- Chimpanzees.
  - A cartload of chimpanzees.
  - A butload of chimpanzees.

- A romp of chimpanzees.
  - Crows.
    - A murder of crows.
    - A storytelling of crows.
    - A flock of crows.
- Correct answers:
- B. A shrewdness of apes.
  - A. A charm of hummingbirds.
  - B. A brood of hens.
  - A. A smack of jellyfish.
  - B. A flock of camels.
  - C. A rhumba of rattlesnakes.
  - B. A murmuration of starlings.
  - A. A glint of goldfish.
  - B. A mob of emus.
  - A. A lounge of lizards.
  - B. A descent of woodpeckers.
  - B. An ambush of tigers.
  - C. A wake of buzzards.
  - A. A cartload of chimpanzees.
  - Here's where I got tricky. The correct answer is both A. A murder of crows; and B. A storytelling of crows.

And I'm not telling a story. If you got at least three correct — congratulations! You're smarter than a dummy of newspaper columnists.

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## TALL TALES

By Lem Griffis  
Fargo, Georgia

Marriage makes it possible for a man to find out what kind of husband his wife wanted.

What children object most to about school is the principal of the thing.

As we understand it, the world would be wrecked if any nation failed to get from us just what they want.

I went in a barber shop. A lady was shaving a man. When a mouse ran across the floor, you should have seen the expression on that fellow's face when his head stopped rolling.

The preacher bought a second hand car and two days later he took it back. The salesman said, what is the mat- ter, preacher, can't you drive it. Preacher said, not if I stay in the ministry.

Truthfully yours,  
Lem Griffis



## Scribbled Notes 5

My scribbled notes from 2021 named two friends I planned to visit. I waited too long for one. Viewing doesn't count.

I kept a newspaper column by Lanier Roberts about an experience from his youth. He and a cousin were playing on a sawdust pile when a man with a knife startled them. They fled, never knowing if the stranger meant them harm or just wanted to scare them away. It reminded me of a local story that circulated during my childhood.

Sheriff Johnny Johnson made headlines in Dooly County after finding a moonshine still inside a moonshine still inside a moonshine still. The ingenious setup had a gas cooker and a hidden entrance. Sheriff Johnson had earlier caught a bootlegger and noticed wood shavings in his car trunk. It didn't take him long to find the pile.

A scribbled note from June of 2021 demonstrated Mr. Emmett Stephens' quickness in finding clever lines. His son,

Charles, told me a story about a Vienna City Council meeting that Mr. Emmett attended decades ago.

Charles said his father wasn't involved in politics, but he felt strongly about some proposal scheduled for discussion. After Mr. Emmett expressed his opposition, a member of the council asked, "Emmett, who pulled your string?" Mr. Emmett said, "Nobody. I'm a self starter."

A. J. Jarvis, a former banker in Vienna, was mentioned in a note. He had suggested I write a column about old comics. Examples he gave included Smiley Jack, which I'm not familiar with, plus Dick Tracey and Snuffy Smith. As a longtime comic reader, I liked his idea. Liking without effort, though, doesn't get things done.

My favorites are gone from what Daddy called the funny papers, but I still read a few comics each day. When I was little Daddy would read them to me on Sundays and add bits of commentary. Snuffy Smith, Lil'

## Neil Joiner

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Abner, Beetle Bailey, and Little Orphan Annie were among his regulars. I don't know how much reading the comics has impacted my life, but memories of sitting in my father's lap are still a blessing.

A memo from April suggested Paul Harvey would be a good column topic. Years ago I was an ardent fan of his immensely popular radio program. I never wrote about him, but I do have a short personal story.

When Paul Harvey came to Valdosta State College in 1973 to make a speech, I was the Student Government President and had a chance to meet him. It surprised me when he asked if I knew Deke DeLoach and had I seen him. Deke soon joined us and was warmly greeted. I was impressed that Deke had never mentioned his family's friendship with Mr. Harvey. It was a good lesson in

choosing modesty.

After Mr. Harvey's talk, he opened the floor for questions. A guy who was part hippie asked, "Do you think marijuana should be legalized?" Mr. Harvey flashed a huge grin. "I don't think cigarettes should be legal!" he said. "Next question." The audience, including a few aspiring hippies, laughed heartily. It was a splendid example of disagreeing without being disagreeable.

Deke DeLoach was a laid-back guy with an understated confidence. He had sort of a Peter Fonda vibe like in Easy Rider. I hadn't thought about Deke in ages. Now I'm wondering what all roads he may have travelled. I'd love to know the rest of the story, but may have waited too long to ask. A scribbled note just became a sober reminder. Viewing doesn't count.

