

# 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  
Fargo, Georgia

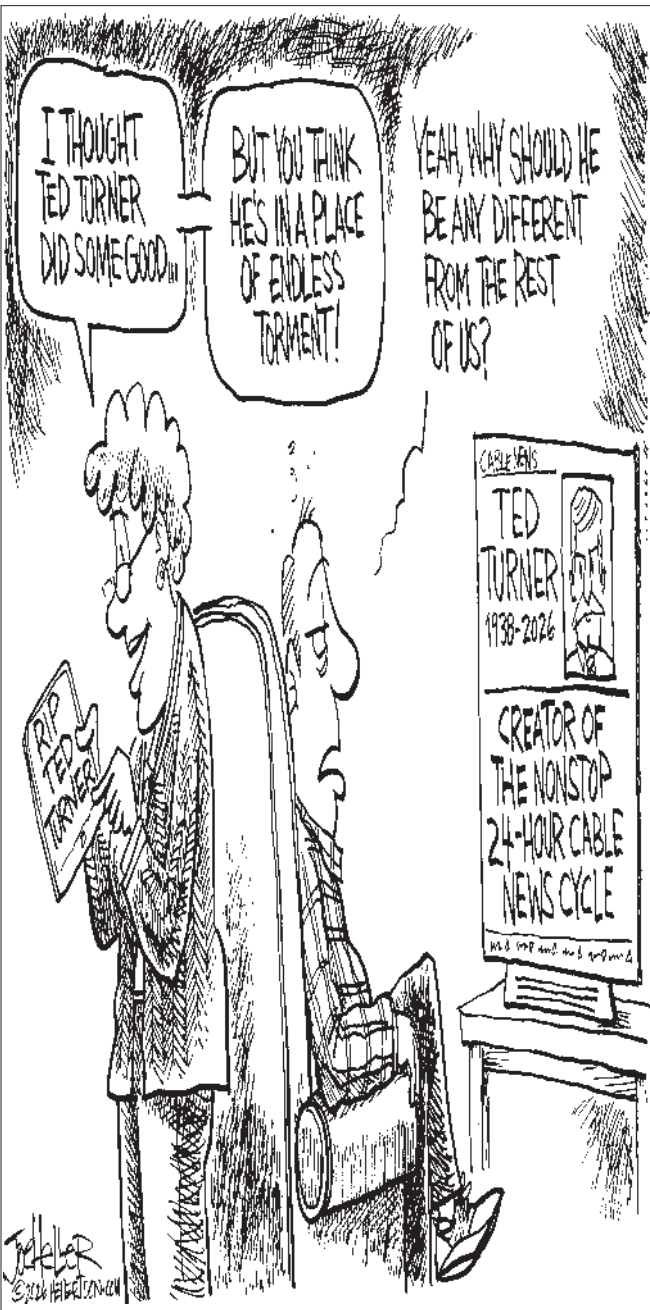
A politician is a person that has what it takes to take what you have. He does not make up his bed and lie on it. He makes up his bunk and lies out of it. He doesn't stand on his own record but jumps on the other fellow's. He will find an excuse for getting out of anything but office.

If ladies should be first in everything, just why was Adam made first? Because our Maker did not need any advice while making man.

The trouble with our schools is they turn out so many people that cannot read until we cannot supply enough that cannot write to fill the demand.

Everything would be just if we had more wildlife in the forests and less in the cities.

Truthfully yours,  
Lem Griffis



## America's squandered smorgasbord

"Eat what's on your plate. There are starving children in India," is what I, and every other American child from the years 1620-2026, heard in some form or another when we were reluctant about finishing our meal.

My usual smart-alecky retort was something akin to "Well, then, we need to wrap it up and mail it to India."

If we did, that would be one large package — about the size of Maine.

This from a story a while back in the *New York Times*: Studies have shown that a quarter to half of all the food produced in the United States goes uneaten.

According to the story, one study, conducted by the University of Arizona over three decades, found that 25 percent of the food Americans bring into their homes is wasted. A book written by Jonathan Bloom, "American Wasteland: How America Throws Away Nearly Half of Its Food," points out that our wasteful ways are also expensive. Bloom points out that a family of four spending \$175 a week on groceries squanders about \$40

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each week, which adds up to more than \$2,000 a year. (Please note that these financial figures were from a number of years ago). Add that to food produced in the U.S. that is left in fields, spoiled in transport or thrown out at the grocery store or restaurant, and that brings you to an estimated 50 percent mark.

Why do we waste so much food? The story offers up a number of reasons — discarding food due to safety concerns, refrigerator clutter, not being hungry — but misses the primary culprit, in my own personal estimation. That villain is timing. More specifically, the timing of when you go grocery shopping. Even more specifically, going grocery shopping when you're hungry.

I'll offer this personal anecdote to make my point.

Shortly after my wife

and I married — nearly 30 years ago — I went to the grocery store on the verge of starvation (American translation: Not full), and placed a gigantic box of animal crackers in our shopping cart.

"Why are you buying an eight-pound box of animal crackers?" my new wife asked, oblivious that I was hungry — and stupid. "You'll never eat all that."

"Oh, yes I will," was my hungry reply. "I love animal crackers."

Her eyes rolled.

"And look here," I added, pointing to the nutritional label.

"Animal crackers are good for you, too. Only 120 calories per serving, and 6 percent of the recommended daily allowance of Riboflavin."

She surveyed the label for a moment, then offered, "Len, there's 120 servings of animal crackers in this box."

I bought it anyway. And ate six servings that

night.

And five more servings a week later. And, then, we moved — five years later.

"Hey, Len, when are you going to eat the rest of these animal crackers?," my wife asked, chuckling, as she cleaned out the cupboard.

"Uh, uh, I'm going to get around to that," I said.

"I have to be in an animal cracker mood."

She packed it in the move — solely to prove a point.

Then, five years later, we moved again. And again, we went through the "when are you going to eat the rest of these animal crackers?" routine.

I threw it away that time — adding to America's squandered smorgasbord.

But I'm also making an effort to create less excess through one simple action: Before I go grocery shopping now, I always go to an all-you-can-eat buffet first.

And when I get in an animal cracker mood, I buy a small bag, or two.

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## Digging up stones

Digging Up Stones struck me as a rock-solid heading for a column on archeology. Today we'll lightly excavate a little known but valuable resource in that field. I'm clueless in such matters, but the Ocmulgee Archeological Society has capable folks who will gladly assist the unlearned. That's assuming, of course, the motivation for uncovering the past is honorable.

Harold Gray, a friend from Unadilla High School days, invited me to attend a meeting of the OAS. The two of us have had little contact since my 1970 graduation. He was a kid when I left town, a whole grade behind me. It was a shock to find out we're now the same age.

Three things stand out in my memories of the lean, red-headed youngster of yesteryear. He was smart, well-mannered, and could run all day long.

"You still do any running?" I asked. My expectation was to hear about knee trouble or other reasons he couldn't.

"Three miles a day," he said, "plus I walk a fourth one." He exercises other muscles at the same time by doing about 500 tensile contractions per mile. I decided not to disclose my favorite workout is pulling a rope to keep a hammock swinging. That is, however, in addition to a rigorous typing regimen and high-speed piano

playing. Not to brag, but my fingers could pass for 65.

At the time of our April 4th visit, Harold lacked about 140 miles traveling around the world by foot, a distance of 24,900 miles. That's based on estimates from 1981 through 1987 and records kept since 1988. If miles were added beginning with childhood, he's well on his second lap.

His sense of humor has held up as well as his legs. "I've been running to or from something all my life," he said, but I knew he was half kidding. At 13 he was the sole employee on the night shift at Odom's Texaco station off I 75, working eleven to seven. When a young teenager walks in the shoes of a man, he isn't prone to running away from anything.

After high school, Harold went to Mercer on a combination scholarship including academics, working with the basketball program, and pitching on the baseball team. Accepted into the Experimental Freshman Program, he's been steadily running forward as long as I've known him.

Today's article, per Harold's request, was to feature the OAS, but I thought it might be helpful to first introduce him as one of their faithful members. Although he works at Warner Robins Air Force Base, his passion

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is archeology, a common thread of OAS members. They're a friendly group who welcome others wanting to learn more or perhaps even join them.

Several professionals are involved in leadership, like Ashley Quinn, Collections Manager of the William P. Walls Museum of Natural History. Or Stephen Hammock, a respected archeologist with 25 years of experience, who founded OAS in 2003. And there's Cortney Whitehouse, a delightful young lady who left a career in human resources to work on a degree in archaeology because that's where her heart is.

John and David, two pleasant senior citizens who help with Artifact Identification Days, confirmed my suspicions that the Indiana Jones movie character is based on Harold. They didn't specifically state that but smiled as they acknowledged having seen him wearing a similar hat.

If you want to learn more about the OAS, their website describes their mission, projects, resources, and opportunities for participation. Or you can email them at ocmarsoc@gmail.com.

Make no bones about it, they stand ready to teach others the right way to dig into things.

Harold shared some details about a few of the intriguing items he's discovered. Their origins far precede the arrowheads typically found in Georgia. As he searches for history and tries to preserve it, he feels a spiritual connection to those who walked here long before us. With decades of experience, he sees things which might be overlooked and permanently hidden or destroyed.

Like his fellow OAS members, Harold has a patient reverence toward archeology. His goal is more than finding artifacts. He wants to understand who left them here and why.

Some mysteries can't be solved on this side of heaven, but a man who has already circled the globe and is still running will no doubt keep trying. A passion for the past is why he does what he does. That's why my friend Harold Gray keeps digging up stones.

Neil Joiner is a syndicated newspaper columnist from Dooly County.