

# Opinion

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

## The Clinch County News

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 113 E. Dame Avenue • Homerville, Georgia 31634  
 Telephone: 912-487-5337  
 Published by  
 AIR Publications, Inc.  
**A.I. "Len" Robbins, III .....Editor & Publisher**  
 lrobbins@theclinchcountynews.com  
**Holly Mullis.....Business Manager**  
 airpublications@outlook.com  
**Ben Murray.....Production Manager**  
 news@theclinchcountynews.com

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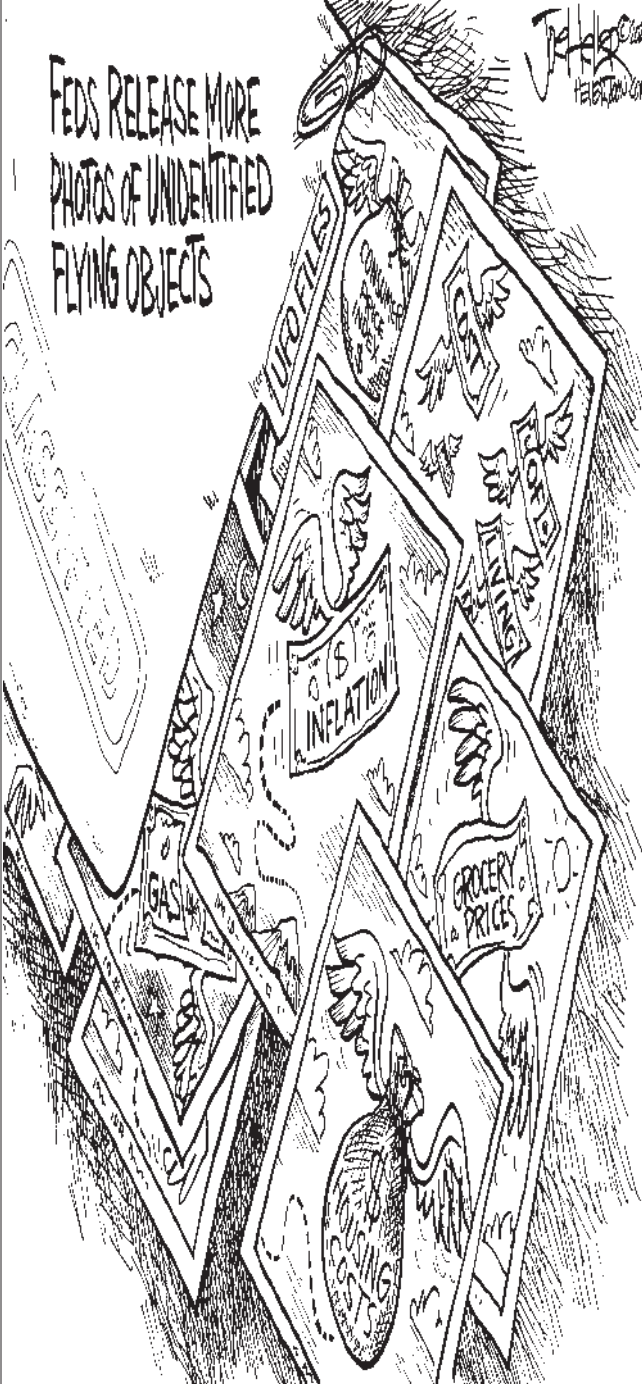


## TALL TALES

By Lem Griffis  
 Fargo, Georgia

Uncle Paul used to live in the Ozark mountains in Missouri. He didn't know anything about machinery except for a home-made wheelbarrow and a 2-wheel oxcart which he had. The country got modernized some, and a road was graded right by Uncle Paul's door. One day a motorcycle come down that road. Uncle Paul had never heard of such a thing and as it passed, he took his gun and cracked down on it. A few minutes later, Aunt Sallie asked Uncle Paul did he "kill that there animal" and he said "Nope but I shore did make him turn a'loose of that man he caught."

Truthfully yours,  
 Lem Griffis



## The folly of explaining a phone booth

I love answering questions about the "olden days."

"Dad, in the 'olden days,' was everything in black and white, or just the TVs?"

"No, everything was in color, including the TVs."

"In what grade were you in when you got your first computer?"

"17th."  
 "Huh?"

Then this one, which seemed to shock my youngest son when he asked a while back.

"Dad, when did you get your first cell phone?"

"My first cell phone? Hmm," I wondered aloud. "I think I got my first cell phone well over 25 years ago. It was in the late '90s."

"Wha? Why, why didn't your parents buy you a cell phone when you were in high school, in college, wh-what did you do? Were you in trouble and they punished you by taking away your cell phone?"

At this point, his astonishment ran down to his fingers, and he began texting something to someone about his father growing up in a cave.

"Well, we didn't have cell phones when I was a teenager, and I

## Len Robbins

lrobbins@theclinchcountynews.com  
 EDITOR & PUBLISHER



don't remember anyone having one when I was in college," I explained. "I didn't get my first cell phone until I was out of college, maybe in my late 20s or early 30s."

"How, what, how, what, did you do when you needed to call someone?"

"I went to a regular land-line phone and called them."

"What's a land-line phone? Are you making up stuff again?"

His cynicism is justified. I have, at some point, told my children that I fought in the Spanish-American War, invented Pringles, was Samuel L. Jackson's roommate in college, and was a member of the cast of the blockbuster motion picture "E.T.," playing "E.T." They later found out I was fibbing on almost all accounts.

"No, a land-line is a phone that you have at your house that plugs into a wall. You know, like the one we have now and never use."

"So, how did you call

people from your car if you didn't have a cell phone?"

"You didn't," I replied.

"What? You mean, you didn't take your phone in your car with you?"

"No, I mean I didn't have a portable phone. No one did. You had a phone at your house and that was it. Or you used a pay phone," I explained.

"A pay phone? You mean, you had a cell phone, but it's one where you pay for your minutes up front?"

He didn't get it.

"No, a pay phone is a land-line phone that's in a booth," I retorted.

"What's a booth?"

"A phone booth is a glass-encased cubicle that had a phone in it, and you put a quarter in it if you had to make a phone call," I said. "They had a pay phone booth on about every corner."

I might as well have been explaining this in Cantonese.

"Wait, let me figure this out," he said. "How

did you make a phone call if you wanted to ask someone a question or tell them something? Did you just text them?"

I laughed out loud.

"Text? No, there was no such thing as texting," I said with a chortle. "If you wanted to talk to somebody, you waited until you got home or to a phone and then you called them. Or, if it was an emergency and you were on the road, you would stop and use one of the aforementioned phone booths, and you would put some money in the phone and you would call them. Do you understand?"

"I think so," he replied, pausing to try to fathom the ways of ancient civilizations.

"Well, I guess, when you were young, you just had to wait if you wanted to talk to someone. You couldn't just talk to them whenever you liked," he reasoned.

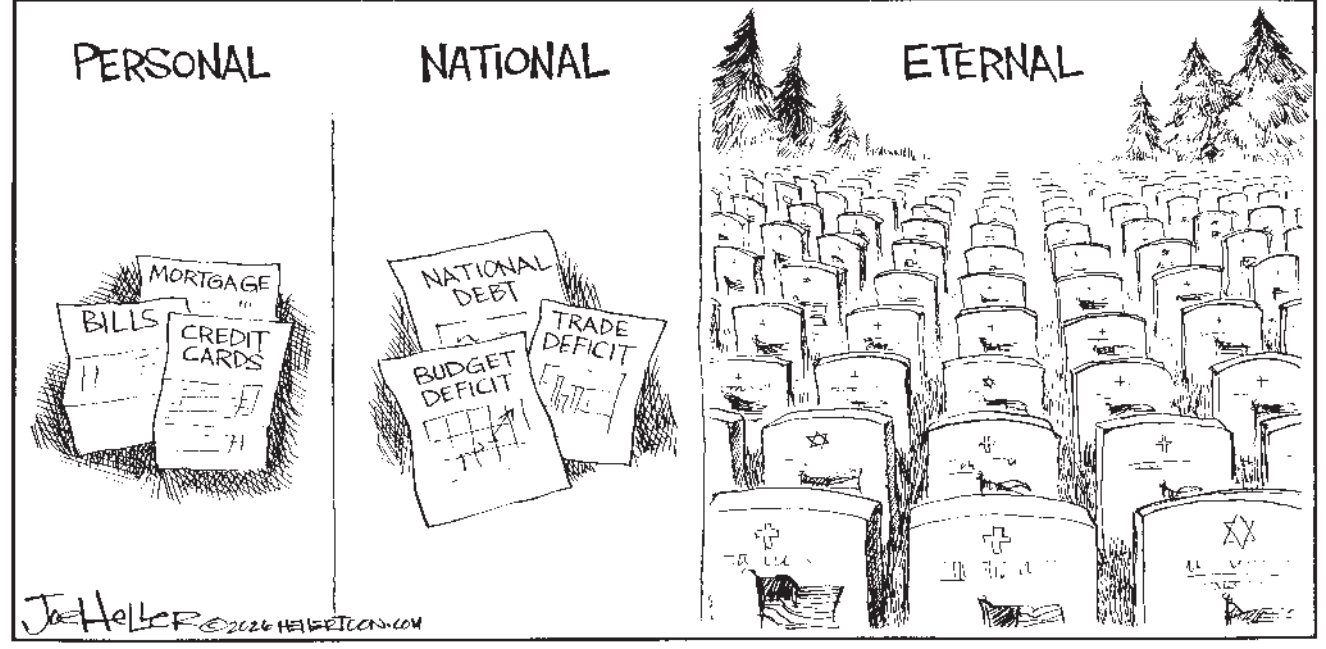
"Precisely," I agreed.

"If you wanted to tell someone something," he added, "you would have to find one of those land phones, or find a computer and e-mail them."

"Uh, huh," I replied, giving up.

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## The debt we owe



## Scribbled Notes 6

I kept a handwritten note in March of 2020 from an older gentleman who had read "Lessons From the Ladder." Although we'd never met, he instantly attained favored status by saying nice things about the author.

In a world of electronic communications, it was nice to get an old-style letter. Hopefully, pen and paper won't become extinct, although I have reservations about cursive writing. It sounds inappropriate for a Baptist.

A newspaper clipping from April of 2021 announced that Daybreak Pregnancy Care Center was holding an open house in their new location. The leading cause of deaths in America is reportedly abortions, followed by heart-related issues. I suppose the two are intertwined. Matters of the heart lead to all sorts of problems.

Jane and I went to Lake Eufaula in Alabama on April 16th. I drove as she made notes about sights along the road. "Lions in a Pasture" is

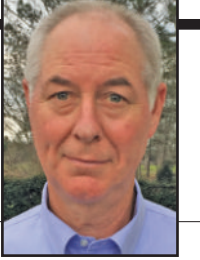
another of my unwritten columns. Two large concrete lions guard a pasture on Highway 280 in Sumter County. I seldom pass that way, but when I do Isaiah 11:6 comes to mind. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

I don't know if scripture inspired someone to place those unusual sentries among their cattle, but that's the thought I ponder when going by. If anyone knows their story, I'd love to hear it.

The Rooster Hotel is near Smithville, Georgia. I made up that name and know nothing about the place except what can be seen from the road. Dozens of 55-gallon barrels with small openings at the bottom house what I'm guessing are roosters. Each bird was tethered with a light line to his private quarters. Some patrolled their yards while others perched atop their cylindrical homes.

## Neil Joiner

COLUMNIST



gnejoiner@gmail.com

I'm guessing the hotel is pet friendly despite fowl service.

Fading white letters, D. M. Dismuke Co., are still legible on a vacant red-brick building. I read online that it was once a thriving business in a vibrant community of Terrell County. Although the structure is more elaborate than the country stores of my childhood, it reminds me of that era.

Eight country stores, including Joiner's Store, were within five miles of our home. Original owners included my grandfather, Jim Joiner, along with Tap Owen, El Sparrow, Bivins Calhoun, J. H. Love, Dee Mashburn, Doc Mashburn, and Harold Nutt, who opened his place in the 1960s. Mr. Harold had severe physical challenges, yet wore a constant smile to complement exceptional determination.

Those stores were all long gone when much to my surprise a new one came along. Carver's Country Store was opened a few years ago in a farming community near Mock Springs, a Pulaski County landmark. While there are plenty of good reasons to stop by, my favorite is a chili dog topped with onions and mustard and washed down with Dr. Pepper.

The hands of time only go in one direction, but I'm learning that the turns offer a blessing - good memories get sweeter with age. As a country store with fading white letters pleasantly reminded me of childhood, I realized that quiet rewards are getting easier to find in sights along the road. That may sound odd to some, but one thing I am certain of. Old men who write handwritten letters will understand.