

# Opinion

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

## The Clinch County News

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## TALL TALES

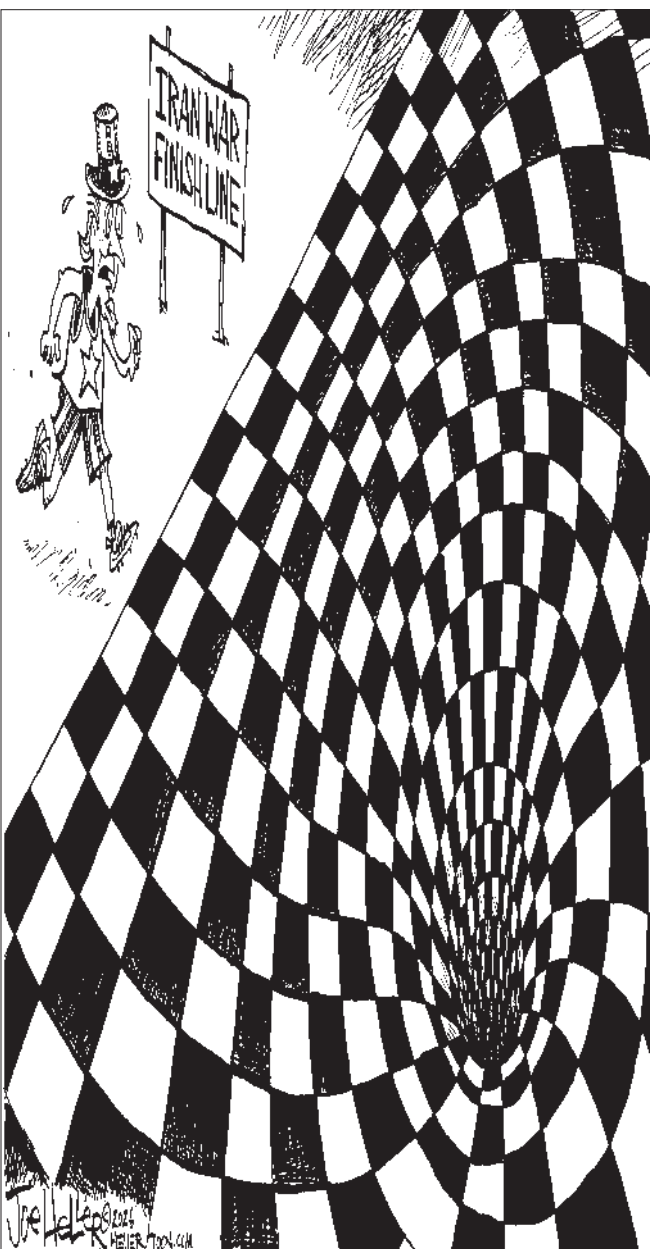
By Lem Griffis  
Fargo, Georgia

On my trip down to Jacksonville, there was an old lady on the train. The conductor came by and she said "is the next stop Callahan?" The conductor said "no". When the conductor came through again, she asked "is the next stop Callahan?" The conductor said "no, nor the next nor the next. So sit down and be quiet I will let you know when we get there."

The old lady leaned back and went to sleep. The conductor forgot about her until they were five miles past Callahan. He pulled the cord, had the train stop and back up to the place, then woke the old lady up and told her that was Callahan and he would be glad to assist her in getting off. She said no she did not want to get off, that her daughter had told her to take a pill when they got there.

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](mailto:clinnews@windstream.net), or visit our website at [www.theclinchcountynews.com](http://www.theclinchcountynews.com).



## Get off my lawn, fortune cookie

Of the smorgasbord of Chinese food we had that evening, the children were only interested in the fortune cookies.

My nephew popped one open. His grandfather said "What does the fortune say?" Without missing a beat, the five-year-old looked at the small sliver of paper and replied, "Your life will be filled with disappointment."

"Big Daddy" thought this was hilarious – as we all did. My nephew just made up the fortune.

Why did he create a fortune rather than reading what was actually on the paper?

Methinks two reasons: 1. "Fortunes" in fortune cookies aren't fortunes at all. They're often philosophies, or quotes, or bland advice stolen from Hallmark cards – which is no fun whatsoever. Even a five-year-old realizes that.

And 2. He couldn't read yet.

## Len Robbins

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Add this to the growing list of "things that were different when I was a kid."

When I read my first fortune cookie, it actually had a fortune in it – a prediction of something that was going to happen to me. For this column, I remember that fortune being: "You will one day grow a wonderful mustache." Which, by the way, I'm still waiting for in giddy anticipation.

Fortune cookies are supposed to be mystical, a prophecy, sometimes a bit scary, sometimes silly, and fun. It's supposed to make you forget the cookie is a mangled, tasteless piece of leftover dough.

Here are the last two, most recent, "fortunes" I

have received in fortune cookies: "If I bring forth what is inside me, what I bring forth will save me."

That's not a prophecy. That's plagiarism from Tony Robbins (no relation).

The other one was: "Writing is a craft, not an art."

Again, that's not a prediction. Nor true, as this column – which is neither craft, nor art – can attest. Although it is writing (technically).

Why did the fortune cookie people in China California Nebraska decide to change the inscriptions in fortune cookies from actual fortunes to crappy new age psychobabble and cryptic adages? Putting on my

grumpy old man hat, I surmise that somebody got mad when their fortune said: "You will meet despair after you encounter a man in a black velvet dinner jacket." Or it could have been something like "You will become wealthy beyond your wildest dreams," and when it didn't happen, somebody complained to the restaurant, then that person complained to the fortune cookie company, and they just decided not to offend anyone anymore with fortune cookies that actually forecast a fortune.

Which makes me sad.

I liked fortune cookies the way they were: Something specific that I could look forward to, worry about, chuckle about as I shared with dinner companions, or ignore completely – usually the latter.

But they're free – so why should I complain?

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## Letters from Vietnam

James Robert Taylor was killed in Vietnam on January 28, 1966. In 2020 his niece, Kim Taylor Farris, found 33 handwritten letters he had sent home. Here are a few excerpts.

9/25/65 - "Last week I was promoted to PFC. That's \$20.00 a month more. If something happens and I am killed, I've got \$30,000.00 insurance on myself. The government gave me \$10,000 for nothing. Or rather for coming over here."

"The first couple days here we just pulled little details like guard and building bunkers. Then they put us Pathfinders as door gunners for helicopters. The first mission I was on was to pick up the 101st Division. About 3 companies had let the Viet Cong slaughter them. The 117th Airborne Company had put them in and had 4 downed helicopters and all the others hit at least once. We picked them up the day after they were put in and only got 3 helicopters hit, none downed. It's getting dark so I'll close for today."

10/5/65 - "Sometimes I wish I was back so bad, just to be with Martha, but I know things will be better if I wait."

10/11/65 - "I've just

about put the Army out of my mind. I'm going to get my high school and some other training then get out."

10/16/65 - "What you heard on T.V. was right and members of my team were there. A couple were shot at but weren't hit. The Army better get on the stick with my money. I told Martha she could buy a set of rings if she saw what she wanted."

10/28/65 - "I guess things are getting pretty bad over here. I dunno. The people get all the news. We get all the noise."

11/1/65 - "The other day some Vietnamese girl tried to get me to marry her sister while we were operating in a drop zone. The little girl's sister was 18 years old but looked like she might have been older."

11/9/65 - "Got in about 16 hours door gunning in the last three days. Tell people not to send me anything for Christmas. I won't be able to send them anything."

11/12/65 - "I'm starting to have my doubts about Martha. She is going out with some other guy. I like being free and just don't want to get married. Maybe I'm just afraid of it. I dunno."

## Neil Joiner

COLUMNIST

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11/27/65 - "They're starting to let people go on R&R to Hong Kong. Maybe I'll go soon. I hope. I dropped Martha. I'm tired of war. Maybe I'll buy a Harley when I get back."

12/4/65 - "I won't be home for Christmas or New Years for the first time in twenty years. Please tell everyone that I miss everybody back home, and no matter where I am Christmas I'll be thinking of you all, as always."

12/7/65 - "Two guys got Malaria in Pathfinders. One of them slept next to me. He sure was a good guy."

12/10/65 - "I gave the Bible to a fellow named Bill Scholl. He's from Jacksonville."

12/17/65 - "Just got back off a mission today. It was the first time I spent the night on the top of a mountain. It was both cold and wet. Tomorrow starts another 30 day mission."

12/21/65 - "My team Sergeant was seriously wounded and another Pathfinder killed that went out with myself and another man. I've

got a little artifact for Kim if they ever give me enough time to mail it. By that time it will be too small for her if it isn't already."

12/24/65 - "I'm thinking of you and love you very much. I've got a thousand things to be thankful for."

12/31/65 - "Darwin is sitting in here writing letters too. I think he just wrote you all one. Right now all I'm doing is waiting for next year. It's about 10:30 p.m. Hope you all had a Happy New Year."

1/2/66 - "I'm going to the memorial services for Louis today."

1/4/66 - "Most everyone else has gone to Pleiku, but I got to stay back. They think I've done too much lately. At times it feels that way. I'm sending a couple of pictures so you can remember what I look like."

"You all be good. Love, Bobby."

Neil Joiner is a syndicated newspaper columnist from Dooly County.