

Opinion

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

The Clinch County News

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TALL TALES

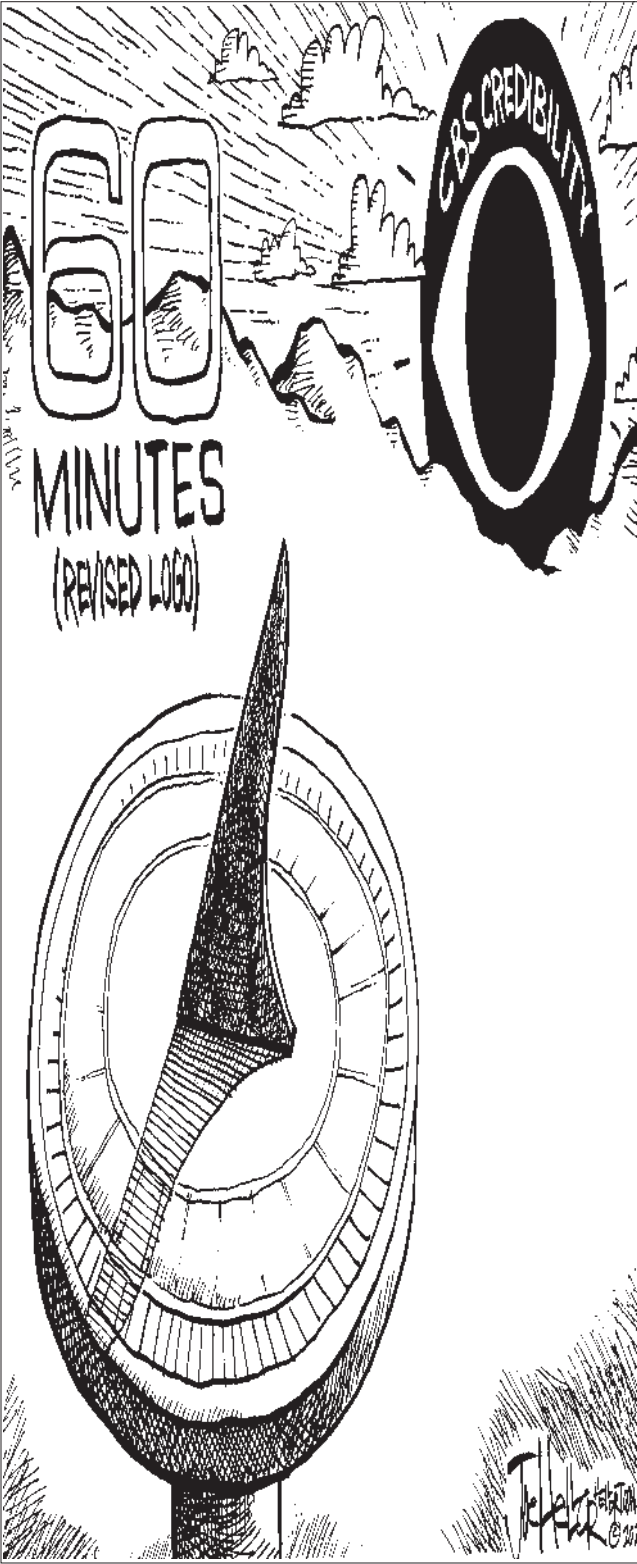
By Lem Griffis
Fargo, Georgia

I crossed my bees with lighting bugs so they could see how to work at night. And they make a double crop of honey every year.

The lightning bug is a strange little creature, He hasn't any mind. He rushes through this world of ours with his head light on behind.

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, or visit our website at www.theclinchcountynews.com.



A salute to all of the 'normal, boring dads'

When our children were younger, we would let them choose books for us to read to them at bedtime.

One of their frequent selections was “Me and My Dad”, compiled by Stuart Hample. The book chronicles the observations of children ages seven to 11 — in their own words — about their fathers.

As we approach Father’s Day (or pass it, depending on when you are reading this), I thought I would dig up the book and revisit some of the wit and wisdom gleaned from these sons and daughters on their dads.

Enjoy:
Even if I’m bad, my dad has to still like me because I am in his family. I think it’s a law.

Alison
I saw my dad in his naked clothes. It was very interesting.

Natalie
When my father pays the bills, he says “Darn it. Everything is getting more expensive these days!” I guess you have to be rich to be a father.

Denis

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER

I can talk to him about a lot of things I can’t talk about with my mom about. But I’m not going to write it down because we’d get in trouble.

Sanford

He always tells me I can do anything if I stick with it and really try. What if I try to walk up the outside of the Umpire State Building?

Naomi

When I say “I’m bored,” my dad says, “no, you’re not. You’re Annie.” When I fall down, my dad makes me tell the sidewalk I’m sorry. When my dad sees chocolate, he goes CRAZY!

Annie

When me and my dad walk our dog I tell him what’s bugging me. He listens very good but I wish he’d come to school with me. Then Jimmy Ryan couldn’t bug me.

Ralph

My dad does things like make the beds and clear the table, but he never, ever cleans the cat box! He says he comes from royal blood, so he doesn’t have to do litter boxes.

Steven M.

I love him very much. If he will raise my allowance, I will love him even more.

Seth

Every time we shoot a video he dances all around and makes these weird faces. You’d never know in real life he’s just this normal, boring dad.

Alvin

My dad has to be in a wheelchair, but he can do most everything. Except walk and play sports. But I wouldn’t trade him for anybody, even Mark McGwire!

Paul

When I get married, I want to find a man like my dad. Only younger.

Vonetta
My dad could beat up anybody. He doesn’t ever do it because he’s very gentle. But I just know he could.

Max

My father made up this song for my birthday. It goes like Yankee Doodle.
“Freddy Barlow just turned 10.

He’s never been a bother. He’s the best kid every born.

I know cause I’m his father.”

Freddy B.

When I’m in church sitting next to my dad, it’s one of the best times in life. I wish we could do it every day instead of just on Sundays.

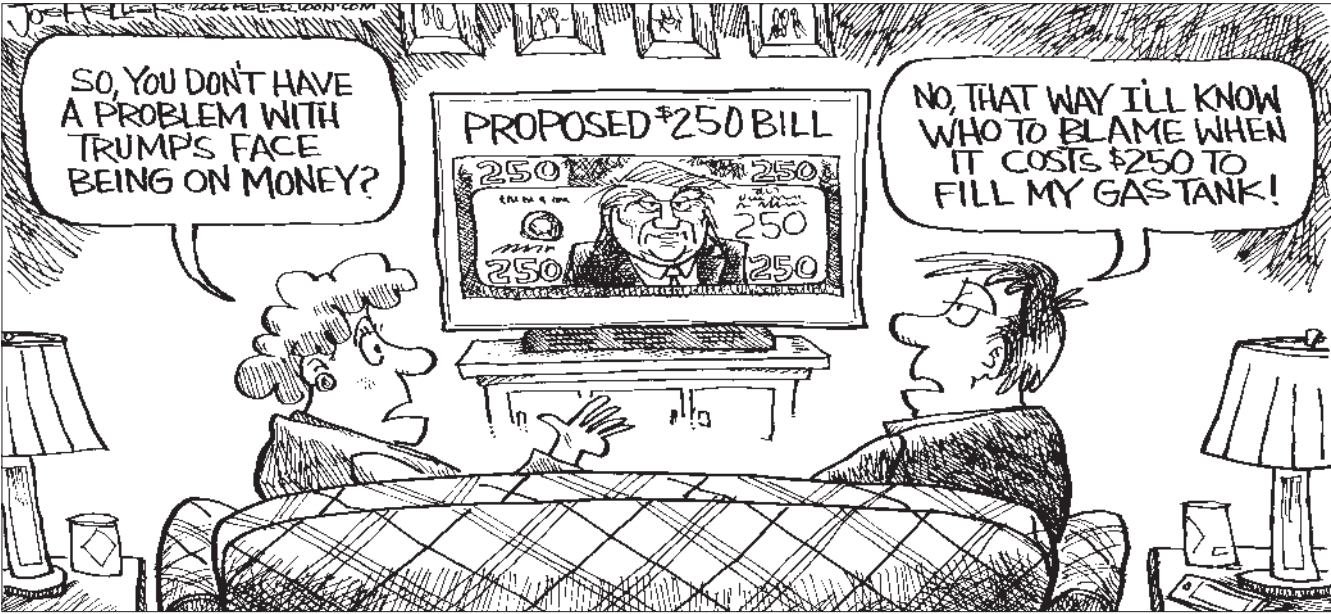
Lisbeth

I love my Dad because he’s my only father and I have lived with him for all of my life. Also, he’s going to take me to see “Godzilla.”

Ross

Even if it’s not Father’s Day yet, it’s not too early to start the celebration — just not in your naked clothes.

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Buddy Belf lower

Buddy Bellflower died way too young. This story begins a few years before. Buddy rode our school bus for a short time when I was a youngster. He was eight years older than me and made a big impression on a little kid. His deep tan and black hair caused me to think he might be part Indian. That elevated his status considerably to a freckled-faced boy prone to sunburn.

He was fun to be around, perhaps sensing my unspoken admiration. I never heard any talk of him causing trouble, but his natural swagger made me think he could take care of himself. Billy Griggs, a childhood friend of Buddy’s, confirmed that opinion. “Buddy was tough as nails but a really good guy. He’d fight a bear with a switch,” Billy said with a chuckle.

Billy illustrated his friend’s bravado with a story about Buddy and Mac Reed finding a coon in the stump of a hollow tree. They threw a coat over the stump then dropped it onto the critter, planning to take him hostage. The coon ate them up from the elbows down. Badly scarred arms led to heavy ribbings at school, but enhanced Buddy’s daring reputation.

Lewis Oscar Bellflower, Jr. (originally spelled Belflowers) was born

October 21, 1944, and died July 8, 1962. I was nine at the time and he was seventeen. Our paths rarely crossed after he completed the eighth grade at Pinehurst Elementary, but his mysterious death troubled me then and still does.

Karen Bellflower Brown was seven when her beloved uncle was killed. He had moved in with Karen’s family that year and was working with her father, Bo Bellflower, in his carpentry business. Dooly County Sheriff H. C. “Johnny” Johnson delivered the news.

Several fellows from Unadilla, including Buddy, had ridden together to a dance in Hawkinsville. Buddy had danced with a young lady, which didn’t go over well with some of the locals. That led to a “scuffle,” but nothing major according to those questioned.

His Unadilla friends said Buddy stayed behind when they left. Later that night, he supposedly began a long walk home on State Highway 26. That’s where he was found after being hit by multiple vehicles.

One theory is he passed out or stumbled in front of a car on the dark roadway. Others thought his body was placed on the pavement to conceal a murder. Sheriff Johnson told the family it appeared he’d

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been beaten.

Buddy was a good-looking guy with confident charm, a combination women found appealing but their would-be suitors might resent. My guess is he danced too long with the wrong girl. Alcohol and jealousy don’t pair well.

His death was disturbing to me because of the suspicious circumstances, but mostly because I had put him on a pedestal in early childhood. I’m not saying I should have, just that I did.

The last time I saw Buddy he was looking under the hood of a car and smoking a cigarette. Karen reminded me he kept a pack rolled up in his tee-shirt sleeve. She compared him to Fonzie from Happy Days, a tough persona concealing a tender heart. He helped her mother in the kitchen and assisted in taking care of three young children. Karen and her sister Beth adored their uncle and had begged him to stay home instead of going to the dance.

There probably aren’t many people left who remember much about Buddy Bellflower. And the musings of a small-time columnist

are unlikely to resolve unanswered questions. But it’s possible someone is tired of hiding a dark secret and ready to clear their conscience.

Hawkinsville is in Pulaski County. His body was found in Houston. He lived in Dooly. Maybe having three sheriffs plus a city police department involved resulted in his case becoming everybody’s business but nobody’s focus. Or maybe someone decided to bury the truth.

Sixty-two years have passed since he died, so this story probably won’t accomplish anything. It does, however, give me some peace of mind by making a small effort on his behalf. Perhaps it’s not too late to determine if justice was served or at least sought.

The tanned boy with natural swagger made a big impression on a little kid. I guess that’s why I still think about him, why I still hope for some answers. There’s plenty of room for speculation about Buddy Bellflower’s death, but only one thing I can say for sure.

Buddy Bellflower died way too young.