

# 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

My milk cow fell in a well. She is a good cow, and I think lots of her. For a while I was puzzled how to get my cow out of the well without injuring her in any way. Finally the idea was born. I jumped right in the well with the cow and grabbed a milk spicket in each hand and went to work. I milked the well full of milk and floated the cow. Then, I went to get a bucket of water, and found that us kicking in there trying to stay on top had churned the well full of milk into butter.

Truthly yours,  
 Lem Griffis

## Tips for safe hide-and-seeking

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Four young men were sprawled across our TV room recently, attempting to define laziness.

"What are y'all doing?," said the old man wandering by, who was wearing my pants. And shirt.

My query was met with muted grunts.

This prompted me to speak louder. "WHAT ARE YOU GUYS UP TO? WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS TODAY?"

"Nuttin," said the muffled spokesperson, who happened to be my son. "There's nothing to do."

It was raining as they sat in front of a TV with 275 channels.

"Nothing to do?," I asked with a smirk. "You can always play hide-and-seek, like you used to."

They smiled knowingly. For years, our house – an older home with many quirky features and hiding places – was a favorite "hide-and-seek" location for our kids and their friends.

This prompted some fond remembrances – including when I found my youngest son hiding in our linen closet.

This is actually a "half-closet," with the door starting about waist level. As I opened this door, I was startled by a 58-pound sack of boy falling into my arms. He had wedged himself inside the linen closet, about five feet about ground level. The opening of the door sent him careening into my unwanted arms.

In that .14 seconds, I aged 14 years.

"What are you doing in the linen closet?" I asked (no, screamed at) him.

"Playing hide-and-seek," he answered. "They would have never found me there."

This episode warranted a reinforcement of our house hide-and-seek rules – established long ago by a father much younger and thinner. Even though our kids are no longer playing hide-and-seek in our home, I am sharing these now as

a public service. Younger parents, feel free to cut and paste them on your fridge for your children to follow, or for your adult hide-and-seek league.

Hide-and-Seek Tip #1: (as evidenced by this episode) Do not hide in an area that you spill out of if the door opens.

Whoever finds you may have a heart condition.

#2: Do not hide in a clothes washer or dryer.

While tempting, it is not fun if someone turns the machines on. Ask our cat.

#3: Do not hide in a refrigerator.

Refrigerators, other than ours, get cold. You also may not be able to breathe.

#4: Do not hide in other people's houses.

Other people may not appreciate the surprise of finding you in their cupboard, particularly the old man down the street that keeps

threatening to shoot our dog.

#5: Do not hide in an animal's cage.

Two main reasons why this is a bad idea: A. Animals (particularly, jungle cats) may bite you if you enter their territory without an invitation; and B. Once you get in an animal's cage, you are ineffective at hide-and-seek the rest of the day because all the seekers will have to do is follow the smell to find you.

#6: Do not hide in a place where there are cables or wires.

It could mess up the TV reception.

#7: Do not play hide-and-seek on Saturdays during football season.

On those dates, you may only play "hide."

#8: Do not hide in a toilet.

It's just common sense. If my shoe can't fit in there, neither can a little boy or girl.

#9: Do not hide in an oven.

Yes, even the microwave.

#10: Do not hide in the attic.

That is your father's hiding place.

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## Scribbled Notes 8

My scribbled notes about "Silver Linings" mentioned Burroughs Corporation. They gave me a wonderful career opportunity right out of college. It only took 18 months to fail, an embarrassing outcome I was not prepared for.

Life was easy growing up with loving parents and good friends in rural Georgia. After that came Valdosta State College, four years which I sometimes enjoyed too much. I apologize if the next part sounds boastful, but it's integral to an honest story.

As a freshman I won the Mr. V.S.C. contest. Delta Chi fraternity sponsored me because I could play piano. The girls in the audience would have crowned someone else, but gray-haired judges enjoyed my medley. It was rather comedic as 15 guys paraded across stage in tennis attire holding rackets, then in rented tuxedos. Talents were widely diverse. Terry Fields, superb shortstop on the V.S.C. baseball team, recited "Casey at the Bat." Tommy Whiddon played a classical piece on the

organ. The only other contestant I remember is Denny Clark. I don't recall Denny's talent, but swooning young ladies applauded him for just smiling.

In my sophomore year I was elected president of Delta Chi fraternity, which prospered despite my leadership. Then came a term as president of the Student Government Association. After my junior year I spent the summer in Washington, D.C. in Senator Herman Talmadge's office. Each intern made a cameo appearance on the televised Watergate Hearings. We thought we were famous. None of those were big accomplishments, but I was on a good roll and expected it to keep getting better.

When Richard Gaddy interviewed me for a sales position with Burroughs he was impressed by my resume. Quite honestly, I was too. I patted myself on the back as I moved to Tallahassee to sell computers. Life was sweet and getting sweeter as wedding bells would soon be ringing. Tallahassee was

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a great town and Burroughs a fine company. Richard was an exceptional boss and mentor. There was only one problem. I was terrible at sales.

Burroughs had a tremendous training program. Eight weeks of classroom instruction in Philadelphia and Tampa were interspersed over six months. Between sessions I went on sales calls with Richard and other experienced marketing reps like Bob Abernathy and Mike McClain. In Philadelphia I won the award for best product demonstration. Classroom performance, however, didn't translate to real-world success.

I dreaded telling Richard I was leaving, knowing he had placed his confidence in me. When I met with him and Doyle Perry, our Branch Manager, I expected them to bemoan their wasted time and resources. Instead they told me I

was welcome to stay if I had any doubts. I had no doubts, but their compassionate gesture brought tears to my eyes.

Years went by before I began to understand how valuable the Burroughs training had been. Sales techniques, such as overcoming objections and dealing with irate customers, came in handy during five years of selling cars and 35 years in banking. It took me a while to realize the bumpy road at Burroughs helped smooth my career path. Decades later than I should have, I called Richard to thank him.

A couple of good lessons came from that humbling experience. One was realizing that failing is not the same as being a failure. The best lesson though is something I still tend to forget. Even in the darkest clouds, there's almost always a silver lining. It's up to us to find it.

