

Opinion

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

The Clinch County News

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SPEAK YOUR MIND!

Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to us at P.O. Box 377, Homerville, Ga., 31634, or e-mail to mail@theclinchcountynews.com, or visit our website, www.theclinchcountynews.com.

Grants awarded to animal rescue organizations

Editor, The News:

With great pride, deep gratitude, and hearts full of hope, we are honored to announce that on July 1, 2026, the Shelley and John Allison Sheltering Hearts Legacy Fund of Homerville, Georgia awarded its first two grants, totaling \$10,000, to two 501(c) (3) animal rescue organizations.

This fund was created for the people who simply cannot look the other way.

They are the ones traveling highways, back roads, and forgotten corners of communities everywhere—searching for the abandoned, the hungry, the injured, the frightened, and the unloved.

They stop when others drive by.
They pick up the dog lying beside the road. They crawl beneath abandoned buildings to reach a terrified cat. They open their homes when there is no more room. They spend money they do not have, lose sleep, shed tears, and carry heartbreak that few people will ever understand.

And then, the next morning, they get up and do it all over again.

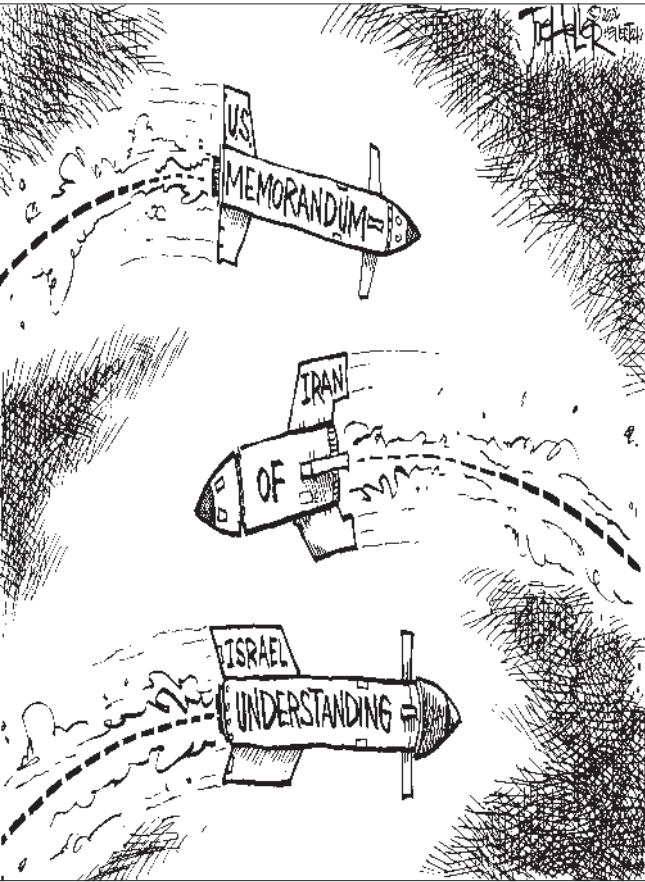
The animals they save ask for so very little—a dish of food, a warm and safe place to sleep, medical care when they are hurting, and a gentle touch to reassure them that, perhaps for the first time in their lives, they are safe and loved.

Small animal rescue groups carry an enormous burden. They struggle not only financially, but emotionally, as they face a seemingly endless need with limited resources. Yet they continue because turning away is simply not something their hearts will allow them to do.

The Shelley and John Allison Sheltering Hearts Legacy Fund was created to help lighten that load—to stand behind those quiet heroes who give so much of themselves to animals who have no voice and nowhere else to turn.

We know who you are.
We see what you do.
And through this fund, we hope to remind you that you do not walk this road alone.
For the forgotten. And for the compassionate hearts who refuse to leave them behind YOU are our heroes.

Say a prayer for peace,
John Allison



Reading is the gateway to knowledge.

I try to read whenever I can – while I’m at home, while I’m at work, while I’m eating, while I’m sleeping, while I’m showering, and I used to particularly enjoy reading while driving.

Unfortunately, I am now no longer legally allowed to read a newspaper or novel while driving a vehicle. Thanks, Obamacare.

But there is nothing in our draconian laws that prevents me from reading bumper stickers while driving, to my knowledge, which is now rather meager since I can’t read dictionaries while driving. So take that declaration for what it’s worth (nothing).

From my reading, I’ve found that bumper stickers fall into three categories: Stupid, funny, or stupider. Recently, one of my institutionalized readers forwarded a list of interesting and/or insipid bumper stickers for my enjoyment. I have added some that I have

‘Watch out for the idiot behind me’

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seen while reading and driving.

- Enjoy (or don’t):
- “I Was An Honor Student. I Don’t Know What Happened.”
 - “Watch Out For the Idiot Behind Me.”
 - “If You Drink, Don’t Park. Accidents Cause People.”
 - “If That Phone Was Up Your Butt, Maybe You Could Drive A Little Better.”
 - “If You Can Read This, I’m Not Surprised. Most People Can Read.”
 - “If At First You Don’t Succeed, Blame Someone Else.”
 - “There’s a Gator in this Ford!” (as seen on a late-model Chevy.)
 - “Jesus Loves You. But Everyone Else Thinks You’re A Jerk.”
 - “If You Can Read This, I’ve Lost My Trailer.”
 - “If You Object To Logging, Try Using

- Plastic Toilet Paper.”
- “It’s Not How You Pick Your Nose, But Where You Put The Booger.”
 - “I Have The Body Of A God – Buddha.”
 - “Be Nice to Americans Or We’ll Bring Democracy to your Country.”
 - “If We Quit Voting, Will They Go Away?”
 - “Eat Right. Exercise. Die Anyway.”
 - “Illiterate? Honk Your Horn.”
 - “Cover Me – I’m Changing Lanes.”
 - “He Who Hesitates Is Not Only Lost But Miles From The Next Exit.”
 - “My Baby Daddy Was Inmate of the Month!”
 - “I Refuse To Have A Battle Of Wits With An Unarmed Person.”
 - “You! Out of the Gene Pool!”
 - “Honk If Anything

- Falls Off.”
- “Remember Folks: Stop Lights Timed for 35 MPH Are Also Timed For 70 MPH.”
 - “Guys: No Shirt, No Service. Gals: No Shirt, No Charge.” (Why would this be on a bumper sticker?)
 - “If Walking Is So Good For You, Why Is My Mailman Fat?”
 - “Boldly Going Nowhere.”
 - “Caution: Driver Legally Blonde.”
 - “My Other Car Is Also A Piece Of Crap.”
 - “How Many Roads Must Man Travel Down Before He Admits He Is Lost?”
 - “Beauty Is In The Eye Of The Beer Holder.”
 - “My Hockey Mom Can Beat Up Your Soccer Mom.”
 - “I Need Someone Really Bad. Are You Really Bad?”
 - “Be Nice To Your Kids – They’ll Choose Your Nursing Home.”
- Maybe I need to get one that says: “Not Drunk. Just Reading Bumper Stickers.”

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Clete, Part 4 - Return to Vietnam

I drove to Leesburg, Georgia, in mid June to see Clete and Deborah Sinyard. A column series in 2023 offered a glimpse of Clete’s 20 years of military service, focusing on his first tour of Vietnam. He joined the Army at 17, anxious for adventures beyond a two-mule Alabama farm. An extra dose of bravado led to a leadership role in an elite group called the Pathfinders. Their motto sums up their daring missions, “First In - Last Out.”

After 12 months in the jungle he returned to America for less hazardous duty. Three years later he began his second Vietnam tour, this time serving in special operations, known as SOG. Letters on one of his Boonie hats represent the full name: MACVSOG - Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Observations Group.

Deborah, a friend since childhood, greeted me in the driveway. We found Clete on the back side of their property, picking blackberries. “This is Clete’s little slice of heaven,” Deborah

said, noting how much he enjoys the garden. A dozen or so laying hens added to the ambience, as did the porch swing under a big shade tree. Norman Rockwell wouldn’t have changed a thing.

I was there to learn about Clete’s recent return to Vietnam. When I was writing the previous columns he said he had no desire to go back. This opportunity, however, was one he couldn’t refuse. He was one of eight SOG veterans invited to participate.

Donnie Edwards, a former pro-football player, made the arrangements through his Best Defense Foundation. Everything was paid for, plus Edwards travelled with the group and took others to assist, including a doctor and a nurse.

Marble Mountain was a place they visited that Clete knew very well. The SOG base camp was located between its twin peaks which border the ocean. The mountain has caves which Clete had explored decades ago, some with openings that face the sky. Missions to Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam were

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launched from Marble Mountain. Studying and observing is a lot more dangerous than it sounds.

Best Defense Foundation had arranged for a short outing into Cambodia. When Clete suggested that might not be a good idea, his SOG partners agreed. Cambodia once had a \$5000 bounty on him. He laughs about it, knowing that’s in the past, but he wasn’t inclined to see if someone might remember. “Peaceful,” is how Clete described today’s Vietnam. “It was so peaceful,” he said several times, marveling at the change. The Vietnamese people were very welcoming and the scenery lovely. Hostility has been preempted by hospitality.

Even spider holes can now evoke laughter instead of trepidation. The hand-dug pits, often positioned along jungle pathways, were just big

enough to hide an enemy combatant. A wooden top, camouflaged with leaves and debris, could be quickly removed to facilitate an ambush. On this trip, however, SOG veteran Jim Shorten lowered himself into a spider hole and got stuck. A video captured him ignoring their guide’s repeated pleas of, “Too big! Too big!”

As I drove home, one thought echoed in my mind. “It was so peaceful,” Clete had said, obviously pleased to find it that way. At seventeen he was hungry for adventure. At 79 he values peacefulness. Returning to Vietnam was a blessing for Clete. Back home in Leesburg there’s an ongoing blessing of a peaceful garden. I’m thankful for a young man who so willingly served our country. And I’m glad an old soldier has found a little slice of heaven in his own backyard.