



The Ugliest Lamp you ever saw

HER ELVIS PRESLEY LAMP

It sits on our nightstand and seems to be looking at me as I turn off the light. There it is when I open my eyes in the morning, an Elvis Presley lamp (**image a**), which belongs to my wife, Phyllis. She has Elvis candles, books, coins, stamps, hats, dolls, a watch and even a lock of his hair. But this lamp is one of her most prized possessions. I think this is the ugliest lamp I ever saw.

Her cousin, Billy Cook, found this unique lamp at a yard sale, and knowing her love for Elvis, he bought it immediately. Billy made her day when he gave it to her.

She invites visitors to our house to see it. She even lugged this monstrosity to work. I think she showed it to her co-workers whether they wanted to see it or not. Maybe Elvis fans envy her, but not me.

I heard her tell someone on the phone that she was washing Elvis' hair. When I looked she was lovingly rubbing a damp cloth over the lamp's head. I believe I am destined to face this lamp the rest of my life. Lucky me.

Donald Grant, Statesville | EnergyUnited

THE BACHELOR'S CHERUBS

I inherited these lamps when I married my husband 15 years ago. His mother gave him a pair of "cherub" lamps (**image b**) when he moved into his first apartment back in 1985. He thought they were cool for his hip bachelor pad. I thought they were hideous. We used them in our first home only because we couldn't afford any new ones. They have long been banished to our basement, but for some strange reason we can't seem to throw them away.

*Rachel & Nick Basile, Waxhaw
Union Power Cooperative*

DRIFTWOOD SPECIAL

Now THIS is an ugly lamp (**image c**).

Elaine Hayes, Somers, Conn. | Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative

MISS SHAPELY

Did you say ugly? This quite unusual lamp (**image d**) is unsightly, hideous, offensive, physically repulsive and just plain ugly. Although I do like the color, and having a figure like that would be nice. We found this shapely lamp in Cameron and left it there.

My aunt and I go to the Cameron Antique Day every year when they have it spring and fall. By the way, we (my aunt and I) are antiques, too. She is 65 and I am 59.

Jenny McPherson, Liberty

THE SERGEANT'S LAMP

Is this not the ugliest lamp you ever saw (**image e**)?

In 1991, I was transferred from Fort Drum, N.J., to Germany. I had no furniture for my bedroom, so my sergeant said he had some things that he and his wife were going to give away that were in my price range: free. So I told him to bring it on over.

The furniture consisted of a couch and a loveseat and this ugly lamp. The couch and loveseat had one-inch legs, like they have in some kind of bars where you go and lay about and have a drink. I jacked them up with blocks of wood, but I couldn't do anything about this lamp. I don't know why I keep it in my living room, still. I even have people come to my house and ask me, "What is that?" It might be ugly but it sure is a good conversation piece.

Lula K. Grover, Fayetteville | South River EMC



Thanks to everyone who sent in stories and pictures of the ugliest lamp you ever saw. You can see more of the submissions at our Web site. Next month we'll publish stories of "the best summer I ever had," by kids age 16 and younger. (Deadline was April 15.) For more themes and the rules of this series, see page 24.



THE FAMILY HEIRLOOM

I was at my mother's house visiting one day and I noticed a lamp (image f) that she had put in her living room. I went on and on about how ugly it was and that she needed to get rid of it in place of a new one. Come to find out it was my great-grandmother's. My mother proceeded to tell me that it was going to be part of my inheritance. Boy, was I disappointed. I guess I'll have an ugly lamp in my living room one day also.

Carla Dennis, Troy | Randolph EMC

QUEEN MUM'S

When I saw the theme "The Ugliest Lamp I Ever Saw,"

I said to myself, "Hands down, I own it!" (image g).

At a recent Red

Hatters gathering, we had a "white elephant" gift swap. Everyone was to bring a wrapped gift, preferably a funny one, something you received as a gift and just wished you could give away to someone else. When it was my turn to pick a gift, I chose the biggest one I could find. It was wrapped like a mushroom, and I thought this could be the birdbath that I've been looking for. As I unwrapped it, I couldn't believe my eyes. Everyone

roared with laughter. I got the prize of the evening—no one could top it. Is that any way to treat a queen?

Carolyn Koch ("Queen Mum" of the Red Hot Mamas of Moore County), Aberdeen | Central EMC

A BEAUTY, IF THE LIGHT IS RIGHT

The passing of time hasn't been unkind to her, though she looks a bit tired and shopworn (image h). Buried in my basement, away from public view, resides a lamp that is the ugliest of ugly. Even though she may be covered with any matter of discarded items, she peeps out at you wanting attention. She lived well in a time of Art Deco, and might have even been called handsome in her day. She is all that is left of a matching set, a couple, a Barbie and Ken in brief tropical attire. In happier days, she and her mate gazed into a warm living room. I never thought of her being out of place then, but I was only a child and she seemed exotic.

Oh, pity her now. Her world is dark, dusty and damp. I pass by her several times a day, occasionally concerned about her safety. Even though her existence may be bleak, the memory of her in her heyday conjures up pleasant memories for me. If the light is just right, the years drop away and she is transformed into beauty once again, if only for a few fleeting moments.

Hurleen Maffett, Asheboro | Randolph EMC

THE FALLEN LAMP POST

I had not been the pastor at the Fairview Baptist Church in Statesville very long, not even six weeks, when this lamp (image i) had its auspicious beginnings. After church services had ended I was the last one to leave, and as I backed out of my usual parking spot I felt a sudden bump. My car stopped and would not start again. I had run over a large white post that occupied the corner of the parking lot. There I sat, with a car that would not start and a large white post totally uprooted, concrete and all.

Several weeks later at a church fellowship, the crowd was hushed. Barbara Setzer, a church member with a great sense of humor, presented me with this ugly lamp. Stripped of its white paint, I suddenly recognized it as "the post"

Barbara had one of the handymen in our church convert the post into a lamp. As I sit and read by the light of this ugly lamp, I am constantly reminded of wonderful friends with a sense of humor and that it is always best to laugh with others, and most of the time at yourself.

Dr. T. Scott Eanes, Statesville | EnergyUnited

ONLY A MUSICIAN WOULD LIKE IT

It all goes back to 9th grade. I played clarinet in the Newark High School band in New York. However, my favorite instrument was piano.



In 12th grade, my dream came true. I was accepted at East Carolina University and was ecstatic that I could attend a reputable music school. Soon, I chose to change my major to Elementary Education. I loved children, and I knew I could apply my musical background to that climate. And I did: I taught kindergarten in Virginia for 30 years and used songs, instruments, etc. in motivating my children to learn.

Then it happened. While I was window-shopping I saw the ugliest lamp ever (**image j**). Someone had turned a clarinet into a lamp.

Today, 30 years later, my family is moving to Lake Gaston. I still have the desire to play piano, but not the clarinet. I dug it out of a closet. It hadn't been played since high school. The clarinet looked good physically, but its workable condition was poor. I went to a lamp shop last summer and had it turned into "my lamp."

It sits in the living room and despite what others think about its looks, I am perfectly content with its uniqueness and good memories. I love it!

Karen Peszko, Portsmouth, Va. | Halifax EMC

THE RUNT OF THE LITTER

My husband and I love to go to local auctions. We've found a lot of interesting and unusual things for a fair price.

One night at auction I spied this odd-looking lamp in the corner (**image k**). The runt of the litter, but I fell in love! Very unique, constructed by somebody's hands, no doubt. A cake pan base with a cheese grater for a trunk, topped with a spaghetti colander as the lampshade. Wow! What a find! I asked the auctioneer's assistant to bring it up front for bidding. My husband, who thought it was hideous ugly, said "You've got to be kidding!" I responded with "It's got character."

I'll admit I was nervous when the bidding started. I thought somebody else would want it and outbid me. Least of my worries! When I heard the auctioneer finally say "Well, won't anybody even give \$5 for this odd-looking lamp?" I held up my card, slightly embarrassed.

But I must admit it looks good in our kitchen, especially on spaghetti night. One man's discard is another man's delight. 🍝

Pia Prince, Tryon



Send us your best Earn \$50

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

July 2006

I'll Never Eat That Again

A bad experience with food.

Deadline: May 15

August 2006

How I Almost Flunked

What were you thinking.

Deadline: June 15

September 2006

My Finest Sports Moment

Send pictures, too.

Deadline: July 15

October 2006

My Favorite Halloween Costume

Send the story and photo.

Deadline: August 15

November 2006

My Favorite Photo

North Carolina people or places.

If they are digital: 300 dpi and actual printing size.

Deadline: September 15

December 2006

Regifting Mistakes

I should not have given that away.

Deadline: October 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
Or by e-mail: finer@carolinacountry.com
Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com