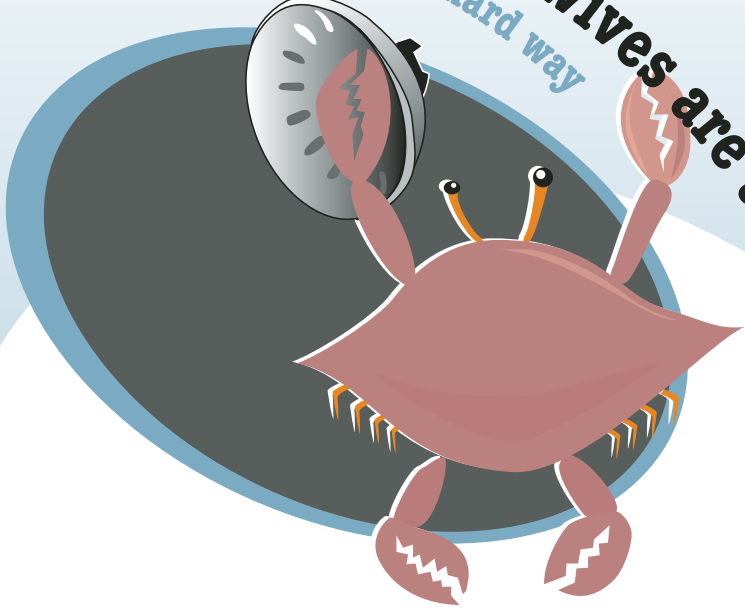


Fathers always win arguments and wives are always right

These and other lessons you learned the hard way



Last month we laughed and cried about your stories of falling-down decks, the \$6,000 dog and building a wooden helicopter in the basement. This month, we find out that you're smarter. You finally learned something. But it didn't come easy.

Thanks to everyone who sent us stories about lessons learned the hard way. I wish we had space to publish more of them. Next month we'll look at your favorite photos (deadline was July 15). There's still time to tell us what you would do as North Carolina's governor. Those will run in October. See page 26 for details.

— Michael E.C. Gery, editor



See more of your stories on our Web site.

LEARNING ABOUT CRAB SHELLS

One holiday weekend I got a really great deal on chilled Dungeness crab — \$2.99 per pound. I brought it home, cleaned it, and the wife and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Following dinner, I sent the shells down the disposal. While running the dishwasher not too much later, my wife reported the sink was filling with water. Sure enough, the crab had clogged the drain. After a \$195 plumbing bill and a tutorial from the plumber, I learned not to send crab shells down the disposal. That was the most expensive crab we ever ate.

Scott Ellis
Matthews
Union Power

LEARNING HOW TO DRY PAINT

I was painting and saw that my white ceiling fan was looking "tired." I thought I'd swipe some paint across the blades and brighten them up. Here's where the learning came in. I turned the fan on slow speed to dry it quickly. Boy, was I wrong about that. After a few minutes I noticed paint spots on my cabinets, my clock, my pictures, anything in line sight of the blades.

Beth Ritter
Mt. Royal, N.J.
Cape Hatteras Electric

LEARNING TO SAY, "YESSIR"

Our family had just returned home from church. My three brothers and I, along with our father, were seated and talking on the spacious front porch of our farmhouse while Mother and the girls prepared our Sunday dinner. Mom yelled from the kitchen door for Dad to send one of the boys to the well to draw a bucket of fresh water for dinner. Dad ordered me to go, since I was one of the younger ones.

"I got the last one," I protested, "It's somebody else's turn."

Dad said, "But I told you to go." I knew he meant business, so I went.

The well was 100 yards away. I returned with the water and took it to the kitchen, then returned to my place on the porch with the other boys. "That's the last bucket I'll get today," I grumbled.

"Maybe not," said Dad, "It may be necessary for you to get the next one, too."

"We'll see about that," I muttered, pushing my luck.

"Yes, we'll see," he snapped. "Go pour out the other one and bring another."

I carried 13 buckets of water before I stopped saying, "That's the last one." I was a little slow learning that fathers didn't lose arguments with their sons in those days.

Howard E. Alley
Highlands
Haywood EMC

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LEARNING TO LISTEN TO YOUR WIFE

After 40 years of marriage I should know by now that “you should always listen to your wife.”

About 20 years ago we lived on a lake, and in order to complete the environment, I purchased six ducks. One of our neighbors was so excited that she immediately named them fish names. My wife was not as excited and warned me that I was making a big mistake.

After scrubbing the docks several times and shooing the ducks out of our neighbor’s garden (he had shot and killed the duck named Crappie), I quickly found a home for the remaining five.

Some years later we moved from the lake to our present home. Over the years we have added a big fishpond and several small in-ground fishponds. To make the picture complete, I purchased two geese. Shortly after, two wild ducks appeared and made their home on our pond, which is only about 200 yards from our house. Again, I soon realized I was so wrong, because not only did the geese and drakes enjoy our big pond, but they also loved our yard, our deck and even our small ponds.

So I decided one morning to chase them to the river that is about a mile behind our house. I even witnessed them jumping into the river. I returned home and told my wife that the problem was solved and never again would we be bothered with them. My wife said she thought they’d be back by morning.

Less than an hour later, when we were sitting out on our deck, what did I hear coming back up from the river? You guessed it right: my four, feathered friends were returning home from their swim.

*Robert T. Walker Jr.
Emerald Isle
Carteret-Craven Electric*

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LEARNING ABOUT CHARITABLE DONATIONS

My daughter Stephanie was quite upset when she called me about lunchtime that Saturday morning. She said that she had done something that would make her husband, Derek, very upset. I couldn’t imagine what she did that was so terrible. She is always so level-headed.

She explained that when she had finished shopping in Wal-Mart that morning she noticed a lady who was asking for donations on behalf of battered women. Immediately, she remembered a verse from the Bible she had read that morning about giving to those less fortunate. She looked in her purse and pulled out three dollar bills and gave them to her. The lady gave her a candied apple for her donation.

She continued on with her shopping. As, she went to pay for a purchase she noticed she was missing a \$100 bill. The realization hit her that instead of giving the lady three \$1 bills, she had given her two \$1 bills and a \$100 bill.

She rushed back to explain her dilemma to the lady, hoping she would return the \$100. The lady was gone.

Later when she tearfully explained to Derek what happened, he took her in his arms and hugged her. He told her that it went to a good cause and just to be more careful next time.

Stephanie had prayed to help someone and her prayers were answered, but not in the way she had expected. I guess the old saying really is true: “Be careful what you pray for.”

*Betty Thomas
Bear Creek
Central EMC*

LEARNING TO AIM HIGHER

When I was 7 years old (I’m 11 now) I saw a sling shot at a craft fair and wanted to buy it. The only way I could convince my Mom to let me buy it was to promise to shoot only peanuts. That was fine for the first few days, but then I really wanted to sling some rocks and see how far I could make them go.

We lived in a cul-de-sac with lots of houses around and a grassy area in the middle. One day I was in the grassy area playing around with my friends and my

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OCTOBER 2004

“If I Were Governor of North Carolina”

What would you do?

Deadline: August 15

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“Mama’s Cooking Was Always the Best”

Send a recipe, if you have one, and photos.

Deadline: Sept. 15

DECEMBER 2004

“Meeting Your Grandparents”

Something you never knew about a grandparent.

Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less. We retain reprint rights.
2. Only 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.
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: carolina.country@ncemcs.com. Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com

sling shot. My mother called me to come in. As I was walking toward the house, I couldn't stop imagining me slinging a rock on top of the roof. Then, before I knew what I was doing, I reached down and picked up the perfect rock, put it in the sling, pulled back as hard as I could and aimed for the roof. I let it rip! I felt so excited, letting it fling with such force.

Unfortunately, I didn't aim quite high enough. Our Suburban was sitting in the driveway and the rock hit CRACK, right into the back window, and it shattered into a million pieces. I was completely astonished and devastated. I was also scared.

I did get in trouble, but mostly I will remember that I disobeyed my parents and the worst possible happened.

*Tanner McAteer
Fayetteville*

LEARNING TO LISTEN TO MAMA

I suppose nobody "listens to Mama" more than I did when I was young. But lessons are learned the hard way, and I

will caution anyone to take Mama's words seriously.

I was a young wife and wanted to fix a nice flowerbed at my new home. There was a pile of old bricks beside the old cotton gin that my father used to run. But they had been overgrown in poison ivy all summer. I happened to notice in February that the poison ivy was all gone, and I could get to the bricks easily. My mother told me to leave them alone. She said the poison ivy was still on the bricks even if the leaves were gone.

But I knew better, and I really needed some free bricks. I collected the bricks in a large flowerbed. Then about a week later, I broke out in a rash. I had poison ivy all over my face, arms, neck and eventually legs, too! It took me months and a doctor's visit to finally get rid of the entire rash. I should've listened to Mama.

*Barbara Chewning
Morven
Pee Dee EMC*

LEARNING WHERE TO CARRY YOUR WALLET

One fall day I was using my lawn tractor to chop leaves out back. I took my hearing aid out and put it in my wallet to keep the dust out of it. I put the wallet in my shirt pocket with the intention of taking it in the house when I got back into the main yard. But something distracted me.

I started blowing the leaves when my dog jumped up on me, wanting me to pet him. I finished blowing the leaves and burned them. When I missed my wallet, I discovered that the bottom of my shirt pocket had come unseamed. My wife and I looked for the wallet and couldn't find it. The next day, I decided to blow the driveway off and found only the metal social security card.

I had burned up \$859 and my hearing aid. I have learned the hard way about putting my wallet in my shirt pocket.

*Robert Philbeck
Kings Mountain
Rutherford EMC*

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