



Ned
Hickson

Giant snakes, screaming kids — welcome to Uncle Ned's daycare

I have a good friend who is a child care provider. So when she found herself in a bind, I told her I'd be happy to watch the kids for a couple of hours; eight children, all under the age of four.

I did this yesterday.

Today, I'm writing to you from a locked treatment facility for the emotionally disturbed.

Being a parent, it's not like I didn't know what to expect. I was prepared. I came with a plan. I had ideas for things to do.

And, if all else failed, I came with a bungee cord large enough to wrap all eight of them together in the mid-

dle of the lawn.

For the purpose of this column (or, more specifically, for the purpose of protecting myself from an investigation by the Child Protection Agency) I'll only refer to the kids by nickname.

"Bonnie and Clyde," for example, were both less than two years old and always planning a getaway. I know this because they would often sit together babbling quietly, then suddenly climb to their feet and make a break for it, stumbling across the yard with both hands in the air. I have no idea where they planned to go once they made it to "the outside" (which seemed to be anywhere beyond the grass), but I took the keys to the Barbie Jeep anyway.

For any men who might find themselves in this situa-

tion, I'd suggest wearing an athletic cup. That's because, for some reason, all children believe that the only way to get your attention is to stand directly in front of you, wait until you're not looking, and then poke you directly in the [censored].

I say this all in retrospect, having NOT brought an athletic supporter and, instead, resorting to the next best thing: Duct-taping a coffee mug to myself. This worked just fine and was fairly comfortable. So comfortable, in fact, that I completely forgot about it until went into the local coffee shop and asked for my free refill. At which point I was told the policy would be changing — effective immediately.

As anyone will tell you, the key to supervising children is keeping them active. Provide

them with things to do and they'll be totally unaware that you are, in effect, slowly going insane. To accomplish this, we played softball, soccer, hop-Scotch and then colored a giant dragon that I drew on the sidewalk in chalk. Thanks to this planning and organization, these activities kept everyone entertained for well over 15 minutes.

Which left me with another hour to fill.

Desperate, I did what any good child care provider would do in this situation:

I kindled their imaginations by telling them I had a giant snake in the car.

This, of course, was very exciting, and we spent the next 10 minutes talking about how big it was, where it came from, and whether or not it had once been an executive from ENRON.

Everything was going great until, naturally, they demanded to see it. Now, because I didn't actually HAVE a 50-foot anaconda in the car, I was left with only one option, which was to tell them it must've escaped.

If you've never heard the sound of eight small children screaming at once, you can experience the same thing by sticking a bullhorn next to your ear and pushing the siren button.

Even "Bonnie and Clyde," who had no idea what was going on, began screaming — hands in the air and stumbling across the grass to freedom.

I should explain that my friend's home is somewhat secluded, which is what kept anyone from reporting a strange man with a coffee mug strapped to his pants chasing down a herd of

screaming children on the front lawn.

On the bright side, it did shave another 20 minutes off the clock, which left me with just enough time to get everyone calmed down and back inside before anyone showed up.

To the parents, I apologize for any future psychological treatment your children may require. To my friend, I've gained an even higher level of appreciation for what you do.

And to my wife and family:

They say I can leave any day now — just as soon as I give up the coffee mug.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, "Humor at the Speed of Life," is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com

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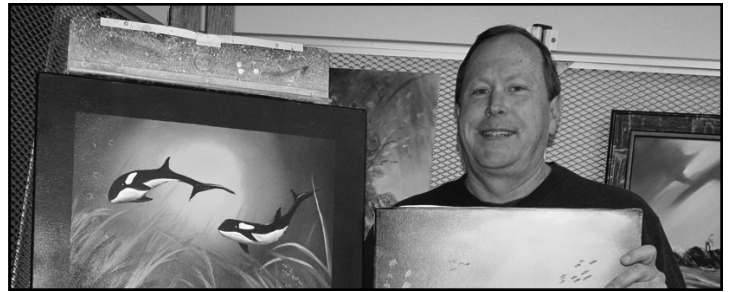
This Lady is Eighty?

Happy Birthday

May 7th
(Rosalie)

Love, Liz & Bob

Oil painting class for youth offered at FRAA



COURTESY PHOTO

FRAA oil painting instructor John Leasure

Florence Regional Arts Alliance (FRAA) has announced three Saturday morning oil painting classes for youth, ages 13 and up, at the FRAA Art Center.

The instructor will be noted local artist John Leasure, and classes will be held on Saturdays, May 2, 23 and 30, from 9 a.m. to noon.

The fee will be \$25 per session, with a discount for two or more from the same family.

"Youth are invited to come and learn how to paint realistic looking birds, landscapes, flowers and more," said Leasure. "Parents are welcome to join the class if they wish."

Each session is a separate class so painters can attend one, or all three.

Call Leasure at 541-992-2754 to sign-up.

The FRAA Art Center is located at 4969 Highway 101, Munsel Lake Plaza #4.

Let's all get our friends together and meet at the **Florence Green Fair**. There is so much for us to learn there and lots of hand outs, giveaways, and drawings too!

Bring the kids! There will be a Kid Zone and admission is free for all kids.

The first 100 kids will receive a free recycle cape!

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