Opinions

The Funny Thing About Gratitude

By Yonatan Hambourger and Tzali Reicher

It happens to everyone: that moment when your phone is about to run out of battery, and suddenly a charger appears in your bag. That quick "thank goodness" before moving on with the day. Or when you're running late to work, hitting every green light, and

breathing a sigh of relief without a second thought about what - or who - might be behind that streak of good luck.

Consider the story that made rounds on social media last summer. A young entrepreneur had maxed out her credit cards trying to keep her



small business afloat during the pandemic. She'd post daily prayers on Instagram, asking G-d for help to save her coffee shop. When a news station featured her story, customers started pouring in. Within months, she was opening a second location. In interviews, she credited her "amazing marketing strategy" and "perfect timing" - seemingly forgetting all those desperate prayers that came before her success.

People have a fascinating habit of reaching out to G-d when times are tough and then taking all the credit when things turn around. Like that old joke about the guy circling the block, desperately looking for parking. He promises G-d he'll donate a hundred dollars to charity if he finds a spot. The moment one appears, he quickly says, "Never mind, I've got this handled!" It's a common pattern.

This tendency to forget gratitude in good times is actually addressed in the Torah, where Moses offers some timeless wisdom to the Israelites. "Beware," he warns them, "lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt." This message transcends time and place. Moses wasn't just talking about ancient history – he was describing human nature.

Consider our modern "Egypt moments." Maybe it's recovering from a health scare or finally landing that job after months of searching. In those dark times, people have deep, honest conversations with G-d. They make promises, bargain, and pray with an intensity they didn't know they had. Then, once they're back on their feet, how quickly they return to business as usual.

See Hambourger, page 5A

Left's Judicial Activism

On November 5th, 2024, the American people overwhelmingly rejected the Democrat Party.

Kamala Harris miserably lost both the popular and electoral vote, Hakeem Jeffries failed to overturn the House, and Chuck Schum-

er's ill-fated plan to retain control of the Senate crashed and burned. Rather than continuing the Left's status quo, Andrew Clyde Americans delivered



President Trump a historic mandate and a Republican trifecta in Washington.

So after losing in the court of public opinion, radical liberals are attempting to win in the court of law by weaponizing our justice system.

The Left is using a tactic known as judgeshopping — which aims to ensure lawsuits end up in front of sympathetic judges, to obstruct President Trump's agenda. In other words, activist judges are selected to weaponize their power in an attempt to usurp President Trump's Article See Clyde, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

ICL

Dear Editor,

I would like to commend a gem of an opportunity, here in the Mountains: the Institute of Continuing Learning – ICL.

This community non-profit organization

What If It's True?

Ian Hutchinson is Professor of Nuclear Science and Engineering at MIT. He is a leader in nuclear fusion research and its practical use for carbon-free power generation. He is an eminent scientist who is also a Christian.

Hutchinson comes from a non-religious British family. When he arrived at the University of Cambridge in 1969, his

ambition was to be an enlightened intellectual, a free thinker who had "escaped the religious trammels" (his words). He had not considered that such a worldview is anything but free. Its shackles are the passions of self-worship, the idolatry that renders all others into one. "You are slaves of the one you obey" (Rom. 6:16).

Fowler

This is not to say Hutchinson was a hedonist. He valued truth, integrity, and compassion. He began to wonder if "there is more to Christianity than the moldering detritus of a prescientific age or the calming opiate that helps sustain useful social structures" (again, his words). He knew that if Christianity is true, it has moral and eternal consequences. But he resisted. "I wanted to be my own Lord," he writes. That is the original sin, one that tempts us all.

Enter two fellow students who were authentic Christians Their lives and friendship attracted Hutchinson to consider their faith. He observed that Christianity was less about giving up freedom and more about receiving from the life of Jesus. What if the Christian story is actually true? As he investigated, three thoughts emerged. (1) There is historical evidence for Christianity. (2) It makes sense of the world and the human experience. (3) Jesus invites us into a personal relationship with Him. He still had questions, but had confidence that answers exist. He knew these thoughts demanded a response. "So, one evening," Hutchinson explains, "I yielded my life to His lordship in prayer, and I began to follow Him."

Hutchinson is super intelligent and has an impressive resume, but he came to faith the same as anyone else. He considered the truth claims of Christianity and felt a gentle nudge from God. He rejected the idolatry of self and received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. "As many as received Him, to them He gave

See Fowler, page 5A



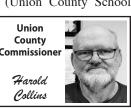
Everybody has one...

From Your Commissioner

Local government can be confusing for newcomers to the State of Georgia and even to residents who have been here a while

There are three main levels of very independent government in all Georgia counties. You have City Government, (City of Blairsville), School Government (Union County School

System) and Union County Government. Since each government is independent of the others, if you have a question regarding one of these, you should contact them directly because the other government agencies may not have the answers you seek



The City of Blairsville has five council members who are elected at large. They also have an elected mayor who also manages the city. The city levies and collects its own property taxes and receives a large portion of their income from water and sewer services. They also have their own police force and employees

The Union County School System is made up of five Board of Education members elected from certain voting districts in the county. The Union County School Board members then appoint a School Superintendent to manage and operate the school system. The school system also has its own security team (Police Force). The Union County Tax Commissioner collects their property taxes on the combined tax bill you receive from the county. Union County School System portion of taxes are sent directly to the school system.

The Union County Government is completely separate from the school and the city government. The County budget and some of the operations are managed by the Sole Commissioner, who is elected. But there are also six other county elected officials who run and operate their own county departments independent of the Commissioner. They are the Union County Sheriff, the Clerk of Court, the Probate Judge, the Magistrate Judge, the Tax Commissioner and the Coroner. Each of these officials are totally in charge of the employees and operation of each of their departments.

So you can see how it might be difficult to know which

See Collins, page 5A

Chamber 2<u>025</u>

Does anyone else enjoy this time of year where the temperatures begin reaching the 70s and the days get longer? It's time to start making that list of the projects you postponed until the weather gets warmer. And while you have the calendar out be sure to plan on attending

our next Business After Hours, which will be held at The Sawmill on March 6th. There will be fun and games while you network and sample some of



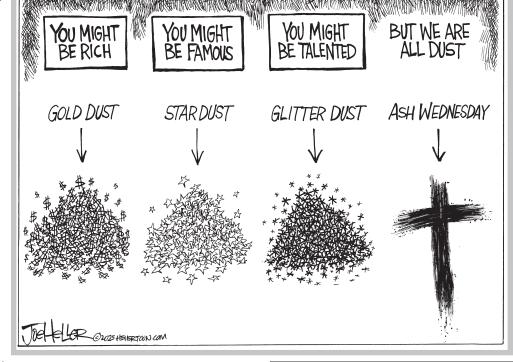
Shawn's favorites as well as a few new items.

With everything going on in Atlanta at the Capitol, you do not want to miss this year's Legislative Wrap-up. Senator Steve Gooch and Representative Stan Gunter will give us a summary of the bills that passed, those that didn't, and how they impact Blairsville and North Georgia. These tickets will sell out fast, so be sure to get yours today through our website.

Check the Chamber calendar for all of our upcoming events and the Community calendar See Chamber, page 5A

To Burn or Not to Burn?

We are entering the time of year when prescribed burns are more and more common. I want to talk about why prescribed burns are important. I think that generally we understand that they are important, otherwise we wouldn't take the risk of doing them, but they are important in more ways than **UGA** many understand.



Letters to the Editor

Pain Relievers Dear Editor.

A few weeks ago I received a prescription of a gastric pain reliever from my doctor. My insurance told me they would not cover the drug since Medicare will not cover it. They continued to tell me that if I were on MEDICAID, it would be covered. WHAT!!! There are a plethora of laws prohibiting law-abiding people from gaining access with their doctors' orders for pain relievers that they desperately need. Why do you think that is the case? One must understand the reason for all these laws; they are there to protect a small group of people that abuse the use of these drugs. So, our politicians are making everyone pay in pain because they are trying to protect the lives of those stupid people.

A Law Officer

This story was told to me by my Papa many years ago, and it was recently corroborated by an article found in a newspaper from Winston County, Alabama. My great-grandmother had a younger sister by the name of Melinda West who at 15 years of age married a young man named G.W. Elliott. The courtship of the two Around is unknown, but, The Farm very ironic because the bride's father Mickey had made moonshine for years, and Cummings after the wedding of

United States Congressman Representative

was founded in 1991. ICL is housed on the campus of Young Harris College with an all-volunteer staff. It is dedicated to offering cultural and intellectual forums that stimulate learning and discovery. The diversity of classes – offered four times a year at a nominal fee – is astounding. The instructors bring a wide range of expertise and experience to the class format - and never a test to worry about!

You can choose from a wide variety of classes that range from hands-on crocheting and

See Long, page 5A

To The Only One

Dear Editor,

Good Day to all y'all Union Countians. A Letter Writer wrote in and said that they had conservative fiscal concerns and liberal social concerns. Simply put, they believe they're an Independent. Now, we know that independents exist. That being said, most of them I've had the experience to have encountered will show you, by what they say, whether they're truly independent or not.

This Letter Writer said they are concerned about Government waste, fraud, abuse, theft and corruption but were worried about the speed at which these cuts are being made. That's a valid

See Rains, page 5A

School Superintendent

Dear Editor,

Over the past two months we have heard very troubling allegations from two families who have children in Union County Schools. This is not just about the two families who have experienced bullying and intimidation in our schools. There are others, but they fear retaliation if they speak out. We should applaud those courageous parents who have stepped forward and finally broken the ice. Hopefully others who have experienced the bullying and intimidation will now step forward to tell their story.

I have attended School Board meetings over the past few years and have addressed the Superintendent and School Board about various issues of concern. Never once have they responded to my concerns. It is no surprise that these parents have received no response to their concerns. If the teacher in question has said the things that have been alleged, it is harassment and the teacher should be fired. No child should be spoken to in

See Vanderdeet, page 5A

Interestingly, these laws do not seem to be really working for other than law-abiding people. Chew on that one for a while.

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Mike Priven

I Was Just Wondering **Dear Editor,**

How will mass firings of civil service employees effect Veterans services? Children and adults who depend upon Medicaid for vital health services? Medical research into cancer and future pandemics? Head Start for vulnerable preschoolers? Income tax refunds? Consumer protection by the (now defunct) Consumer Financial Protection Agency?

And what about farmers who will lose billions of dollars because the United States is no longer sending food to poverty stricken people around the globe? How will this effect America's reputation globally?

And I was just wondering...

How does a non-elected billionaire from South Africa have the authority to obtain access to the private data of American citizens? And why is Congress, and more specifically, our representative to Congress, allowing this to take place?

I was just wondering,

Jennifer Cordier

For One of the Least of My Brethren **Dear Editor**,

In the House budget vote this past week, our Representative Andrew Clyde voted to reduce Federal funds for food and health. Nine million low-income Americans could lose access to the SNAP food aid to feed their families. With cuts to Medicaid, 36 million Americans could lose their health care coverage.

See Levine, page 5A

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G.W. and Melinda, her husband became a deputy sheriff, and a moonshiner ultimately would take his life years later.

Sometime around 1913 the young couple took up residence not too far from Double Springs in a little community called Need More. At one time this little community was called Cummings Town until some teenaged boys erected a sign which stated "We Need More." The name stuck and everyone began calling the place Need More. The couple were evidently very happy because the ensuing years would bring them nine children, and they owned a 122-acre farm that became known as Big Oak. He farmed and operated a sawmill on Rocky Branch. The couple attended church along with his parents and siblings at Macedonia Baptist Church.

He was also the song leader at the church and sometimes sang with a quartet. Tom Spears of the Spear Family was a good friend of G.W. and would periodically ask him to fill in for an absence in his quartet. People remember Elliott as a Godly man that worked hard and loved his family.

On November 19, 1930, a knock was heard at the door of the Elliott home, and upon opening the door the family invited into their home Deputy Sheriff Andrew Willis. The young father was holding his twin daughters, Zenobia and Leofia. He asked his daughters to sing a song for their guest, and when they had finished singing he kissed them both goodbye and told them that he loved them. The two deputies left on foot traveling east to go raid a moonshine still. It is not understood why there were only two of them. But the reason they were on foot was because they knew the wildcatters would be watching the roads. So the two men walked through the woods to a place called Clear Creek where the still was located.

The men finally found the still and watched the operations for a time. Deputy Willis recognized both of the operators, with one of them being a troublemaker. The deputies lay in the brush and made their plan of attack. If the illegal operators ran, G. W. was to take the one expected See Cummings, page 5A

To talk about the importance of prescribed burns we also have to talk about natural forest succession. For-



est succession can look different depending on where you live. For us, it can start with meadow lands. Meadows would have plants like asters, queen Anne's lace, and broom sedge. After about 5 years, the meadows will start to grow up some more and brush like sumac and blackberry will start to take over. At year 20, we would see a young pine forest start to emerge. This pine forest would start to mature and at about year 70, we would see an understory of hardwoods begin to emerge in the mature pine stand. From year 70 on, the forest begins to transition to a hardwood forest. At 100 years, we've reached the forest climax which is a mature oak-hickory forest. If there is no intervention, either natural or manmade, our forests will remain at the mature oakhickory forest stage.

So, what's wrong with allowing our forests to stay at the mature oak-hickory stage? And if it is wrong then what can be done about it? To answer the first question when all or a majority of our habitat is in the mature oak-hickory stage we have less diversity of habitat. Diversity of habitat is necessary to be able to support a diversity of wildlife, plants, fungi, and everything else that creeps, crawls, and grows in the woods. Deer need a diverse habitat to thrive. They need brush cover to protect fawns. Mature forests have very little cover and leave fawns exposed to roaming coyotes and bears. The deer also need mature forest for the mast crop (acorns and other nuts) that those trees provide every year. Our deer population is in decline, which is not due to overhunting as there are fewer and fewer hunters each year. Turkey populations are also in decline, in part because there is not sufficient brush cover for poults (baby turkeys). Bobwhite quail have become very rare in Georgia, because they need brush for their habitat. Grouse have also become rare because they make their home in the transition area between habitat types. These are just a few examples of species that we have seen a decline or significant decline in population.

Controlled burns reset the natural forest succession process, allowing a diverse array of habitats that support a diverse array of wildlife. See Williams, page 5A

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CummingS...continued from Page 4A

to be the troublemaker. G. W. was a tall man of medium build and was good in a fight. He was also in better shape than the other deputy. So, he quietly took off his shoes and for some reason laid aside his shotgun. Willis called the names of the illegal operators and told them they were under arrest. Immediately, the men took to the woods running.

G. W. followed his man toward the west. The man was running fast, but Elliott followed at a steady run hoping the other fellow would tire out. The criminal soon began to tire and after about a mile he stopped to rest. The deputy caught up to him and a grand fight followed. Later, a posse found the ground torn up at the site. Bushes were ripped up and the bark of many trees was scuffed up where the pair of men fought a long battle. Later the criminal testified that a man came to help him. This other man jumped upon the back of the Deputy and knocked him to the ground. Somehow during this scuffle the other man grabbed the lawman's pistol shoving it into his chest and pulled the trigger.

and since he could not catch his man made his way the mile or so toward G. W., and by the time he found him he was gone. The illegal bootleggers knew that Willis had recognized him, so they came back to finish the job. But, the deputy heard them and eased out of the woods to a neighbor's house to seek help. A posse was formed to track the murderers down, but they lost the trail. However, the men were later captured in Gadsden, Alabama, and were tried for the murder of George Washington Elliott. The third man was never identified if there ever was a third man.

The two men were convicted and sentenced to 10 years of prison. But, served only three years before being given probation. Melinda moved her family to Haleyville where she found a job in a boarding house. Five months later, her youngest son, G. W. Elliott, was born. Four years later she was sitting at a sewing machine making some clothes for her children when she had a massive heart attack and died at the age of 38. Although her death certificate listed the cause of death as a heart attack, all of her children say that she grieved herself to death.

Willis heard the gunshot,

Williams...continued from Page 4A

Historically, in the southern US, wildfires would burn parts of the landscape every 1 to 3 years. Now in the southeast it's estimated that 4% of lands that could be burned are in a burn rotation. With the development that we have now it's a good thing that we don't have wildfires raging through the southeast every 1 to 3 years. Controlled burns are able to keep the fuel load in the forest down to prevent that from happening. But if we don't have enough controlled burns or responsible timber harvest from public lands then we won't see the rejuvenation of the forest necessary for it to sustain a diverse group of species for generation after generation.

If you have questions about controlled burns you can contact the Georgia Forestry Commission, the US Forest Service, or email me at Jacob. Williams@uga.edu.

Rains... continued from Page 4A

concern. That being said, I say this to you, Letter Writer: If you go to the Doctor and they tell you that you have cancer and time is of the essence, what would you do? Would you look at the Doctor and say thanks, now that my brain and I have been made aware of The Cancer, I'm sure the cancer is gonna not be as aggressive as it has been and give me enough time to formulate a plan of action, and then I'll worry about it?

Or would you look at the doctor and say what do we do Right Now? I would choose the latter, not the former.

Here's the thing – Government waste, fraud, theft, abuse and corruption aren't gonna stop just because we have been made aware of them. It takes people willing to get in there and act where others, who may have talked a good game about such things before an election, do nothing from cancer is the easy part. A surgeon must make sure when cutting out cancer that they only get the cancer. After all, most vital organs don't grow back when you cut out large pieces of them to get cancer. If Musk's team happens to let people go who we need or cuts programs which upon further review are deemed necessary, those people can be rehired, those programs can be reinstated.

And here's the thing about that – after they've been rehired, those employees will know that The Government expects actual results from their work, not just as little work as they can do to keep their jobs. The recipients of those programs will also know they had better not squander what they get from those programs because they can always be eliminated, if abuse of them happens

again. If you ask me. THAT'S

Clyde... continued from Page 4A

II authority and ignore the will of the American people.

For example, U.S. District Judge John McConnell recently filed a motion ordering the Trump Administration to comply with a restraining order he previously issued to temporarily block the Administration's efforts to pause federal grants and loans. As you may know, President Trump ordered a temporary freeze to thoroughly review this funding as part of the Administration's work to root out waste, fraud, and abuse.

Judge McConnell has a documented past of radical rhetoric, including referring to President Trump as a "tyrant." Yet it appears his abuse of power is rooted in more than his political bias.

Alarmingly, Judge Mc-Connell has deep ties to a federally-funded NGO, Crossroads Rhode Island. He has served on the organization's Board of Directors for nearly 20 years, during which the NGO received over \$128 million dollars in federal funding.

Therefore, it appears Judge McConnell has a major conflict of interest in this case, as Crossroads Rhode Island stands to benefit from actions to halt President Trump's temporary funding freeze.

I'm deeply disturbed by

Collins... continued from Page 4A

government agency to contact as each operates independently of each other. If you are unsure which office to contact, you can always call my office, and we will make sure to connect you to the right place.

Fowler... continued from Page 4A

the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

In 2018, Hutchinson published a book entitled, "Can a Scientist Believe in Miracles?" Yes is his answer, particularly the resurrection of Christ. "Science cannot and does not disprove the resurrection," he writes. Science reveals the ordinary course of events, but 2000 years ago, even ordinary people recognized that something extraordinary happened.

What if it's true? Isaac Watts responds, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

Long... continued from Page 4A

games to book studies and/ or lecture format. A sample of recent classes includes book discussions; astronomy; wild flower identification walks; paint with water color; Bible study with a Rabbi; photography; gaming - like Talk Across the Table Bridge and Mah Jongg; Georgia history; Blacksmithing; and Elder Law, just to name a few. The classes change quarterly. Consider joining ICL to continue your learning by visiting https://www.iclyhc.org/. Spring quarter begins Mar 31, 2025. Jill Long

this blatant and dangerous judicial activism, which is why I'm introducing articles of impeachment against Judge Mc-Connell. Republicans simply cannot sit on the sidelines as partisan judges weaponize their power to stop President Trump from exercising his constitutional authorities. After all, the responsibility to hold activist judges accountable lays at the feet of Congress.

Yet Judge McConnell isn't working alone.

Several other activist judges are also thwarting President Trump's agenda, including blocking the Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) access to data and obstructing the Administration's executive orders to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) — with the list of injunctions only expected to grow.

Thankfully, my conservative colleagues and I are ready to lead the fight in holding these activist judges accountable. I'll have more to share about our efforts soon, but please know that I remain committed to ending abusive judicial overreach, upholding the separation of powers, and defending the U.S. Constitution.

Vandereedt... continued from Page 4A

that manner.

Even more disturbing are the allegations being leveled against the Superintendent, John Hill. Who does he think he is to pursue someone at their place of employment and raise questions about them to their employer? This kind of intimidation and conduct is disgusting and unacceptable. Why would he think he should be able to get away with this kind of behavior and not be held accountable? If these accusations are true, he should step down as the Union County School Superintendent.

I also question our School Board. Why didn't they meet with the parents to resolve these issues? I am very disappointed with the elected board members not following through to have the parents' concerns resolved. This is also unacceptable. If the School Board does not want to respond to parents or citizens then maybe we need new people on the board who will give us answers when we have questions or concerns. Over 60% of our taxes are paid to the school system.

ATTENTION SENIOR CITIZENS: If this is how the school wants to operate, perhaps it is time senior citizens over 65 are exempted from school taxes. I don't care to fund the conduct of some teachers, the Superintendent or the School Board.

The children in our schools deserve better! Cindy Vandereedt

once in office.

Now, where Government waste, fraud, theft, abuse and corruption are different

how The Government should have been operating the entire time.

Claude Rains Jr.

Hambourger...continued from Page 4A

Take the story of a contractor who never missed Sunday service. When his business nearly went under during the housing market slump, he prayed daily for a miracle. Sure enough, he landed a major renovation contract that turned everything around. These days, he's so busy with work that he barely makes it to church. "G-d blessed me with good business sense," he tells anyone who asks about his success.

Moses understood something fundamental about human nature: people tend to forget their blessings when times are good. It's like having a perfect Wi-Fi connection – no one thinks about it until it stops working. Then suddenly, they're ready to promise anything to get back online.

But here's the truth: genuine gratitude isn't just about remembering to say thanks during tough times. It's about maintaining that awareness when everything's going right. It's about acknowledging that our successes, good fortune, and even those perfectly timed parking spots come from G-d rather than our own cleverness.

The message is universal: don't wait for hard times to practice gratitude. Sometimes – and hopefully it doesn't come to this – it takes a reversal of fortune to remind us who's really in charge of all those green lights we've been sailing through.

This isn't about adopting an artificial sense of piety or maintaining a constant state of prayer. Instead, it's about developing a genuine awareness of God's presence in our daily lives. Acknowledging the source of our morning coffee, the ability to work, or the gift of family and friends could be as simple as acknowledging it. These small moments of recognition can transform our relationship with both our blessings and their source.

Some might argue that maintaining constant gratitude is unrealistic in today's fast-paced world. But perhaps that's exactly why it's more important than ever. In an age of instant gratification and selfmade success stories, taking time to acknowledge G-d's role in our achievements isn't just an act of faith – it's a powerful reminder of our connection to something greater than ourselves.

Perhaps the next time things are going well, we should pause for a moment. Not just when desperate, not just when in need, but especially when everything's perfect. Because that's when gratitude matters most. After all, true wisdom isn't just about knowing when to ask for help – it's about remembering who to thank when that help arrives.

Yonatan Hambourger is a rabbi and writer dedicated to serving spiritual seekers of all backgrounds on behalf of Chabad of Rural Georgia. Tzali Reicher is a rabbi and writer who supports communities throughout the regional South. You can contact them at y@tasteoftorah.org.

Levine... continued from Page 4A

I would remind Mr. Clyde and those who support this, for the good of all of our souls, that our Lord emphasizes in Matthew 25, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Our Lord also sternly warned, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of my brethren you did not do for me." **Richard Levine**

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

for other opportunities you do not want to miss. Follow us on Facebook and help welcome our new members and see details on our ribbon cuttings and posts from recent events. Call us today to learn more about how we can work together to help you.

Thanks to all our members that help make Life and Business Better in Blairsville.



March 11, 2025 In memory of Paula Paris Johnson on the anniversary of her death by Ginger and Terry Meeks March 19, 2025 In memory of Harry Walker In honor of Shirley Walker

on their 71st Wedding Anniversary by Joan and Aaron Mannheim

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