



## Cummings...continued from Page 4A

they'd ever seen. The old goat must have thought he'd died and gone to heaven. Those two boys were always feeding the goat an apple or fresh green onions. The two young'uns loved the goat. They hugged and petted the goat constantly. They could hitch the wagon to the goat and ride it anywhere. They rode the wagon through the woods to their farm every day, and the goat never faltered. He loved pulling the wagon as much as the boys loved riding the wagon. However, one day Poggy came for a visit. He was my grandfather's fun-loving brother who drank too much. As usual he was drunk when he showed up at the farm and he decided he wanted to ride the old goat. Without Granny's knowledge he got on the old goat and started spurring the goat's sides. At first the goat complied, but, soon grew weary of the man's prodding. The goat began running full speed while Poggy was laughing at the top of his lungs when all of the sudden the goat stopped. But, our Uncle didn't. He sailed over the head of the goat and into a ditch. Paul said, "Uncle Poggy climbed from the ditch and his entire face was bleeding." He told the boys he was going to kill that goat as my Granny walked up to the scene. The boys began crying while Granny walked over to her brother-in-law with her hoe handle extended. He was scared of Granny. All she

did was look at him, which prompted him to leave. But, I guess the goat was still angry. Later in the day Papa drew some water from the well and poured it into a big wash tub so his sons could take a bath. For some reason Papa bent over the wash tub to move it and the old goat noticed the target of his rear end. Without any hesitation and before anyone could stop it, the goat lowered his head and rammed Papa's butt, sending my Grandfather head-first into that water. He must have been stunned because it took him a minute to recover. When he popped out of the water he turned and pointed his finger at the goat and said, "I will take care of you tomorrow." Paul and Bud knew exactly what that meant. The next morning Lon Steele showed up at the house to trade a fresh cow for Granny's old milk cow. After they had negotiated, Lon told Granny, "Okay, I will trade with you." Granny then told Lon, "Okay, now what will you give me for the goat?" Lon was surprised, but he quickly said, "I will give you 2 dollars for it." Granny smiled and agreed to the deal. Once again Granny had used her wiles to save the day. Although her boys were not happy about giving up their goat, they knew their Daddy would have taken care of the goat when he got home. Besides, each boy had a dollar to spend the next time the peddler came by their house.

## Williams...continued from Page 4A

present. Most of the time people are bitten when they try to kill a snake. Non-venomous snakes are protected by state law. If you are bitten 1) stay calm; 2) Get competent medical help as quickly as possible; 3) Keep the affected limb level with the body; 4) Do not cut, suck, or apply ice or a tourniquet to the wound. Wear closed toed shoes when walking in areas where snakes might be present. There are no chemical

poisons or effective repellents for snakes. Mothballs are not registered for use as snake repellent. They also can't hear, so any kind of repellent that uses sound isn't going to work. Make sure that the area around your house is kept clear and your house is sealed to that snakes can't enter your home. If you have any questions about snakes please contact your local Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Shirkey... continued from Page 4A

ing 14 billionaire U.S. Cabinet members, and an un-elected trillionaire making many day-to-day decisions about Veterans, Scientists, National Park workers, Air Traffic Controllers and more. Americans that speak out are being harassed and threatened with legal action. I hoped to see a better America as we moved into 2025, however, prices are still getting higher, more people are losing their jobs and tariffs have become a threat to farmers, auto workers and more.

Tourists are no longer coming to America because of the change they see in our attitude and lack of respect towards people. I can only hope we begin to realize our Democracy and Love of Country are better than this. Even the Bible reminds us, "Do to others as you would have them do to you," and "Love your neighbor as yourself." May America's empathy, decency, honesty and strong desire to help others bring us closer together again. **Kristie Shirkey**

## Whittington...continued from Page 4A

allenges requiring immediate attention. Per your article, and thanks to private donations and government subsidies, the Center has experienced a prolonged period of expansion. Specifically, it has served a growing number of seniors with more programs and services that have satisfied their needs and wants quite well. Unfortunately, the resources required to support those programs are no longer available. Declining donations, reduced staffing, and disappearing subsidies are not a time for sustaining current operations, much less continued growth. This will no doubt be a bitter pill to swallow on the heels of success, but not as bad as sacrificing quality and perhaps jeopardizing the entire future of the Center. No matter the value of each program, maintaining the status quo is not a sustainable strategy. When things change for a business, as they have for the Center, resulting in a significant shortfall between resources and needs, taking steps to understand and adapt quickly is essential. To that end, I would strongly suggest that Senior Center management immediately undertake a complete business review to balance this year's budget and re-examine its core mission and program priorities going forward. As difficult as it will be to curb enthusiasm and support for individual programs, some hard decisions must be made. The Center needs to cut back on its programs and services until budgets can be balanced and not restore eliminated programs or add new programs until funding is in the bank and staffing is identified. This is the responsibility of Senior Center Leadership. Continuing to ask a significantly reduced staff to manage a list of ever-expanding programs for even more seniors, while they find time to solicit donations and manage a long list of ad-hoc fundraising efforts to make up for the significantly

reduced budget is a recipe for disaster. Before the situation further deteriorates, resulting in an even greater budget shortfall and causing even more staff to resign, I suggest an immediate fact-based program review to balance the budget for the remainder of this fiscal year, establish program priorities going forward, and implement process controls, so this can't happen again. Participants should include decision makers (not delegates empowered only to make recommendations but no decisions). Inputs required for the review will minimally include knowing budget details for this year, cost details for each program, and the wants/needs of the Union County senior population for their Senior Center. I have facilitated and participated in many of these types of business reviews during my career. They can be completed quickly and provide immediate clarity and relief to everyone involved. If the facts required for the review are available and participants clear their calendars, this review could be completed in a week or two. If not, then the meeting(s) should be scheduled as soon as these facts can be gathered and distributed to the participants... but the review should be completed and decisions taken within a month so that seniors and staff know what to expect going forward. Regards, **Dick Whittington**

## Dyer... continued from Page 4A

So, when you receive a letter from your volunteer fire station, we ask that you read it to stay informed. We also ask you to come to the open house of the fire stations. But most important, we ask that you please make a donation to your local volunteer fire station. Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

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## Hambourger... continued from Page 4A

is actually better for my knees than tennis, if aliens built the pyramids, and whether my neighbor's new bird feeder is attracting too many squirrels to our block." This exchange, while humorous, mirrors a perspective that many people hold about life's bigger picture. It's remarkably easy to convince ourselves that we're focusing on what truly matters while overlooking the actual foundations that support our daily existence. We often relegate the seemingly mundane details to others – or assume they're beneath notice altogether – while we occupy ourselves with grand philosophical questions or entertaining distractions. Consider how this plays out in the spiritual realm. Many people of faith maintain

a curious disconnect in their worldview: they believe in an omnipotent force capable of orchestrating magnificent events – natural wonders, historic moments, unprecedented coincidences – yet somehow doubt this same force would concern itself with their daily challenges, hopes, and decisions. It's a mindset that separates life into convenient categories: the meaningful versus the mundane, the significant versus the trivial.

This tendency to dismiss life's details shows up everywhere, from spiritual beliefs to business leadership. Consider Richard, a successful business owner who always prided himself on "seeing the big picture" while delegating the details to others. A health scare forced him to pay attention to the small daily choices that ultimately shaped his well-being – what he ate, how much he moved, when he rested. He came to understand that these "minor" decisions were, in fact, the very substance of life itself.

The truth is, life doesn't actually divide neatly into "big stuff" and "little stuff." Each moment connects to the next in an intricate web of cause and effect. The daily choices we make – how we treat others, manage our resources, care for ourselves – create the foundation for everything else. Just ask any financial advisor: it's not the occasional windfall that typically builds wealth, but rather the consistent, thoughtful management of regular income and expenses. Margaret, who recently celebrated her 50th wedding anniversary, puts it this way: "People always ask about the secret to a long marriage, expecting some grand revelation. But it's not about the big romantic gestures or how you handle major crises. It's about all the small moments – how you speak to each other over breakfast, whether you remember to pick up their favorite snack at the store, if you really listen when they tell you about their day."

This perspective invites us to reconsider what we classify as significant. The Almighty operates not just through dramatic interventions and major events, but through the subtle interplay of countless small interactions and choices. True wisdom lies in recognizing the profound importance of life's seemingly ordinary moments. For those seeking deeper meaning in their lives, this understanding offers a powerful shift in perspective. Instead of waiting for big moments or dramatic signs, we might find more satisfaction in embracing the sacred nature of daily life – in recognizing that every interaction, every decision, every moment carries weight and meaning. The next time you're tempted to dismiss something as "just the little stuff," remem-

## Collins...

continued from Page 4A and its properties are spread out all over the County - but the Offices for Parks & Recreation can be found at 519 Industrial Blvd, and the phone number is (706) 439-6074.

I hope you find these department explanations and their phone numbers to be helpful. Last week we mentioned calling E-911, and we need to correct an error in the information provided. We stated that calls made to the non-emergency number are not recorded. This is incorrect. The correction is: All E-911 calls are recorded – whether the call comes in on the 911 system or on the non-emergency number.

## Chamber...

continued from Page 4A in October at Meeks Park. The Chamber, along with a group of individuals from different organizations and the County, have been working to ensure there will be a 56th annual festival at Meeks Park with a downtown parade and square dancing. We hope the community will continue to come together to help make the festival and parade a success. Thanks to our members that have stepped up and volunteered to help, we look forward to working with everyone in the community to share our heritage with others. Thank you to all who contribute to making Life Better in Blairsville.

## Your Patriot Reflection



### Mortal Enemies of Freedom

We often think of the mortal enemies of our republic as those from foreign lands who wish us harm and seek to limit or destroy the freedoms of this great land. In recent history we find that many of those same nations have decided to bring their fight to our homeland, often with devastating demonstrations of hatred and destruction. We are alert to their intentions, and have built-in safety and intelligence measures in place to thwart and stop their intentions. But there is another class of enemy, more cunning, crafty and powerful than those I just mentioned. They are the ones who want more and more government control and less opportunity for "We The People" to speak and exercise the freedoms established by our Constitution and Bill of Rights. Over the course of the last 75-100 years these enemies of the Republic have chipped away the foundation of our legal documents, placed new interpretations of law and have relegated our freedoms to the United Nations. Those who were elected to public office have far exceeded the bounds they were entrusted to preserve. We have allowed the mortal enemies of freedom to ravage and plunder the most sacred of values, our oneness, freedom, liberty and justice. George Washington said, "When a people shall have become incapable of governing themselves and fit for a master, it is of little consequence from what quarter he comes." We have got to be on guard and vigilant to those who would seek to destroy us from without and within. Our freedoms must be preserved! A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuaswarriors.org.

ber the man in the coffee shop. While he pondered life's entertaining diversions, his wife was quietly shaping their future through attention to the very details he'd overlooked. In the end, perhaps there is no little stuff – only building blocks of different sizes, all essential to the structure of our lives.

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.