Opinions

Everybody has one...

We Make Our Own Luck...(Mostly)

There is the classic joke rabbis just love to tell from the pulpit: Jim is running late for an interview at his dream job, and swings into the parking lot only to find there are no spots avail-

He drives around and around, and in desperation calls out to G-d: "If you give me a parking spot right now, I will make a large donation to charity!" No

sooner have the words left his lips when someone hurries out of the building and speeds away in their car. Breathing a sigh of relief, Jim says: "Never mind G-d, I found a spot!"

Sure, it's funny, but there is a deeper message in this joke.



Have you ever felt taken for granted in a relationship? That people only know you when they need you, and ignore you the moment after their use for you is over? And those same people you'd drop everything for, you can't count on to do the same?

Well, you're in good company. In this week's Torah portion - Bechukotai in Leviticus - G-d himself cautions us to not look upon our good fortune as something random, or attributable exclusively to our own efforts.

A theme we've discussed time and time again in this column is the virtue of doing your very best to improve your own circumstances, and then believing in G-d that He will do what is best for you. In classic Chassidic terminology, we are told to make a Keli (vessel or container) for G-d's blessings, and after we do our part, watch the blessings overwhelm us.

But the danger is when we forget the source of our good

Too often, success can get to our heads. We grow egos, we believe our own hype, and start believing that our achievements are solely the result of our own efforts. We don't properly appreciate or credit G-d for delivering our good fortune, and send a message that we don't need Him: we're all good on our own.

This kind of mindset becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, wherein G-d abides by our desire for distance (G-d forbid) and fulfills our wish to be governed by the laws of cause and effect, rather than by His personal providence. And then when we (realize

See Hambourger, page 5A

Jastrow's Logic

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1)

Or did he? Scientists in the 20th century assumed there must be another explanation for the origins of the universe. Many adopted the worldview of materialism, and believed it was their duty to relieve mankind of primitive notions about origins. That's why Edwin Hubble's discov-All Things

New

ery of the red shift set many scientists on edge. They knew it had theistic implications.

The red shift indicated that stars are moving outward, expanding the universe. As physicist Robert Jastrow put it, imagine filming this

expansion, then running the film in reverse. Eventually all mass, energy, and space would be reduced to a finite singularity, i.e. a beginning called the big bang in popular parlance. Jastrow founded NASA's Goddard Institute. He was ag-

nostic about the existence of God. But he didn't mind pointing out the surprisingly theistic implications of the big bang. He calls it "an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries. One of his contemporaries, Stephen Hawking, posited a

mathematical explanation in the field of quantum cosmology as the cause of material world. Those who look for reasons to dismiss the God explanation put their faith in Hawking, who was no doubt a brilliant scientist. But Hawking himself identified the problem with his proofs. He asked, "What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe?" In other words, equations do not create. He may have the right equation, and equations exist in minds. For quantum cosmology to have explanatory power, it needs a mind predating the material world. And that mind had to have the power to breathe fire into it, to make something (the big bang) happen!

Jastrow supposed Albert Einstein shared his thoughts about science pointing to God. He quoted Einstein, "the harmony

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Meeks Park (Part 1 of 3)

There have been so many great improvements to Meeks Park over the past several years, and people are continuously calling and sending messages to my office - thanking the team of Union County Government for the park options available to families. The next three weeks' newspaper columns will attempt to address some of the questions we have received about Meeks Park

and as well some offerings available from Union through the Recreation Department. County Commissioner

Q. Who can use the walking trails and related outdoor activities? Are these activities available Paris to non-Union County residents?



A. Meeks Park is available to all visitors and residents. The park is open to adults and children of all ages, and it offers activities for people of all ages. However, because a dog park is available down by the Senior Center, animals are not permitted inside

Q. I have heard reference to a Meeks Park I and Meeks Park II. What does this mean?

A. Meeks Park I refers to the original side of the park that faces State Hwy 515. On this side of the park, you will find an outside basketball court, skateboard park, swimming pool/splash pad, tennis courts, soccer fields, a children's playground, baseball fields, batting cages, pavilions, and walking trails. Families can swing next to Butternut Creek or sit at one of the many picnic tables to have lunch.

Meeks Park II refers to the side of the park that faces the Old Blue Ridge Highway. This side of the park is carved out by the Nottely River that flows past the Meeks Park Kayak Ramp. Meeks Park II also offers outside adult exercise equipment, a children's playground, and a picturesque grist mill with a fully working waterwheel made with parts dating back to the civil war era.

Q. How many miles of walking trails are there between the two parks?

A. Actually, there are three parks associated with Meeks. We've talked about Meeks Park I and Meeks Park II, but there is an on-leash dog park also. It is located next to the Senior Center and behind North Georgia Tech. I mention it now because it also

See Paris, page 5A

My Confidant

I found a confidant who was par excellence in trustworthiness, humility, and wisdom in our relationship. To me, he was a walking giant of a gentleman. At the time I had a prominent position on a church staff. As with all jobs, there will be occasional misunderstandings and hurt feelings, even

ment. Just because a setting is labeled a zation doesn't mean disagreements and



don't happen, since human beings are involved. I personally encountered some traumatic, devas-

Out of the need to vent, I would call my friend, C., and arrange a lunch meeting. We discovered a small restaurant where we knew it would be safe and secure to let it all "hang out," and boy! Did I! We named the restaurant Watergate. So each time I needed to talk, I'd call C. and say, "If you are free for lunch, I'll meet you at the Watergate." He never ever refused to meet.

See Ashurst, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Sheriff Elections Dear Editor,

Has it ever been considered making the sheriff's election one that is non-partisan?

As it stands now, only Republicans are choosing the sheriff.

If it was non-partisan, everyone - Republican, Democrat, Libertarian or undeclared – would choose the sheriff.

Dan Waits

Extreme Candidates

Dear Editor,

About the "extreme candidates" for Sheriff and Commissioner that lost. What a comment that was and still is.

One person came up to me and laughed in my face about her/his vote. "I voted for that Republican candidate because I wanted Paris to win in November, and that candidate won't beat Paris and the other one could have." I have no idea if that person was a RINO or a Democrat and don't care.

That answer was the same for the Sheriff race because the candidate that lost had made it plain that we needed change in the Sheriff's Office and she/he didn't want any changes. I feel pity for those misguided people of

Union County and sorrow for the better future Oh, and good luck Suches, it's the same

oh same oh.

Marsha Lodes

All,

Terrible Milestone

Our Country has passed a terrible milestone Thursday with the conviction on all 34 counts of former U.S. President Donald Trump.

These extreme partisan decisions further the decline of America in the eyes of the world and continue the division of our Republic. No good will come of this. If a Republi-

can administration pulled stunts like this there would already have been bonfires and murder in the streets. In the view of the Western World, Amer-

ica now has a third-world, two-tier justice system that Nicaragua or Zimbabwe could envy. At least Biden hasn't had Trump ex-

ecuted, yet. Amazingly, fence-sitting voters see Trump's conviction as a reason to vote the Democrat ticket whomever is in it.

"Orangeman bad."

A sad reflection of our eduction system. Pray for reason to take hold. And VOTE or you are part of the problem.

Orémus. J. Murray Tarter

North Georgia News

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Rewriting History Miss Floss The Left's attempts to rewrite our na-

tion's history know no bounds.

QUESTION: HOW

WOULD YOU VOTE IF

HELD TODAY?

THE ELECTION WAS

As you may know, the left-wing media's latest target is U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito. His crime? Flying "Appeal to Heaven" flags outside of

his private residences – one of which was spotted after January 6th, 2021. The liberal media and Andrew Clyde Democrat pundits



quickly decried Alito's decision to display the flag, dubbing the symbol "provocative" and "con-

Interestingly, the Left's outrage was absent when left-wing protesters displayed this very flag in recent years. But more importantly, the "Appeal to Heaven" flag has absolutely nothing to do with the events of January 6th or "controversial" political

The "Appeal to Heaven" flag, also known as the "Pine Tree" flag, dates back to the Revolutionary War.

Designed by Colonel Joseph Reed, who served as the personal secretary to Commander-in-Chief George Washington, the iconic symbol was inspired by philosopher John Locke.

Specifically, the flag references Locke's Second Treatise on Civil Government, which refuted the theory of the divine right of kings: "And where the Body of the People, or any single Man, is deprived of their Right, or is under the Exercise of a power without right, and have no Appeal on Earth, there they have a liberty to appeal to Heaven, whenever they judge the Cause of sufficient moment."

The flag was originally used by a squadron of six cruiser ships commissioned under George Washington to intercept British vessels in October 1775.

Notably, it also served as the maritime flag of Massachusetts from 1776 to

Maybe the Left should pick up a history book before pushing propaganda and demonizing our country's core values.

Because for nearly 250 years, the "Appeal to Heaven" flag has been a powerful reminder of our nation's founding principles, symbolizing the relentless pursuit

All Americans should be proud of the "Appeal to Heaven" flag and what it stands for. After all, we're blessed to live in the greatest and most free nation in the world.

My third-grade teacher, Mrs. Foote, was the nicest lady you would ever want to meet. Back then to me she was ancient. But, it dawned on me the other day that she was younger than than I am now. My perspective has now changed.

DO YOU WANT THE

THAT WILL GET YOU

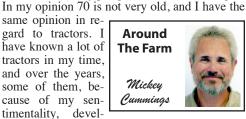
ANSWER THAT DOESN'T

THE MOST HITS FOR

YOUR PUBLICATION?

MATTER ORTHE ANSWER

same opinion in regard to tractors. I have known a lot of tractors in my time, and over the years, some of them, because of my sentimentality, devel-



oped names Miss Floss was an elderly lady known by my grandfather when he was a boy. She could be cantankerous and stubborn; however, she had a heart of gold. But, the one thing she was known for was being bossy. This elderly lady was Papa's Sunday School Teacher for 10 years. After each Sunday School lesson, Papa said she would bark out orders to her class in an effort to get the front of the small church house organized and ready for preaching. Her bossy behavior was accepted by the young people. But, the men of the church took offense when she started on them, and so they began poking fun at her by calling her Bossy Flossie.

One particular Sunday Papa told me that she showed herself at church. "She took a fit," Papa said. It seems that Floss was overwhelmed with emotion and began to buck dance in church. Then she lay back on the floor of the church. Somehow she rolled over on her belly while her legs were kicking and her arms were waving. All of this activity caused her dress to roll up over her head and there for all to see was written across her rear end the words, "Martha's Finest Self-Rising." The word flour was missing. Apparently, Floss had made her underwear from a Martha White Flour sack.

This story was handed down through four generations in my family. The story became intertwined in the actions of my family. For example, when I was a young boy Papa had an old Ayrshire milk cow. This old cow was the boss ,and she let the other cows on the farm know it. She was always the first to feed, and the other cows would not attempt to eat the feed until she was finished. Nobody in the family remembers who the person was that gave the old cow the name of "Bossy Flossie." But, we all agreed the cow reminded us of Papa's old Sunday School

In 1953 Papa bought a Farmall tractor. He used that old red tractor until the late 1960s when he purchased a blue Ford tractor. I learned to plow using that old tractor, and it was the first tractor my sons ever rode. It was dependable, See Cummings, page 5A

Blairsville

town Blairsville last weekend for the Arts, Music and Crafts Festival. The square was buzzing with energy as locals and tourists alike came to have fun and to find that one-of-a-kind item. Weekend events produce a significant boost to our local economy

Chamber of Commerce

I hope you had a chance to visit Down-

to not only the 110 vendors but also include a boost to our downtown businesses and shops as these tourist visited on and off the square. I would like to thank all

County Chambei Steve Rowe

those who stayed and toughed out the rain, to be

Georgia mountains. Blairsville is a wonderful place to be, and we are deeply thankful for the value of all those who have sacrificed their lives for us. Their bravery and dedication allow us to enjoy the freedoms and opportunities we have today. As we celebrate our community events and come

rewarded by a beautiful afternoon, and Sunday

turned out to show all the wonders of the north

See Chamber, page 5A

Fire Ants

Fire ants are very common throughout Georgia. Thankfully, we don't have as many in the mountains as they do south of us. However, once you experience a fire ant bite, you won't ever forget it. Another problem with fire ants is that you rarely get just one bite. Fire ants

were first reported in Georgia in the 1950s. They've been found all the way from North Carolina to Texas, and down to Florida. Let's talk about



fire ants and things that you can do to control them so that they don't take over your lawn or

If you can manage to get an up-close look without being bitten and stung, you'll see that fire ants have two nodes between their abdomen at the end of their body and the thorax in the middle of their body. Fire ants generally like to stay in open grassy areas.

Fire ants are most active when temperatures are between 70 and 85. In the fall fire ants are active because they are foraging for food. This makes fall the best time to treat them. Treatment during the spring and summer is also possible, but effective population control will be less likely. When it's really hot during the summer time fire ants will burrow deeper into the ground. making them more difficult to treat. Treatments in the summer are best done in the morning or evening when it's cooler.

Using a bait will be the most effective way of controlling fire ants. Amdro is the main ant bait that is used for fire ants. Broadcast the bait in a circle around each mound. It's important to know that Amdro is not labelled for use in vegetable gardens. It has to be used in scenarios where the plants growing there are not going to be eaten, like your lawn. If a few mounds remain after seven to ten days, a follow up application of Orthene will be effective against those problematic mounds. Take a long stick and quickly put a hole in the center of the mound. Then fill the hole with insecticide to eliminate those mounds. When applying pesticides always make sure to read and follow the label.

I have also seen people using orange oil mixed with soap and other ingredients. This treatment is effective because it eats away the ant's skin. However, it will also kill any other insects, grubs, or worms that are in its path. It could also strip away the outer layer of any roots that it meets.

There are not many biological controls for fire ants in the United States because they are an invasive species. Fire ants are native to South America and have many natural enemies

See Williams, page 5A

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

has walking trails as well as an 18-hole disc golf course. When you add up all three parks, there are approximately 6 miles of walking trails.

Walking is one of the easiest, most enjoyable, and most available forms of exercise. All you need is a good pair of shoes and comfortable clothing. The walking trails cross Butternut Creek and go under State Hwy 515 – connecting the dog park. All trails are easily accessible. In the Spring and Summer, you might also see the Union County Middle or High School students practicing for cross country competitions.

Q. I see many baseball fields in Meeks Park. Who uses these?

A. The seven (7) baseball fields are used by the Union County Recreation Department baseball program. They are also used for football practice and cheerleading practice. The Union County School System will also use the fields from time to time for middle school softball and baseball.

Q. Can I reserve a

Meeks Park pavilion for a special occasion?

A. There are four pavilions and one gazebo at Meeks Park and one pavilion across from the Senior Center. If you wish to reserve a pavilion, please contact the Recreation Office at 706-439-6074. The Union County Recreation Office will be happy to provide costs and to reserve a pavilion for your special day.

Q. Do you allow bicycles on the walking trails?

A. No, we do not allow bicycles, skateboards, or any other wheeled activities on most of the walking trails. Safety of our trail walkers is top priority. However, residents do have a couple of biking options. The portion of Meeks Park I trail that connects the Sorghum Festival Field to the Senior Center will support bicycles; however, we do recommend that this ½ mile portion be limited to small kids on their bikes.

Additionally, a TVA maintained trail for off-road biking is available. You will find it out by the Nottely Dam.

we) need G-d's help once again, the cycle we despise when people do it to us, repeats: You need me, I help you, you move on without thanks or appreciation, and then you'll call the next time you need me.

So how can we show G-d thanks for all the blessings in our life?

We must see every green light, as well as every bump in the road, as a custom-sent message from G-d. But just as your phone must be turned on to receive a text message, your spiritual sensitivity must be turned on to receive G-d's messages.

Take a few minutes right now and review everything that occurred to you today and contemplate the messages that G-d has sent you. Think of the everyday miracles we take for granted - our families, homes, and our health - and how fortunate you are for your own good fortune. Make efforts every day to deepen your relationship with your Creator and express your gratitude proactively.

This is strengthened through learning Torah (the Bible) and fulfilling His precepts. Rather than attributing things to "coincidence" (which is just an eleven-letter name for G-d), recognize we experience divine providence in all aspects of our life.

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic movement, was an early advocate of this approach. He taught the concept of hashgacha pratis (Divine Providence), which teaches that G-d is intimately

Hambourger... continued from Page 4A involved in every detail of our lives, from the grandest events to the smallest occurrences. Nothing happens by chance; every moment is part of G-d's purposeful plan. This perspective encourages us to recognize and reflect on G-d's presence in our daily experiences, deepening our connection through Torah study, good deeds, and gratitude. By viewing life through the lens of hashgacha pratis, we see every experience as an opportunity for spiritual growth, fostering humility and trust in G-d's benevolent guidance. The Baal Shem Tov also used to encourage people to respond "Thank G-d" when he asked how they were, as another way to actively express our appreciation for G-d many times throughout the course of

With this mindset, paired with a hearty work ethic and trust in G-d, we will never go wrong.

Yonatan Hambourger and Tzali Reicher are rabbis serving communities throughout the regional South.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

together in joy, we remember and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice, ensuring our ability to gather and thrive in such a beautiful and welcoming town.

Our community makes

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

even in cold weather. Just like Miss Floss was there for Sunday School, the old Ford tractor was always ready to work. Is it any wonder then that the tractor picked up the name "Flossie?"

About 25 years ago Papa called me with some news. The first words from his mouth were 'I baptized Flossie yesterday." Papa had taken the old tractor down by the lake to clear out some brush. He set the parking brake and got off the tractor to close a gate he had driven through. Somehow the brake loosened, and he watched helplessly as the old tractor rolled into and disappeared under the

always been partial to red milk cows, Martha White Flour and blue tractors. Now, each time I eat a biscuit or sit on top of my orange tractor, I think about a long gone Sunday School teacher and the stories Papa told me about her. And as I age, the word "old" keeps changing. The word fifty nor seventy sound old to me anymore, and I keep walking in the high moun-

waters of Bear Creek Lake. I

actually shed a tear for a tractor

tains trying to stay healthy and

doing my best to keep the old

As you can see I have

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

of natural law...reveals an intelligence," and commented, "The beauty and simplicity of those laws...suggest a design. A design suggests a designer. That was (Einstein's) back door approach to the question of belief in God."

Here is what theologians know: "In the beginning was the Word...All things came into being through Him...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1). Jesus, God the Son, is that Word. Those who looked into His face saw the One who spoke the universe into existence. Those who believe in Him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). And science keeps pointing us to that same Cre-

Williams... continued from Page 4A

there. Researchers have to be very careful about introducing a natural predator, because the effects of that introduced species are unknown on our eco-

If you have any questions about fire ants and fire ant control, contact your County Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.

Ashurst... continued from Page 4A

The purpose of this story is that while we may have a multiplicity of friends, there may be a special confidant. And such is normal and OK. Among all of our friends, we may be fortunate to have one or two confidants besides our significant other. If you do, you are blessed in an extra way. C. has been my friend for over 40 years, and the friendship is still strong and special.

"Good friends are like stars. You don't always see them, but you know they're al-

ways there." (unknown) life better in Blairsville. Union County Retired Educators Association

The next meeting of the Union County Retired Educators Association is our Annual Picnic on Wednesday, June 12th at Conley Pavilion in Meeks Park at 11:30 a.m. We will provide the meat, paper products, and drinks, so please bring side dishes – vegetables, desserts, bread, etc. We would like to extend a special invitation to all new retirees and prospective members to join us, find out about our association, and consider membership at the state and local levels. Membership in the state organization is critical for retired educators and only costs \$27 yearly. Automatic Deduction is an option. Simply go to https://www.garetirededucators.org where you can print/ complete a membership form and mail to the address listed or you can join online. We urge you to join the LOCAL (\$15.00 yearly) association also. Our local dues provide monies for a Scholarship for a graduating senior each year, for our local project which is the Ferst Readers Childhood Literacy Program of Union County, other service projects, and for any supplies needed for maintaining our unit. Dues are tax deductible and they, or any other contribution you may want to make, may be

Pat Everett, UCREA President Allyson Mc-

A special concert on

Saturday, June 8th as an exten-

sion of the Scottish Festival

going on at Meeks Park, Colin

Grant-Adams and Robert Val-

entine will be in concert at the

Old Courthouse on the Square

in Blairsville, beginning at 7

PM. The doors will open at 6

Special concert featuring Colin

Grant-Adams at Old Courthouse

paid at any meeting.



Shelia Garrison and Judy Carpenter giving note pads for Teacher

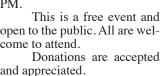


Convention attendees.

Graw, Judy Carpenter and Shelia Garrison represented our local unit on May 7-9 at the State Convention held at

the Classic Center in Athens, GA. They will give us an update including the awards our unit received. This meeting will also include our local awards presentation and officer installation. County Commissioner Lamar Paris will also give us an update on what is happening in our area.

We seek to provide support, fellowship, and service to each other and our community. Come for a time of fellowship and good food! The Union County Retired Educators Association is an affiliate of the Georgia Retired Educators Association and all retired educators, affiliates, and their family members are invited to join this local unit.



Colin Grant-Adams