Opinions

Celebrate Elections...

Celebrate Elections. Don't Dread Them! By Yonatan Hambourger and Tzali Reicher

With the presidential election behind us, Americans have reason to take a moment and celebrate.

The election season - with its passionate debates and compet-

ing visions – showcased the strength and resilience of our democratic system, which has stood as a beacon of freedom and stability for generations. Each voice, each vote, has shaped the direction our nation will now take. And, as one party steps back to let another lead, we witness an inspir-



ing reminder of our democracy's power: the peaceful transition of authority.

This process is greater than any party or individual. It's a testament to our commitment to participation, respect, and resilience a national covenant to uphold a system where different perspectives can coexist and contribute to our common good. The Torah speaks to the value of harmony, of embracing diverse voices to build a unified whole, reminding us that true strength lies in our ability to hold differing opinions while remaining committed to a shared purpose.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory, encouraged public engagement and saw voting as a profound responsibility, a way to contribute to our communities and express our thoughts on our nation's course. He viewed every person's role in governance as an honor, underscoring that, even amid differences, our democracy's strength lies in unity and stability.

Ours is a grand experiment in self-governance. Since its founding, this system has withstood challenges, adapting and evolving over time. Beyond individual policies or parties, it's our collective commitment to civic duty that gives this system its lasting power. We are not simply governed; we are participants in shaping the framework that keeps our nation strong.

For those in the Jewish tradition, civic responsibility resonates deeply. Involving oneself in community decisions is both a duty and an honor – a commitment to the tzibbur, the collective. Judaism places such high value on community and people com-

See Hambourger, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Lamar Paris

Dear Editor,

Thanks, Lamar, for all you have done for this county over the last 24 years. Your legacy will continue for generations. It's hard to remember all the positive changes made during your tenure as Sole Commissioner, but I will attempt to list a few. I retired and moved to these mountains 32 years ago, and these are the things I can remember:

The first thing I remember is a common sense street-numbering system.

Created the very popular Union County Farmers Market.

Built the magnificent Union County Community Center.

Meeks Park, the crown jewel of Union County. Most folks don't know it was because of your friendship with Bill Meeks that we even have a Meeks Park. Years before holding elective office, Lamar persuaded Bill Meeks to sell this property so it could be developed into a county park. This is one of the most beautiful county parks anywhere. Something for everyone to enjoy.

Implemented the modernization of the Union County Courthouse. The existing courthouse was too small and inefficient. The remodeled courthouse speaks for itself.

Enlarged and improved the Union County See White, page 5A

Preach It

Dear Editor,

A while back in the North Georgia News,

Everybody has one...

The Broken Jar

The Geller family just wanted a little relief from living on the loud edge of chaos. They left their home in northern Israel for a day trip to the Hecht Museum. What awaited them was a new kind of distress, which most parents can relate to.

The museum's founder believed that visitors would have the best experience if artifacts were displayed without obstruc-

tion. "The museum is not a mausoleum, but a living and dynamic place," explained the current director, Dr. Inbal Rivlin. That does not mean exposed artifacts should be touched. But it is a risk, especially considering the policy of free admission to families with children. "All



the senses work in children," Rivlin said, "not just the sense of sight, and they need it. We are aware of this need, and we will provide this experience.'

You see where this is going. The Gellers' 5-year-old son was just inside the front door when he decided to tilt a jar to see inside. It slipped from his grasp. When the sound of shattering pottery reached the father's ears, his first thought was, "I hope that wasn't my child!" He turned to see that a rare, 3500-yearold, bronze age jar was in pieces at his son's feet. The mother quickly whisked the child outside. With a deep gulp, the father headed to security to confess and offer to pay. The upset family left to go home.

The museum authorities reviewed security footage and saw what happened. They did not ask for payment or demand punishment. In fact, they invited the family to return to complete their visit. A few days later, the Gellers did just that. The jar was back in place. The museum's restoration expert said, "I like that people touch. Don't break, but to touch things, it's important."

It would be a distortion of the policy to ask, "Why does the museum allow children to break artifacts?" No, the museum doesn't give permission to break things but knows the risk. This is of a piece with the question, why does God allow evil in the world? Answer: He always knew the risk of creating humans with the dignity of free will. He is good, and not culpable when we "break things." He is loving, and always had a plan for restoration. He had a "purpose and grace which was granted us in

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Q. Last time I was at the recycling center, I saw new equipment. What type of equipment is being installed and what will it be used for?

A. We are very excited to talk about two new pieces of equipment that will provide Union County residents with additional options in the area of recycling:

1. You may recall that Union County has been providing Document Destruction services twice a year. We used a company based in Atlanta – a company that would shred documents onsite. We should not have to use an outside company for this service in the future. The Union



County Recycle Center has purchased a shredder that will be permanently installed at the Transfer Station. This shredder will be available during regular Transfer Station hours, and residents will be able to shred documents as needed instead of waiting for an official Document Destruction event. This commercial shredder will also be useful to local businesses that work with a great deal of paper such as banks as retailers. The shredder will be open and available to the public as soon as power is connected.

2. Currently, the Union County Transfer Station bails some cardboard and other materials. However, a new and more efficient bailer was purchased - allowing the unit to run 4 tons at the time. This bailer will be able to bundle plastics numbers 1-7, cardboard, paper, aluminum cans, and steel cans. Materials will also get a better price because it will let Union County ship by the truckload. This bailer will make Union County more money when selling materials to be processed. The concrete is being poured now for the bailer floor, and the building should arrive mid-December. We are so very excited about the advancements in Union County recycling.

Q. What are the current prices for dropping off bagged trash?

A. Individual household trash up to 30-gallon bags is \$1.50 per bag when you drop off at one of the three locations. Individual household trash in bags larger than 30 gallons is \$2.00 per bag. It is very important to note that the bagged trash locations do not accept yard waste such as leaves, branches, and twigs.

See Paris, page 5A

Chamber of Commerce

First and foremost, we want to extend a big thank you to the Rotary Club of Union County for hosting an incredible Veterans Luncheon last week. The event was a true celebration of our local heroes, and the lunch was absolutely fantastic! It was heartwarming to see so many

veterans and their families come toenjoying gether. good food and even better company. We are deeply grateful for the Rotary Club's efforts in or-



ganizing such a meaningful event and for honoring those who have served our country.

A big thank you to everyone who volunteered at the Chamber to help set up the large trees and fluff them in preparation for the decorators. We could not have done it so quickly without your help!

With that being said, we still have a Sponsor tree, large and small trees, wreaths, and gingerbread houses available to decorate. If you have not signed up yet, there is still time to be

See Chamber, page 5A

Joro Spiders

Joro spiders are making their presence known in the Georgia Mountains. These spiders have been in Georgia since 2014, but have not been seen very much until this year in Union and Towns counties. Let's talk about these invasive spiders and what their presence here could mean. Joro spiders scientific name is Trichonephila cla-Watching vate. They are naand Working tive to Japan and East Asia. In Asia, Jacob Williams they have a very large and diverse native range. It is possible that eventually they will be found in all of Georgia, the Southeast. and the Eastern U.S. The females in this species are quite large with legs that can be up to 3 inches long. Their abdomen is yellow and teal bands with red splotches near the end. The males on the on the other hand are much smaller and do not have as striking of colors on their body. These spiders are in the orb weaver family, which means that they spin very ornate and large webs. If you picture what a classic, cartoon spider web looks like in your mind, that is very similar to a Joro web. Their web silk is unusually strong, and is capable of even catching small birds. The female's silks have a golden yellow color to them that matches their body coloring. Because these webs are so strong they can span 10 feet or more. I've seen single strands stretching 20 feet from tree to tree. If you have walked through the woods this fall and encountered webs that were larger and stronger than usual, you have likely walked through a Joro web. Because the females are so big and their webs are massive, they can be a bit spooky. The speed that they are able to reconstruct their webs with is impressive. Even though they are big and scary looking, they pose virtually no threat to people. They run away when the encounter people, and very rarely actually bite. The fall is the time of year when you see them the most, because their size and population have peaked. In the fall the females will lay eggs that overwinter. These egg masses may be attached to leaves, bark, or structures. These eggs will hatch in May. Over the course of the summer the spiders grow in size until they are mature in the late summer and fall. Joro spiders can spread by hitching a ride on vehicles. When they are young in the spring the baby spiders can spread by creating parachutes out of webs that catch the wind. These parachutes allow them to travel long distances. Joro spiders are not dangerous to people or pets. Their webs are a nuisance when they are in your yard or you are walking through the woods. Their full impact on our ecosystem is See Williams, page 5A



Becoming

One of our reminders about growing through life is that we are in a continual stage of Becoming. Individuals who are in this stage are in a stage of becoming more productive, of becoming more adventurous, of becoming more thoughtful, and of becoming more accepting, which allows God Successful to use them in re-Mental markable ways. Health On the flip Dr. James side are people Ray Ashurst who are in a stage of becoming more PH.D. pessimistic, of be-

Miss Pollardi

Not long after I was born my father lost his job at the textile mill and our family moved to Chicago. Dad soon found a job working as a day laborer on a carpentry crew. At night Dad attended a school for carpenters through a local labor union. An acquaintance of Dad was also attending this same school. One windy Around day this young man The Farm was working on a skyscraper that was Mickey more than 50 stories tall. The young man Cummings was carrying a piece

a letter writer commented on a submission I penned by the leading of the Holy Spirit that lives in my heart. She replied that I was too preachy, and I just dismissed it because she has a right to her opinion as well. But it has always haunted me until the Holy Spirit told me to rejoice instead, because at least she read my letter and I obeyed the Holy Spirit's leading. When Jesus was here, He commanded His disciples to go forth into the world and proclaim the good news of God's salvation plan, and they did with boldness though it cost them their lives.

This is why I send articles out to warn folks of the impending judgment of those who reject Jesus' offer, which means they will be totally separated from the One true God, who created them to just love Him back for what He did on the cross for mankind.

The Bible says in Psalm 14:1 – The fool says in their heart, there is no God. They don't feel the need to believe in a god to explain the world around them nor do they believe a god is necessary for human beings to lead good, happy, and meaningful lives. There is a Hell to shun, but a Heaven to gain. Which one do you choose for eternity?

Frank F. Combs

Thank You Patriots

Dear Editor,

Thank you and kudos to all American patriots who used wisdom, discernment and common sense to elect Donald J. Trump our 47th President and for rejecting Kamala Harris's manipulative lies, divisive tactics and outrageously liberal profile.

As many conservatives running for office across America also were favored, we now have the highest hopes for our beautiful country's future.

"With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26), so I give Him my most heartfelt thanks.

Christians should remember and follow 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and I will heal their land."

We must always be salt and light on planet Earth, while giving God our complete devotion and gratitude. He has showed us mercy and blessed America. In return, may America bless God.

Tamara Phillips

coming more stubborn, of becoming more selfpitiful, or of becoming meaner each passing day.

We are in charge and in control of our Human Destiny - that is, of what we are becoming day-in and day-out. What are you becoming in your daily life?

The success behind Becoming in a positive way is to own your present age, whether you are in your 30s or 60s. Owning one's age is accepting the exact age you are but not necessarily what you are supposed to behave like. There is no psychological standard that equates a certain age to certain required behaviors. Too many of us have fallen into such a trap and sadly have See Ashurst, page 5A

45-47

On Tuesday, Nov. 5, the American people made their voices heard loud and clear by painting the country red.

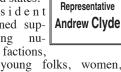
Like you, I couldn't be more excited that President Donald J. Trump is heading back to the White House! His landslide victory marks

United States

Congressman

the greatest political comeback in history - sweeping all seven battleground states.

President Trump gained support among numerous



including young folks, women, Hispanics, working-class voters, and Black Americans. Moreover, Trump captured the highest count of the popular vote of any Republican presidential hopeful.

This monumental victory will rescue our great country.

As you may know, Republicans also kept our majority in the House of Representatives and flipped the Senate. In other words, Republicans won a Trump Trifecta in Washington.

The American people are so fed up with the Biden-Harris Administration's destructive See Clyde, page 5A

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of plywood when a burst of wind carried him off the skyscraper into the thin air. The young man didn't panic. He simply clung to the plywood and glided back to the building and onto a lower floor.

After hearing about this young man's experience, Dad decided on another vocation. He applied for and secured a job with a Finance company in a place called Cicero. Soon he found himself in a management training position under the guidance of a man by the name of Fitzgivans. This fellow was a man which thought hill people were of an inferior intelligence. Dad said, 'Fitzgivans was not hateful or mean he simply thought he was smarter than me because I was from northern Alabama." For example, he was always explaining things to Dad in a very condescending manner.

One phase of management training required of Dad was the interview process in which he had to practice talking with potential customers seeking loans. After a grueling day of practicing these interviews the condescending man told Dad, "Paul, you must learn to get personal with potential customers. Through the interview you must try to determine the best way to help your client." The very next day he was training another potential manager and Dad was working the front desk when in walked Miss Pollardi.

This elderly lady told the receptionist she wanted to talk with someone about a loan. So, Dad invited her into the interview room. He asked the lady about her needs, and her response indicated she needed a \$250 loan. Dad asked about her ability to pay back the loan. The 80-year-old lady explained that she was an entertainer. She was asked to clarify that statement, and much to my Dad's surprise, Miss Pollardi stood up and began her routine. Dad quickly realized Miss Pollardi was a stripper and stopped her. He explained that since he was nothing more than a trainee he could not make a decision. He explained, "However, my supervisor is here today and he will be able to go through this in-terview and make a decision about your loan." She was asked to remain in the interview room See Cummings, page 5A

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Paris...continued from Page 4A

Q. Can commercial garbage hauling trucks use the transfer station?

A. Yes, the Union County Transfer Station does have a commercial side for haulers. The price is \$57/ton, and minimum charge to cross the scales is \$20 for up to 700 pounds.

Q. What are the normal open hours of the transfer station and convenience centers?

A. The commercial side of the transfer station is open Monday through Friday, 7

Clyde...continued from Page 4A

agenda that they've handed President Trump a decisive and historic mandate.

Folks, it's imperative that Congress doesn't waste this incredible opportunity.

Rest assured, you can count on me to keep fighting to get our country back on track. I look forward to working with President Trump and my conservative colleagues to deliver tremendous wins to the American people - wins that start with Trump's America First agenda. From lowering inflation and unleashing domestic energy production to building the wall, carrying out mass deportations, and enacting national concealed carry reciprocity, we have a lot of important work on our hands.

am - 4:00 pm and Saturday,

7:00 am - 12 noon. The other

functions are also open Mon-

day through Friday, 7:00 am

- 3:00 pm; and Saturday, 7:00

am - 12:00 noon. The centers

are closed on Sundays and certain holidays. The centers will

not be open New Years Day,

Memorial Day, Fourth of July,

Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day,

County citizens for supporting

the improved Recycling pro-

I want to thank Union

and Christmas Day.

grams.

One thing is for certain: Inauguration Day - January 20th, 2025 - can't come soon enough!

Through it all, it's an honor to continue representing your voice and our shared values in Congress. I look forward to all the ways we will make our country strong, safe, and great again.

White...continued from Page 4A

Library.

Negotiated with NAS-CAR legend Bill Elliott for the purchase of the land on the Glenn Gooch Bypass and across from the high school. This purchase has enabled the county to build a modern health department, gymnasiums, pickleball courts, new voting center and a driver's license building.

Union County Horse Arena. For those who enjoy equestrian events.

Union County Waste Transfer Station. Recycling certain items is also possible. Fire Stations. Several new fire stations provide added safety to our community while also reducing insurance costs.

Because of space limitations and an old man's memory, it is impossible to remember and record all that has been accomplished, but suffice to say these things did not happen by accident and have improved the quality of life for each of us.

Union County has been blessed to have had Lamar Paris as Sole Commissioner for 24 years. I have not met Mr. Collins but sincerely wish him well. He has some big shoes to fill!!

Peter W. White

Hambourger...continued from Page 4A

ing together that many prayers can only be said when a minimum of 10 people are gathered, because, as it says in Ethics of Our Fathers, the Divine Presence rests on people who gather to study together or do a communal good. Every vote cast respects the diversity of a nation, reflecting our dedication to each other's well-being while staying true to shared values. This election reminds us of the power we hold together, with each ballot carrying weight in shaping the world around us.

Election season can be tiring, with all the ads, debates, and constant back-and-forth. But this fatigue is, in a way, a privilege - it shows that we live in a place where we have a real choice, something many around the world don't have. Our right to vote is more than just an obligation; it's a privilege, a chance to help shape our country's path. The cycle of leaders stepping down and others stepping up brings new voices, ideas, and changes, while still respecting the stability tradition provides, and in a few short years, we will have the opportunity again to determine if this leadership is working or if it's time for something new. This rhythm is what keeps our nation alive and moving forward. For those whose candidate didn't win, disappointment is natural, but it, too, is a testimony to the greatness of our system. No matter who

leads, the system remains steady, fostering continuity while allowing for change. And in time, even those feeling discouraged may be surprised by positive developments and unexpected progress that the new leadership brings - not just to our country but to the world.

Our democracy is a model that has inspired others globally, a system where governance serves the people and where power is peacefully transferred. This week, as we reflect on the election, we can feel grateful for a system where leadership is chosen, not imposed, where authority is accountable, and where each citizen has a voice in the future.

As the next administration steps in, we look forward with hope, trusting that they will fulfill their duty to the na-

CummingS...continued from Page 4A

while Dad retrieved his boss, Mr. Fitzgivans

Dad held the door allowing his supervisor to enter the interview room and introduced him to Miss Pollardi. He shut the door and stood in front of the door listening to the conversation. He overheard his boss begin the interview by asking the elderly lady the same questions which he had previously asked. When Dad overheard the lady tell his boss that she was an entertainer, he grabbed a hold on the door knob and braced his feet against the door jamb. As she went into her routine he overheard Fitzgivans say, "Miss Pollardi, please don't take off your clothes.' Dad soon felt the door knob move and heard the words "Let me out of here." Dad held onto the door knob and soon heard "Miss Pollardi, if you will put your clothes back on, I will give you this loan."

When Dad heard those words, he let go of the door and ran to his desk where he acted

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2 Tim. 1:9). It is the promise that evil does not have the final say. He defeated evil at the cross to offer you a place in eternity where good prevails.

The Hecht Museum hopes the international interest in the broken jar encourages more families to visit. It is a story of fault and forgiveness, distress and mercy, brokenness and restoration. It is a picture of God's amazing grace. www. mountainchristian.net

Williams... continued from Page 4A

not fully understood yet. Any of their webs that are covering walkways, decks, doorways, pollinator gardens, or beehives should be removed.

If you have questions about Joro spiders contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@ uga.edu.

Ashurst... continued from Page 4A

remained in an age rut. For example, if you are 67 and you want to jump out of an airplane (with, of course, a reliable parachute), who has the right to say that you are too old?

"The great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do." (Walter Bagehot)

Owning one's age means that you have the right to direct your own behavior as long as it is healthy and legitimate. Owning one's age requires stamina, confidence, and trust in one's inner self. Becoming is an active, positive movement to be better and perhaps wiser than yesterday.

as if he were on the phone. Soon his boss came walking through the office red-faced and very angry. He looked at Dad and told him to help that lady complete the loan process. Mr. Fitzgivans and Dad soon found mutual respect for each other and became close friends. Dad never told him he held the door during the interview process. And yes, Miss Pollardi paid off her debt to Time Financial.

tion until the time for change comes again. In a world too often marked by division, our democracy serves as an example of cooperation and respect. Let us celebrate this election season as a reminder of our privilege, honoring the responsibility that each vote holds, and embracing a system that allows for both spirited debate and unity in our shared future.

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

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

part of the fun! Decorating began November 14th and runs through November 27th, so grab your spot and help make this year's Tour of Trees even more spectacular.

Ônce again, thank you to all our volunteers for getting us started on the right foot. Life is better in Blairsville, especially when we come together to celebrate and give back to our community.



Saturday, December 7, 2024 • 6:00 PM Sponsored By Union County Historical Society

Theme: "Cheers To 125 Years" "Christmas Through The Years" Celebrating The 125th Anniversary of the Historic Courthouse

PARADE APPLICATION

Name Of Entry: _

Contact Person:

Phone:

Type Of Entry: Float Walkers Animals Automobile Motorcycle

*****All Entries Must Have Christmas Lights*****

Entry forms must be received in the Historical Society office by noon on December 6th. Send completed form by email: history1@windstream.net or drop off at the Old Courthouse on the Square. For more information call the office at 706-745-5493