

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Habitat for Humanity

Last month alone, our volunteers donated 206 hours of their time, on average, to our organization helping in our ReStore. We are so thankful for their time, their friendship and their dedication in seeing our organization succeed.

We decided to create an event that allows us to give back to them. On May 2, we will be hosting here at Habitat for Humanity of Towns/Union Counties a Volunteer Appreciation/Recruitment Day! All are welcome as we celebrate our volunteers and the impact they have on our community. Between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., in the parking lot of Habitat at 225 Wellborn St., Blairsville, we will have live music, a silent auction to raise money for Habitat, and door prizes and giveaways for volunteers. We will also have information on our Helping Hands projects, our ReStore, and a sign-up sheet for those interested in volunteering!

In addition, we are proud to see local businesses come together for this event by offering to donate gift cards, gift baskets and items of their trade to give away as prizes for volunteers! We have several local vendors coming to the event to share their items and advertise their businesses as well! If you are a local business and would like to take part in this event or donate items to give to volunteers, please contact us at 706-745-7101 and ask for myself! We would love to make this event a massive blessing to our volunteers, and with the support of local businesses, we can do just that.

Did I mention there will also be food at this event? We will have hot dogs, and Papa John's of Blairsville has generously offered to donate pizza for the event! This community is so incredible, and we are thankful to see support for events like this one that honor those who give of their time freely and work diligently for our mission through Helping Hands Projects and the ReStore.

Please save the date and join us for a fun-filled event, with community engagement, delicious food, live music and opportunity to find out more about what we do and how you can get involved. We are so excited to see you there!



**Habitat Happenings**  
Madelyn Bailey

### Love vs. Power

The whole incident started during the pre-dawn hours in a village in Haiti where I lived. I was shocked at how attractive the lie was.

My job included making the daylong journey to Port-au-Prince to purchase supplies. It was a cash economy, so I had \$400 in my backpack. I left in the wee hours of a moonless morning. The absence of electricity and the inky darkness masked whatever lurked about.

I drove the Land Rover to pick up a companion. I stopped beside his house and walked a few steps to his front door. Was that a noise behind me? I looked into the darkness. Nothing. As we climbed in for the grueling trip ahead of us, I checked the back seat. My backpack was gone. So were my plans for the day.

I learned later that a healthy young man had followed me, hoping to hitch a ride to the city. Seeing my backpack, he couldn't resist the crime of opportunity. He had never seen that much cash. The next day, he checked himself into the hospital. A few days later ... he died. The Harvard-trained doctor who attended him told me he died from shock and fear. Seriously.

As I tried to get my head around that, Renoll from the village came to see me. I suspected Renoll of petty theft but never accused him. He said, "Now everybody knows you have power. You know I never stole from you, right?" For a moment, I marveled at my newfound "power." The culture expected me to exploit it. Then it hit me. To embrace that lie would change my mission and method from love to power. I told Renoll that I forgave the thief, because God forgave me through Jesus' death on the cross.

The voodoo culture has something in common with our popular culture. They both pursue and abuse power as the supreme goal of human existence. In this cultural moment, history, identity, reality and language all depend on who's in power. What a contrast with the Christian worldview of loving God and neighbor by believing and offering truth!

Love does not abuse power or endorse lies. It "rejoices with the truth" (1Cor. 13:6). Jesus promises you power, not for

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**All Things New**  
Wayne Fowler

### Commissioner's Questions

We are seeing Facebook posts and billboards advertising that the Byron Herbert Reece Farm & Heritage Center opened last week. Where is this farm, and what goes on at the farm?

**Q1. What is the Reece farm?**

A. The Byron Herbert Reece Farm & Heritage Center, commonly referred to as the Reece Farm is a historic farm and homestead located at 8552 Gainesville Hwy., Blairsville. The farm is bordered by Wolf Creek and the Blue Ridge mountains. This is a county treasure with the experience of 20th century Appalachian farming, farm animals, exhibits, Visitor's Center and Gift Shop. The farm property is open daily. The visitor's center and exhibits will re-open for the season on April 17th and are open Wednesdays-Saturdays from 10AM until 4PM thru mid-November.

**Q2. What is there to do at the farm?**

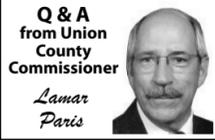
A. First, there is a Welcome Center located in the restored home of Byron Herbert Reece and contains some original furnishings. There you can pick up a self-guided tour brochure with a map and information. The Welcome Center also houses a Gift Shop which includes books by Byron Herbert Reece and other local authors as well as other items such as arts and crafts made by local artisans. Outside there is a poetry trail that will lead you along the points of interests, beginning with Mulberry Hall, Reece's writing studio. Be sure to stop at the petting and livestock area to see the farm animals before heading to the main barn which houses farm exhibits and equipment. Also along the trail is a smoke house, corn crib, chicken house, Creekside amphitheater and picnic tables. Then you can follow the trail across the meadow to a wooden bridge crossing the lovely cascading waters of Wolf Creek. This path will lead you to a large pavilion.

**Q3. What is the Pavilion?**

A. The Pavilion is a large wood and stone structure, that is great for reunions, weddings or picnics. The pavilion is available to rent for special events through the Byron Herbert Reece Farm at 706-745-2034.

**Q4. Would you say it would be worth a visit?**

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**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
Lamar Paris

### Letters to the Editor

#### A Small Price to Pay

Dear Editor,

To invest in the future success of our youth today for just pennies on the dollar... What is that worth to you? What is that worth to our community? Are you willing to pay that small price to invest in our students, to empower them now to be successful in whichever occupational career path they choose for their future... for our community?

My husband and I, along with our two children, have been residents of Blairsville since 2012. Like many families, we moved to Blairsville for the community and beauty of the mountains. The bonus for us as parents of young children is having top-rated schools available to our daughter and our son. Our daughter, Casey, began her Union County Schools academic career as a fifth grader, attended college courses in her junior and senior year through the Dual Enrollment program at Union County High School, and is now completing her junior year at the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega, working on her degree in Criminal Justice with a focus on forensics. With the

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#### A Review of "Facts"

Dear Editor,

I guess I started something with my March editorial offering — that's OK — we need to write and read more words regarding the "free country" and "Constitution" subject. Written debate is better than no debate at all.

Apparently, an April 6 letter writer didn't read what I actually wrote in my March "offering." I didn't say we all needed to "agree" with everything that our president and his administration were doing or even proposing; I just stated that it was our collective and patriotic responsibility to support what he's trying to do for the good of the country. We should NOT be allowing our Congress to simply do everything they can to stop the president from getting anything done, as seems to be going on now. If we don't agree with what the administration is doing or proposing, we should do what we must to convince our representatives and senators to openly talk about the questions they have and to offer legitimate alternatives (that's what we used to call "open debate"). We also need to make sure that we/they are actually dealing with and talking about facts, not conjecture or conspiracies.

Let's review a few "facts":

- Our "border situation" has never been perfect, but it was severely "damaged" during the Trump administration. Contrary to what

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#### God Does Exist

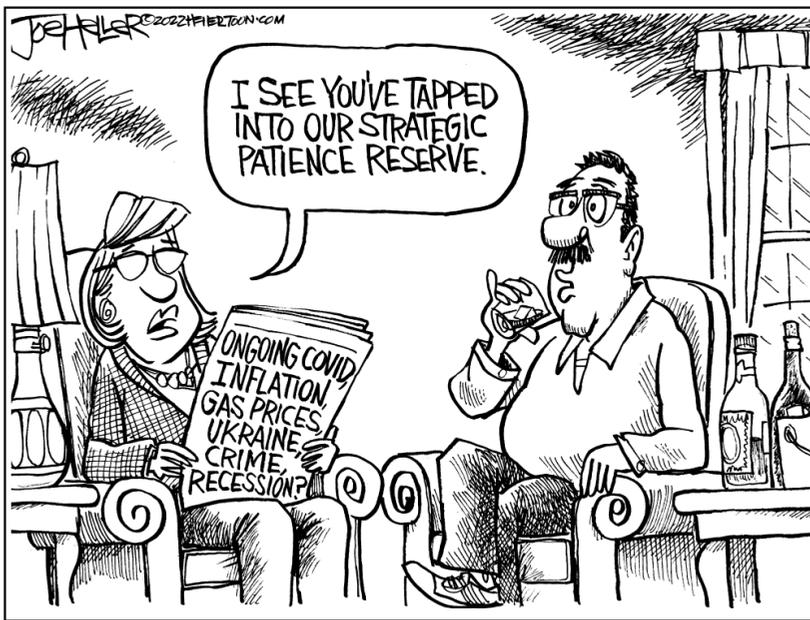
Dear Editor,

Remember the movie that came out a while back called "God Is Dead?" In today's society, there are millions upon millions of people who are saying the same thing, and their actions speak for themselves. One may say it's easy to say that God is not out there, and if He is out there, does He really care about us? And to that, I say: We are the ones who have forsaken Him, abandoned Him in our time of need.

Just because no one has ever seen God doesn't mean that He doesn't exist. I for one have never seen Tokyo, Japan, but I believe there is a great city by that name, because I have heard about it, just like I have heard about who God is. So do I dismiss these two facts because I have never seen either one?

Just because a person has had no intimate relationship with God does not mean that He doesn't exist. Mankind down through the ages in their own stinking thinking have had a choice to believe whether there is a God or not, and I guess the only way folks who don't believe in a God will learn this fact is when they actually stand before Him and bow down and confess

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### Soil and Water Districts

Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council (CCRCD) has many partners with the programs, events and field days that it administers and facilitates each year. Our closest partner groups are the 40 Soil & Water Conservation Districts that cover most of Georgia. These Soil & Water Districts are made up of supervisors who are local farmers and businesspeople who monitor and oversee projects that involve soil, water and erosion. The district supervisor's purpose is to monitor these projects through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to prevent erosion and damage to our streams, rivers and lakes. These district supervisor groups are monitored and supported by the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC), a state agency under the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

GSWCC was formed to protect, conserve and improve the soil and water resources of the State of Georgia. The Commission's goal is to make Georgia a better place for its citizens through the wise use and protection of basic soil and water resources and to achieve practical water quality goals. Serving as the coordinator and guide to all these efforts is a board, appointed by the Governor and comprised of five supervisors from different regions of the state. The Georgia Association of Conservation Districts (GACD) is a nonprofit organization made up of Soil & Water District Supervisors and is dedicated to helping the districts with the protection and conservation of our state's natural resources.

The 370 GACD members volunteer in each of Georgia's 40 soil and water conservation districts to promote conservation, educate citizens about the importance of conservation, and inform policymakers about natural resource issues. Conservation districts host educational events throughout the year, covering topics such as best management practices for agricultural production, erosion control, water conservation and improving wildlife habitat. GACD partners with other organizations to maximize the impact of the efforts for conservation activities. Whether they are conducting educational events for the public, collaborating with agricultural producers to implement conservation practices, or advising developers and municipalities on best management practices, they count on these partners' technical assistance and financial support.

Soil & Water Districts were formed in the late 1930s to protect, improve and conserve

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**RC&D Executive Director**  
Frank Riley

### Speck Fishing

One of my favorite enjoyments is what is called "Speck Fishing." Speckled Trout derive their name from the specks that cover their body. In other parts of our country the fish are called "Brook Trout" or "Brookies." The fish generally require cold, clean water and do not tolerate "Rainbow Trout" well. These tend to prey upon the Specks. These little fish are Georgia's only native trout. As a matter of fact, when John Muir traveled through Trackrock Gap all those years ago, he noticed many smaller trout in the creeks of the area. Later it was determined these minnows were actually Specks.

Since that time the territory of our native Speckled Trout has decreased significantly. The introduction of Rainbow Trout and the development of much of our land have both decreased our water quality and placed extraordinary pressure upon our only native trout. Now to catch this species you must travel into the high coves and above waterfalls underneath many of our high mountains. My good friend Patrick Fix loves to Speck Fish as much as I do, and this is a story from his childhood.

Patrick, his cousin and his father, Bill Fix, were Speck Fishing somewhere around Blue Mountain. Patrick said, "I can still remember watching Dad walk through the rhododendron thickets. He carried a small fishing rod, and on his back was a day pack containing water and a small frying pan." When the trio caught enough fish, they would grease up a pan and build a fire. Next, all the fish were rolled in corn meal and fried along with some potatoes. It was a way to spend a day with your son and nephew.

Late in the afternoon the trio came to a long cascading waterfall. The falls were not free falling, but, more of a long chute with potholes place intermittently through the 100-foot drop. Actually, the waterfall was in the shape of an s-curve, much like a water slide you might see at an amusement park. Bill Fix looked at the two young boys and said, "That blue granite is too slick for my liking, so I am going around this fall to the bottom and fish that big hole." So, Bill and his nephew disappeared around a point while Patrick sat looking at a pothole halfway down the waterfall.

I don't think Patrick has ever met anything he is afraid of, and the more he looked at the pothole, the more he wondered if it contained a record "Speck." So, carefully, he

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**Around The Farm**  
Mickey Cummings

### Snakes

As the temperatures continue to rise, plants are blooming, leaves are expanding, and life is rustling in the woods again. Some of the life includes snakes. I've already heard a few stories of encounters that people have had with snakes early this spring. Snakes are a natural part of the landscape that we're going to have to learn to live with. So, it's not going to be possible to completely eliminate all encounters with them. There are some things that you can do to make those encounters less frequent and safer for you and the snake.

Most of the snakes that live in Georgia are non-venomous. There are 46 species of snakes in Georgia, of which six are venomous. We have two of those six in Union and Towns counties. Copperhead and Timber Rattlesnake are the two that we have in our area.

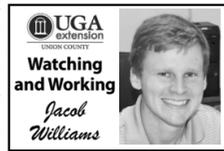
Copperheads can grow to be 4.5 feet long. They are usually light brown with dark brown hourglass shapes on the back. The narrow part of the hourglass is along the spine with the wide base on either side. They are mostly found in forested areas. They like spots with logs, leaf and rocks for cover. They are capable of living in suburban areas with people around.

Timber Rattlesnakes can grow to be about 5 feet long. They have a color range from yellow to black. Their backs are covered in brown or black chevron shaped crossbands. They like to live along wooded streambanks. They like old debris piles, old burrows and rock crevices. They will also have the iconic rattle on the end of their tail.

Most people will talk about being able to tell if a snake is venomous from looking at the shape of its head. Generally speaking, venomous snakes will have a triangular-shaped head. However, this can be difficult to determine in the wild without getting close and handling the snake, which is never advised. Non-venomous snakes can flatten their heads and appear to have more triangular heads too. Some of the markings on non-venomous snakes can be confused with copperheads.

To lessen the chance of having snakes around your home, make sure that your dryer vent is covered with a screen to prevent snakes from wandering inside. Remove piles of debris, leaf piles, or wood piles, because those create habitats for snakes. Thick ground cover like tall grass or ivy can create hiding spots for snakes or the rodents, frogs and insects that snakes like to eat. Keeping the space

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**UGA Watching and Working**  
Jacob Williams

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## Paris... continued from Page 4A

A. Absolutely! The Reece Farm is a relaxing and fun place to walk along the creek, look at historical signage, pet the donkey and just imagine how it was living on a farm in early 1900's rural Appalachia.

Byron Herbert Reece was a talented farmer and poet that made Union County proud. His story is happy and sad, and if you haven't visited the farm, you and your family are missing out on a Union County jewel.

## Hargus... continued from Page 4A

academic and technology resources available to Casey in high school to accelerate her college career, she is on track to graduate early from UNG. Our son, Evan, was in second grade when he started in the Union County School System. Currently a junior at Union County High School, Evan has been taking the automotive and metals pathways and is on track to earn his welding certification by the time he graduates in 2023.

Other families like ours, our Blairsville commu-

nity, and the teachers and administrators of Union County Schools, are all looking at the growth and development of our future leaders, business owners and entrepreneurs. We are thankful for the valuable academic and vocational resources that ESPLOST has enabled Union County Schools to purchase for the students of Union County, investing in their futures. Your children are worth it! Please vote YES on May 24th to renew ESPLOST.  
**Alysia Hargus**

## Holzinger... continued from Page 4A

the responding letter writer wrote, Joe Biden did "inherit" a "mess" from Trump, and he's currently trying to make it better.

- Biden did not stop the Keystone Pipeline, as was clearly pointed out in an op-ed contributed by another writer in the same April 6 issue of the paper. Biden only co-sponsored a necessary move, years ago, to help "monitor" the flow.

- The Putin War didn't happen because of "a perception of weakness"; it was caused by an overly ambitious, probably deranged dictator and anarchist. Biden and his coalition have been anything but "weak" on Putin's Russia.

- The question was asked, "Does anyone think Putin would have invaded Ukraine during a Trump administration?" It's fairly clear that Trump would have probably supported Putin's War, as he stated during a number of his "rallies."

- One strange statement/implication: "Fuel prices were lower during Trump's administration." Of course they were. They were lower during almost all prior admin-

istrations. They were lower before the COVID crisis hit. They were lower before Putin's War started. They were lower before they were raised for many reasons (some pure greed)! They haven't raised because of Biden. He has clearly done everything he can to combat and defeat the COVID crisis, and he's doing everything he can to beat/defeat the fuel price situation.

I really don't understand my responder's words about the "generation he came from." My generation supports and promotes the truth, NOT fiction or "made-up alternative facts." I came from, and currently exist in, a generation that has better sense than to promote or even consider a "nuclear war" with anyone.

One last thing regarding another comment in the responding writer's letter. He said "you can't make this stuff up." If that's so, why does he do it? I certainly agree with one thing he wrote: "God help the planet" (from the people who spread and promote thoughtless and fact-less nonsense)!  
**Jim Holzinger**  
**Still Concerned & Patriotic**

## Riley... continued from Page 4A

the soil and water resources of the State. GACD works with GSWCC to educate supervisors and the public on conservation issues. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) offers support from the national perspective. NACD develops the educational materials distributed by the districts during Stewardship Week each year.

The annual meeting and the summer legislative conference offer continuing education for supervisors and conservation partners and is held in various parts of the country. NACD represents the conservation community on legislative issues and national policy concerning natural resources.

NRCS is an active partner on conservation activities and provides technical assistance to agricultural producers to get conservation practices on the ground. NRCS employees help conduct educational activities within the district and work closely with local work groups to establish conservation priorities. Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D) partner with soil and water districts to help achieve conservation goals.

Several RC&D projects, such as the sustainable agriculture workshops, Cover Crop and No-Till demonstrations, Feral Swine workshops, sawmill demonstrations, fire-on-the-farm, and many others are promoted by the districts and facilitated by an RC&D. One supervisor from each district also serves as a member on the local RC&D council.  
The Georgia Environ-

mental Protection Division (GEPD), Soil & Water Districts and RC&Ds cooperate to protect and improve environmental quality in the state. Information is shared on environmental laws and enforcement so that supervisors have the knowledge needed to perform their duties. CCRCD works with the Soil & Water groups across Georgia to facilitate field days, workshops, and events that will help educate the citizens about soil health, erosion control, water quality, alternative farming methods, High Tunnels, pasture management, row crop management and forest management.

These are some of the topics that are part Best Management Practices (BMPs), voluntary rules and methods that help farmers conserve and protect our soil and water resources.

CCRCD is a member of five Soil & Water Districts and attends the monthly meetings. CCRCD exhibited at the GACD annual meeting on this week at Callaway Gardens to meet and greet our conservation partners from all over Georgia, and most importantly, the folks from Washington that control our grants, agreements contracts and dollars. Our purpose at these meetings was to be meet and greet and be seen, because as my old mentor always said, "Your absence is noticed more than your presence!"

For more information on GS&WCC, S&WCD, GACDS, or NACD, contact Chest Chatt RC&D at info.ccrd@gmail.com.

and division. Where are the moral and ethical strengths of character, honesty, stability, strength and principles?

John Jay, in describing the American culture and makeup said, "This country and this people seem to have been made for each other, and it appears as if it was the design of providence that an inheritance, so proper and convenient for a band of brethren, united to each other by the strongest of ties, should never be split into a number of unsocial, jealous and alien sovereignties."

What would John Jay say today if he were to analyze our society? The splits we see today are not created by foreign entities but by a failure to see the strength of a UNITED States.

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuaswarriors.org.

## Your Patriot Reflection



### Integrity of a Nation

Have we lost our integrity of oneness as a nation? Where once there was a code of moral values, there is now a schism of that which was once held as sacred and cast in stone. Where there was once a unity of purpose and oneness of spirit there are now multiple avenues of dogma

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

crept through the boulders, navigating his way down the waterfall to the pothole. At one point he was standing on a flat-topped boulder about 3 feet wide and 30 feet tall, with nothing but other sharp boulders below him. Finally, he found himself above the pothole. He noticed there was not any soil around this waterfall. His only footing was the wet, slick, blue granite. As he stepped onto the wet rock he remembered his Dad's words: "That blue granite is too slick for my liking."

As Patrick's foot touched the rock, he slipped and fell, launching his body into the pothole. It was only a 3-foot drop, and he thought

## Williams...

### continued from Page 4A

around your house clear will decrease the likelihood of a snake being 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. Snakes 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 so 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.

## Chamber...

### continued from Page 4A

who continue to address the needs of our county.

Speaking of leaders, on April 21st Senator Gooch and Representative Gunter will be at the Chamber's Legislative Wrap-Up Breakfast. We will have an opportunity to hear from both on what bills passed, what did not, and how it will affect Union County and North Georgia. Contact the Chamber for more information or to reserve your seat.

With the overwhelming response to our first "Success in '60," you don't want to miss your opportunity to attend "Google My Business." Mark your calendar for April 27th and call the Chamber to reserve your seat. Tickets are limited and we sold out at last month's class, so don't wait.

The Shoot for the Stars Golf Tournament is sold out, but there are still opportunities to be a hole sponsor or donate a door prize. If you would like to be a part of raising money for scholarships for local students, call Ashley for more information.

Thanks to all that help make life better in Blairsville!

## Fowler...

### continued from Page 4A

personal gain but for telling the truth (Acts 1:8). The Christian's calling does not align with a power culture's denial of the obvious and attempts at mass deception. Now is our time to speak the truth boldly and kindly, whatever the consequences. When you do, "It is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you" (Matt. 10:20).

I regret the death of the young man. If I had gone to his bedside and offered forgiveness, perhaps love might have set him free from the cultural lie that destroyed him.

## Combs...

### continued from Page 4A

with their own lips that there is a living, breathing Risen Savior called Jesus Christ. And folks, it's going to happen, whether you believe it or not, and that is the Gospel Truth.

I have said this before and I believe with all of my heart this needs to be heard again: don't sell God short because you don't believe in Him. John 14:6 says: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no one comes to the Father except through Me. Jesus is speaking to your heart; don't let it get so hard that you can't hear Him any longer, because then it will be too late.

**Frank F. Combs**

to my knees and I saw stars for a short second or two.

This scenario scared my son. He thought he'd killed me. But, we kept going. He is now 36 years old, and we have

enjoyed many adventures together over the years. And yes, we still enjoy walking around in these and other mountains. We just do our best to be a little more careful these days.