

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

The Command for Consistency

By Yonatan Hamburger and Tzali Reicher

There is a common misconception about the Old Testament that is worth debunking.

Conventional wisdom and people with only a surface knowledge of scripture tend to fall on shallow adjectives when attempting to describe G-d as portrayed in the Hebrew scriptures, describing the Lord as dark, vengeful, and vindictive, and constantly clashing with the Jewish people. But aside from being objectively incorrect, this synopsis doesn't capture the undying love, connection and warmth G-d is explicitly said to have for His people.

That is why it is so jarring to read the opening verses of this week's Torah portion (Leviticus 6.2), where G-d tells Moses to "command" the priests to offer the twice-daily sacrifices in the Tabernacle. When introducing a mitzvah (commandment), typically the verse uses the words "speak," "say," or "tell" the Jewish people about what G-d wishes for them to do, using considerably softer language than the infrequently invoked "command." Rashi, the most prominent commentator of the Torah, goes on to explain that the word "command" is used here because this mitzvah must be performed daily, and therefore needed extra emphasis from G-d to encourage the people to perform it regularly and to signal its importance.

When there is a unique and exciting opportunity to do a good thing, it's easy to summon the energy to perform it with little instruction. It's easy to go to our places of worship once a year on special occasions, donate our time or money irregularly, and visit our elderly relatives briefly when we just happen to be in town. Doing the right thing is harder when it's expected to be done regularly. Indeed, it is difficult to commit to attending daily or weekly opportunities to connect to G-d together in community, setting auto-payments to charities and devoting weekly times to volunteer and spend time with people who could really use the company.

That is why G-d places the emphasis of a divine "command" on a regular practice, instead of on the unique services of different holidays or the like: We must be careful to not let our regular acts of service become rote and robotic. Instead, we should enliven these actions, imbuing them with the vibrancy and enthusiasm we typically sum up for special occasions, because G-d seeks to foster a relationship with us through consistent expressions of engagement. This is reinforced by the seemingly regular mitzvah G-d is commanding the Jewish people to perform here: Placing a sacrifice on the fire that should burn constantly. Fire signals passion and excitement, which is how we need to approach even every day, mundane events, and good deeds.

In understanding the depth of the "command" for consistency in our daily observances and actions, it becomes evident that this principle extends far beyond religious rites to encompass the very essence of our daily lives. The practice of turning the mundane into moments of significance teaches us the power of transformation – the ability to elevate our routine tasks, interactions, and commitments to a level where they become sources of joy, growth, and profound connection. This lesson from the Torah is not just about religious observance but about how we approach every aspect of our existence, turning the ordinary into extraordinary through consistent effort and dedication.

This is true of relationships between people, and in the realm of working to build good habits.

If a couple only discusses their relationship or show each other appreciation or affection on birthdays and anniversaries, they will drift apart. If someone working towards succeeding in their chosen profession only puts in the hours sparingly, failure is inevitable. Only by putting all of ourselves in everything we do, truly applying ourselves to make every day fresh and exciting, will we be able to thrive in whatever we drive ourselves to achieve.

G-d is teaching us an important lesson when He commanded the priests to perform a seemingly easy and frequent act of service with excitement. Consistently doing good deeds and everyday acts of kindness with passion becomes a powerful tool for personal and communal transformation, guiding us towards a deeper, more meaningful engagement with our faith, our relationships, and the world at large. It is in the faithful execution of our positive daily duties and responsibilities that we find the true expression of our highest and best selves and the fullest realization of our potential to succeed and make a difference.

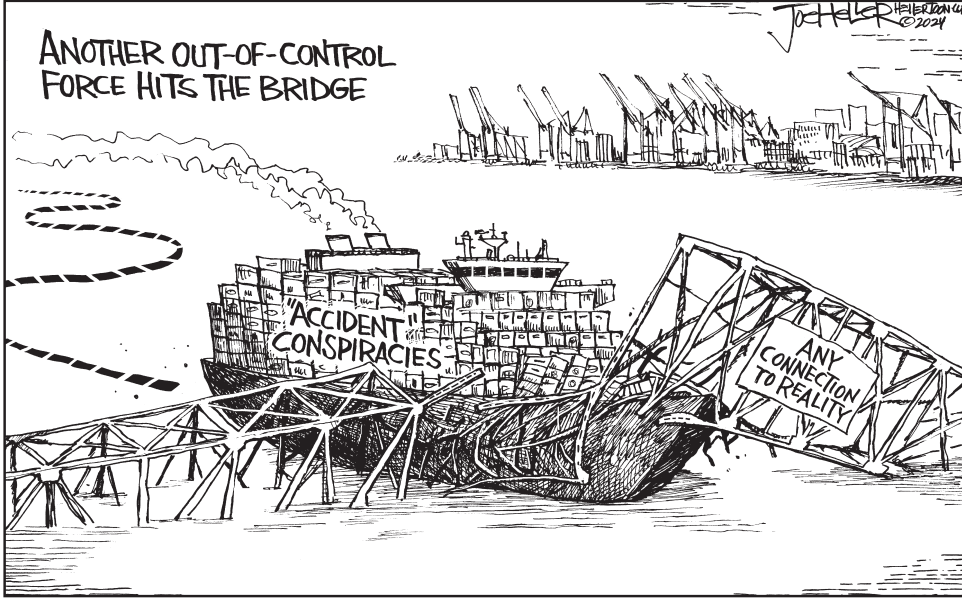
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Towns County Community Calendar

First Monday of each month: School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday: Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month: Hiaw. City Council... City Hall YH City Council... YH City Hall	6 pm 6:30 pm
Second Wednesday of each month: Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
Third Monday of each month: Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month: Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse City of Young Harris Planning Commission... Meeting Room in City Hall TC Water Authority Board Meeting	5:30 pm 5 pm 6 pm

ANOTHER OUT-OF-CONTROL FORCE HITS THE BRIDGE



Gravity Gets In Everything

"I know this defies the law of gravity, but, eh... You see, I never studied law." -Bugs Bunny

Some time ago, I was disappointed when some young friends were politely disinterested in learning to use a map and compass before embarking on a hiking trip. They planned to follow the prompts on their phones to get from point A to point B, and I was disabused of the notion that my years of practicing orienteering would be of any use to anyone.

Therefore, I was eager to help when my friend, Marty, suggested that we could use some of that knowledge to locate his property line by consulting an old survey. I knew that if we could find a single iron pin on the line, we could eventually find them all.

It was a fine day for amateur surveying; one of those early spring days before bugs and pollen arrive, warm enough to be comfortable in the sun but not hot enough to sweat with the exertion of traversing the steep grades of our North Georgia foothills.

I was happily engaged in two of my favorite things: spending time with a good friend and doing something that requires the use of, as Agatha Christie's Poirot might say, "the little gray cells." Ah, but danger lurks when contentment overcomes awareness, and as comic writer Ben Edlund's character "The Tick" would remind us, "Gravity is a harsh mistress."

The log crossing the gully looked sound. I tested it, jumped on it, stomped it hard before committing to the crossing. It felt sound too and didn't budge at all from my efforts. When I was about halfway across the gully and suspended about 5 feet in the air, it budged.

All at once the center collapsed, like a trap door opening in a cartoon, and gravity got into the mix. Gravity. It gets in everything. Now, a 5 ft. fall onto leaf mold over soft ground is not a particularly dangerous thing. If you land right. Unfortunately, the section of log under my feet got there just before I did. I landed on my side with the log between the ground and my lower ribcage.

It's interesting, the things that go through your mind when you get the wind knocked out of you. It was not an unfamiliar sensation for me. It felt just like the time my mother told me not to climb the wisteria vine on the tree outside her kitchen window. I can still see her face through the window as I fell with the vine clutched in my hand.

It was also reminiscent of that time when I was learning whitewater canoeing and swam Screaming Left Hand Turn on the Chattooga River while my friend, Rain, yelled, "Don't grab the gunwales." I grabbed the gunwales and both river and rock conspired to locate almost the same ribs.

When the breath returned to my body, I thought of how many times I had warned young hikers under my care not to attempt a similar stunt. Deep breaths, a quick probe to assess. Nothing broken, but this is going to hurt when the nerves finish organizing their protest.

Bruised ribs can be mightily inconvenient, especially when the best weather of the year for working outside is taunting you as you look out the window from your chair with the heating pad. But we make the best of every situation when we can. Tracey cooked an excellent sympathy supper for me, and I didn't even have to do the dishes. I indulged in a few days of rest and contemplation, which is particularly satisfying when you don't have to feel like you should be doing anything else.

Among the things I contemplated was my personal history with gravity, and the number of times the Creator has had to intervene to preserve this minor project of his. There was the flying somersault over the handlebars of the bicycle on the steep hill, the wind that suddenly and unexpectedly blew the crown out of the tree I was topping, the leaky hose that turned the metal roof into a waterslide. I could go on for some time with gravity and then begin a chapter on inertia and my history with physics and classical mechanics. Don't tell me it's luck. I don't believe in luck, and neither does statistics.

I also contemplated the toughness, the true grit of our forbears. I'm sure my grandfather's ribs were in worse shape than mine after being kicked by a mule and enduring the many hazards of his world built by hand, and he didn't have the luxury of taking time off to complain and contemplate. I wondered if he would have lived as long as he did were he given the benefits of the sophisticated medicine of our age. I marvel at its abilities, and I have benefited from them, but I also notice that given the opportunity, it always, always finds something wrong and in need of treatment.

My ribs have healed now and there is wood to be chopped and water to be carried. I will stay mindful of gravity. I'm convinced that it's stronger than it used to be. I will also be mindful that while the Good Lord looks after children and fools, I can now only claim one of those benefits.

Guest Columns

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper.

If so, please write.

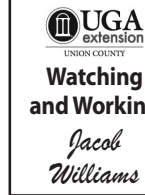
Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

Outside The Box

By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Mummy Berry

Mummy berry is a fairly common disease that affects blueberry plants. It can be a pretty devastating disease to your blueberry harvest. By the time that you see the effects of it, the opportunity to treat has passed. Let's talk about mummy berry, how it works, and what you can do to manage it.



Mummy berry is a fungal disease on blueberry bushes. It causes the blueberries to rot and fall off just as they are ripening to be ready to harvest. This can be very frustrating to you as it looks like you're going to have a lot of blueberries and then one by one they fall off the bush. Mummy berry is not too difficult to manage, but you have to follow a couple of steps to make sure that you get the best control of the disease possible.

Mummy berry infects the blueberry bush when it is in bloom. Those blooms will turn into fruit over the course of the season. Blooms that were infected carry the mummy berry pathogen with them, which causes them to rot and fall off. When they rot and hit the ground, the pathogen stays there over winter. In the early spring it forms apothecia, or tiny mushrooms. These release spores that infect the leaves of the plant. The infected leaves produce spores that are transmitted to the flowers by bees or wind, and thus the mummy berry life cycle continues on and on.

Because the infection of the fruit occurs at bloom it is most important to treat plants at that stage each year. Captan is a fungicide that is very effective at making sure that making sure that the blooms do not become infected. It's best to spray Captan every 7-10 days while plants are in bloom. There is an organic fungicide called Serenade that can be somewhat effective at controlling mummy berry if it is sprayed every 7 days. With Captan or Serenade it is important to get good coverage on the blooms of the plant. With any pesticide it is always important to read the label and follow it, as the label is the law.

A couple of other practices that can help to reduce the amount of mummy berry that you have are to remove dead berries after they fall. This will reduce the amount of pathogen that overwinters in the soil. To remove berries simply rake them out or use a leaf blower and then throw them into the trash or compost pile. Another practice is to mulch. Placing mulch 3-4 inches deep around the bush creates a physical barrier that is difficult for the mummy berry spores to move through. You don't want to place the mulch all the way up to the trunk of the bush. Pine straw, pine bark, or wood chips all work well for mulch. The best control of mummy berry is to use a combination of spraying, removing, and mulching.

Mummy berry is simple to control if you get the timing right. If you have questions about mummy berry contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

On April 10th from 1-3 PM the Towns-Union Master Gardeners Association and the Enotah Garden Club are hosting an afternoon tea with Ashley Frasca. The cost is \$15. You can register for this event by going to <https://t.uga.edu/9JK>.

I am also hosting a Master Naturalist training. This is an 8-week course that focuses on the natural resources around us. If you are interested in participating in that email me or call the Union County Extension Office at 706-439-6030.

Letters To The Editor

Eve of Destruction

Dear Editor,

The so-called "war on terror" is a creation of the U.S. security-deep state, i.e., America's secret CIA government, special covert operations and the military-industrial complex in service of Big Oil and the imperialist capitalist corporate need to control and expand hegemonic power worldwide.

The U.S., formerly unipolar Empire, is locked in a deadly struggle, some zealots describe as good versus evil, in today's multipolar world of wars for global resource control and struggle for market share.

U.S. foreign military occupations almost always lead to violent insurgencies. In Iraq and Syria, terrorist groups from ISIS to al Qaeda to al Nusra, in Syria, Palestine and Lebanon, Hamas and Hezbollah, to the Taliban in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, violent military invasions have led sovereign countries left with a litany of pain, death, chaos and misery in its path.

In the case of the U.S. war on Iraq, the war was about the oil industry, which post-invasion, fell under U.S. Big Oil's control. In Libya, U.S.-NATO military strikes under the Obama-H. Clinton administration rendered the country a ruined, dysfunctional state with civil war factions left to fight for control.

EXTRA: U.S. combat troops have been stationed on islands off Taiwan for the purpose of training Taiwanese troops. In addition, the U.S. is arming Taiwan to the teeth, both of which are acts of war against mainland China. This is in violation of the One-China policy agreement.

The war in Ukraine is a proxy war against Russia and is escalating by terrorist attacks on Moscow civilians and infrastructure.

The political class needs to be held accountable by the public before today's chaos leads to another world war and possible nuclear annihilation.

Lance G. Jobson

Supporting ARFS

Dear Editor,

A huge applause for Main Street Grill in Hiawassee and its owners Shannon and Misty Garrison. Main Street Grill is faithfully donating a generous portion of its profits on the first Friday of each month to Animal Rescue Financial Support (ARFS).

The restaurant's very benevolent donations are helping the local community by enabling ARFS to pay for veterinary expenses for impoverished pet owners, as well as financially providing for other animal-related needs.

When you eat breakfast or lunch at Main Street Grill on the first Friday of the month, you too will be helping your community. Since you are going to eat breakfast and lunch anyway, why not spend your money helping suffering animals by eating at Main Street Grill?

Animal Rescue Financial Support is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization located in Hiawassee that serves Towns, Union, Clay, and Cherokee counties. Donations can be sent to ARFS, P.O. Box 972, Hiawassee, GA, 30546.

For more information, check us out at www.arfs-inc.org or facebook.com/ARFSga.

Sue Scott, CEO, CFO
Animal Rescue Financial Support, Inc.

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