

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Just Keep Swimming

By Yonatan  
Hambourger and  
Tzali Reicher

As the flooding intensified around Mr. Smith's house following a torrential storm, his neighbors – surprised he hadn't left already after multiple warnings – encouraged him to join them as they escaped the devastated area. He politely declines, saying he had faith in G-d to spare him. With the waters rising, emergency services bravely rowed through the streets, but Mr. Smith still did not call out for help despite seeing them: he was waiting for his G-d to come through. Passing away hours later, Mr. Smith ascends for his final judgment, at which point, disenchanted, he confronts the Lord, asking Him how he could possibly justify the faith Mr. Smith had in Him his whole life. The Lord responded, "I was there all along: I was the warnings, I was the friendly neighbors, I was the emergency services. I was there to help, but first you must help yourself."

This apocryphal tale is perhaps the perfect example of the Jewish concept of Bitachon (faith) and Hishtadlus (effort; doing your part in what has to be done).

In Judaism, while we do ask for blind trust in G-d, we do not ask for blind faith. G-d doesn't ask us to throw away the keys and wait for Him, omnipotent as the Lord is, to deliver salvation. Rather G-d asks us to follow His guidance and instructions and proactively do the right thing, and have the faith that He has our best interests in mind and will ensure the best result will eventuate.

Maybe the earliest historic example of faith meeting effort was over 3,000 years ago, when the Jewish people were terrified. Fresh out of centuries of slavery in Egypt and headed back to their homeland Israel, the nation now gathered around Moses amidst swirling rumors the Egyptians were headed straight to their location by the Red Sea, to take them back into captivity.

Reactions to the concerning news were mixed. Some advocated for outright war, others for prayer. A faction suggested simply accepting their fate and walking back into the arms of their enemies, while several others said the Jews should commit suicide by jumping in the sea rather than go back into slavery. Moses calmed his flock, and inspired them to have no fear: the same G-d that had engineered the miracles that got them to this point would deliver them again. At that point, a brave Jewish leader, heeding G-d's instructions to begin walking towards Israel, marched into the water, at which point the sea split and allowed the Jews safe passage while the Egyptians perished.

The lesson is clear: G-d had told them to head into the sea, and once the Jews heeded His instructions and fulfilled their part of the bargain, amazing things happened for them.

This teaching especially resonates today, in an age where children are often coddled and people are told they don't have agency over their choices as a result of circumstances out (or even in) their control. They must be taught, and then reinforced, that we make our own luck: if they put in the work and do what has to be done, good things will happen for them.

It's true for personal and other issues. If a person needs a job, they can't sit on the couch and expect things to change. Rather if they pursue opportunities, send out resumes and sit for interviews, they'll find themselves employed soon enough. When businesses need clients, the more they pitch and reach out the more success they have. Essentially, the more effort one puts into solving a problem or situation, the higher the probability of a good outcome.

As a new year rapidly approaches, let's make 2024 a year of personal and proactive growth, taking the initiative and overcoming potential challenges instead of letting them fester. On a more global level, our leaders should have the clarity and courage to make the decisions that ensure a peaceful and conflict-free year for all.

The more one tries to overcome a challenge, the more obstacles and complications they will encounter, but we must realize this too is part of the journey of life in order to defeat it. Rabbi Shmuel Schneerson had a motto: "The world says that if you cannot crawl under an obstacle, try to leap over it. However, I say, leap over it in the first place!" Lechatchila Ariber: take the initiative, power through your challenges, and great things will happen.

Yonatan Hambourger is an Atlanta-based rabbi with Chabad of Rural Georgia teaching the richness of Judaism, while Tzali Reicher is a rabbi and writer currently residing in New York.



Echos from Sinai "Torah for Everyone" Rabbi Yonatan Hambourger



## Unpacking Memories

Ah, the memories that are summoned this time of year as we unpack the Christmas decorations, the Menorah or the Mishumaa Saba candles. Here is that very odd-looking decoration I made in the fourth grade that my mother kept all those years. It's always good for a laugh, and sometimes a tear or two. Look at those beautiful brass electric candles for the mantle and remember the warm glow of their now endangered and diminishing supply of incandescent bulbs. LEDs, for all their moral superiority, just aren't as pretty. I'll bet you've got an ornament or two, carefully preserved, that carries special memories.

This is the time of year when we're more than willing to burn a little extra fossil fuel regardless of our political or philosophical inclinations. There are family and friends that must be seen in order to sufficiently commemorate another trip around the sun, and those who have no other time off from work during the year to accommodate a visit. There are dinners and parties to attend, and just a bit of shopping is not inherently evil when the material gesture emerges from a sincere spiritual desire. Better still is the gift of time and companionship that a road trip provides, and perhaps a bit of global warming will take the edge off these frosty mornings.

AAA says there will be near-record levels of holiday travel again in 2023. This, as much as anything we do, holds up an (LED, of course) illuminated mirror to the advanced, or declining, state of our civilization, that families and friendships must travel hundreds and thousands of miles for a much-needed hug. The Age of Exploration is long gone, but we continue to expand in pursuit of economic frontiers, because my company transferred me, because I can make more money in the city, or because I've just got to get away from this small town.

The natural impulse of the young is to explore and expand our boundaries, and so we migrate. Later in life, the impulse turns to escaping what we once sought so fervently, to get away from the noise and the bustle, traffic and crime, and so we migrate again to quieter places. A significant chapter in the growth of these mountain counties is the story of families born here who moved to the industrial cities for work, retired, and then came back to what was once and always home.

I consider myself lucky that my own travels more closely resembled the kudzu vine than the tumbleweed. I traveled far and wide but always returned to the place where my roots grew ever deeper. Blessed are those who can visit their entire family on a Sunday afternoon, and these families are fewer and farther between in the developed world. But let us continue unpacking our memories along with a few more decorations.

During my years growing up in the large poultry town to our south and for a long time afterward, we would drive around the neighborhoods at night to enjoy the Christmas lights and decorations. I was there recently and disappointed to discover that few people inside the city limits are decorating outside this year.

Perhaps it's holiday fatigue caused by the start of Merchantile Christmas back in September. Maybe it's because only 63% of Americans now consider themselves to be Christian. (Ten years ago it was almost 80%.) The Neighborhood Watch website posits that there is a significant chance that any decorations placed outside now in this rapidly growing city will be stolen, and people are unwilling to contribute to that particular redistribution of wealth after being robbed at the grocery store and soon to be robbed again on the 15th of April.

I'm grateful that this is not a problem in the hills and valleys of home, where the internal joy of the season still finds outward expression in the illumination of front yards and the creative arrangement of all that is brightly colored and silly and dear to the child, the grandchild, and the inner child. Tracey's courtyard is illuminated this year by white and red LEDs that have been modified to mimic the warm glow of the old unlightened incandescent lights. They do look nice and admittedly contribute significantly less to our power bill.

We've now found that box of Christmas DVDs in the attic. Rumor has it that Hallmark will be adding a second plot to their vast collection of Christmas movies this year, but we will still be enjoying our own selection that includes Snoopy, the Kranks, the Griswalds, and a Miracle on 34th Street. At the heart of it all, however, is the miracle that occurred over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. With continuing gratitude, we celebrate the season and wish you all the best of it, and you might see us slowing down in front of your house at night to appreciate your Christmas lights.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:**  
Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor  
P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546  
Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.\*  
Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

## Cold, Cattle, and Horses

With cold temperatures well upon us I wanted to take some time to talk about livestock needs in cold weather. Cold temperatures mean that animals require more energy to maintain their body temperature, ice can become a problem, and the way that you care for your animals will change some.

Windbreaks can help reduce the affect of cold winds on animals and therefore improve the "feels like" temperature. Cattle are generally cold tolerant and are comfortable down to 20 degrees. Horses are generally comfortable down to about 18 degrees. Horses can be blanketed when temperature get low to help them handle the cold.

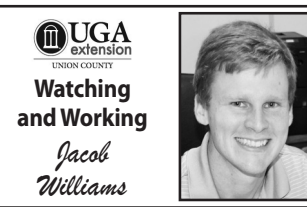
It's best to use a well-fitting blanket. As these animals are using more energy to stay warm, be mindful of how much energy you are providing them in feed. Building a shelter for animals to take cover in is also a great way to help keep them warmer.

It's best to have abundant feed available to help animals maintain body temperature in cold temperatures. If the total digestible nutrients (TDN) of your hay is low, there may not be enough energy in the hay to sustain the animals for a long period of time. High quality hay has a TDN of >58%. Low quality hay is 45 to 52% TDN. A simple hay test will tell you the TDN of your hay. Cattle and horses don't have unique vitamin requirements during the winter compared to the rest of the year.

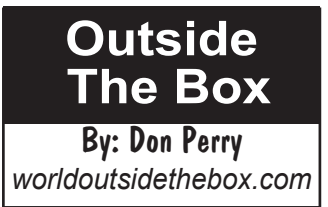
Body condition scoring (BCS) is important to monitor during the winter. BCS is a tool to help you evaluate the health of your animal, and determine if they getting enough feed and energy. The scoring ranges from 1 to 9. 1 is severely emaciated, and 9 is extremely obese. 5-6 is generally the desired score for cattle, while a score of 5 is ideal for horses. On cattle that are 5-6, the spine and the ribs are not visible and the tailhead and brisket have no fat. On horses a 5 will have a level back, the ribs are not visible but can be felt, the withers are rounded, and the shoulders blend smoothly into the body. Animals that are too fat or too thin can have health issues. In the cold, maintaining a good BCS will give you a healthier animal.

Outdoor water tanks will need to be cleared of ice under extended cold conditions. Cattle need about 1 gallon per hundred pounds of weight during cold weather. A 1000-pound horse will need 10 to 12 gallons of water each day in the winter. In the growing season grasses contain lots of water that horses can use to satisfy their water need. However, in the winter horses eating dry hay will need to drink extra water. If the watering trough has frozen over the animals can't drink from it. The ice may need to be broken up with a hammer or have a heater put on the water.

If you have questions about the impact of cold weather on your animals contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



Jacob Williams



By: Don Perry worldoutsidethebox.com

## Letters To The Editor

### Pre-Tribulation Rapture

Dear Editor,  
Pre-Tribulation Rapture... What does Jesus say in NKJV?

In 22:18 Jesus gives us a loving warning. "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book." Which book are we not supposed to add words or events to? The book of Revelation.

Jesus said, "After the tribulation, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers of heaven will be shaken. V26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory (Mark 13:24-26)." Jesus uses same words in Matthew 24:29-30.

Revelation 1 Jesus asks John to write. Rev 2-3 Jesus writes 7 letters to 7 churches, which means we are still here on earth. Rev 6-19 describes tribulation events. Pretribulation believers and teachers therefore add an event they call the rapture to the book of Revelation in chapters 4 or 5. Don't be deceived. I do not want you to receive upon yourself the plagues of the book of Revelation. This Christmas and beyond, strengthen your Faith and prepare for the LORD.

**Terry Rathmann**  
A Shepherds Life  
terry@ashepherdslife.org

### The Runt of Religion

Dear Editor,  
The law in the Old Testament of God's word was overrated, because no one could live up to all the rules and regulations and follow all the commands. It is estimated over 600 laws were on the scrolls for folks to attain, but no one could fulfill them all, so if you broke one you had sinned; break 400, you still are a sinner. Religion kills more souls from becoming believers in Christ because it was never intended to save anyone. Back then the priest sacrificed animals to atone for your sin, then one went out and sinned until the next time. There was no end to it, until the New Testament came upon the scene. The age of grace spouted outwardly to give mankind a hope for redemption.

Only the moral laws of the Mosaic Law, which include the Ten Commandments and the commands repeated in the New Testament, directly apply to Christians today. Jesus spoke about the Old Testament laws, saying—Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For surely, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Praise God He never changes, but when a new covenant came about, certain rules changed, were modified, or affirmed. Some of these covenants are the original Edenic, Noahic, and the new one in Christ's blood. Everything changed when Jesus came on the scene and told us about His saving grace on the cross that saves a sinner from their sins. We are no longer under the guilt and shame of our past, present and future sins. They are all covered by Jesus's shed blood on Calvary that sets us apart from those who don't believe upon the Name of Jesus Christ. No more animal sacrifices to be made. No more running to a priest for forgiveness. Now we can boldly go to the throne of God and make our prayers known to Him. Praise God from whom all blessings come. Thank you, dear Lord, for bringing us salvation so free and allowing us to live under your umbrella of grace till you gather your children home to glory.  
**Frank F. Combs**

## Towns County Community Calendar

<b>First Monday of each month:</b> School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Story Time for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
<b>First Tuesday of each month:</b> Hiaw. City Council... City Hall YH City Council... YH City Hall	6 pm 6:30 pm
<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b> Conventions & Visitors Board... Civic Center	8:30 am
<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b> Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
<b>Third Monday of each month:</b> Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> 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

## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

**Kenneth West** Owner/Publisher  
**Derek Richards** Advertising Director  
**Shawn Jarrard** General Manager/Editor  
**Jordan Hyatt** Office Manager  
**Todd Forrest** Staff Writer  
**Lowell Nicholson** Photographer

**Publication No: 635540**  
Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.  
**Towns County (1 Year) \$30. Out of County (1 Year) \$40.** Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. **Postmaster:** Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.  
Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 3 "The Mall", Hiawassee  
**Phone:** (706) 896-4454 **Fax:** (706) 896-1745 **Email:** tcherald@windstream.net  
**Or mail to:** PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546