

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Delegitimization

*The Obstacle to Mideast Peace is Delegitimization*

By Yonatan Hamburger and Tzali Reicher

**Echos from Sinai**  
"Torah for Everyone"  
Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger



Throughout the West Bank – known in the Bible as Judea and Samaria – one can literally touch Jewish and Christian history, and by extension the entirety of Western civilization.

This is the land where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob walked and where famous Biblical scenes unfolded, remaining standing to this very day. In Hebron, the patriarchs and matriarchs rest. In Shiloh, the remains of the Tabernacle that preceded the Temples in Jerusalem stood for almost 400 years. Ancient synagogues still exist in Jericho and as-Samu, while the remains of Roman roads can still be walked in Jerusalem, close to the ancient City of David. The Western Wall has endured for millennia as the only remnant of the glorious Temples, while the Temple Mount itself – the holiest site in the Jewish faith – is barren of its Jewish roots. Dotted the landscape of the West Bank are countless pieces of evidence of the Jewish people's intrinsic connection to the area, with Jewish ritual baths and sites still intact for all to explore.

The Jewish history of the region and its relationship to the rest of civilization can also be seen in the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and his upbringing in Nazareth. These are stories well-known to the Christian world, proving that the Jewish historical and spiritual connection to this land is deep and indisputable.

As tensions escalate once again on the West Bank, Palestinian leaders frequently justify terror attacks and uprisings by claiming they oppose Israeli efforts to "Judaize" Jerusalem and ancient holy sites. This argument is not just about land; it is an attempt to strip not just the West Bank of its history, but the rest of Israel, too. The West Bank is just the first stop.

In their efforts to rewrite history and overthrow the Jewish claim to the land, Palestinian leaders have also targeted historical and archaeological sites that clearly demonstrate the Jewish connection to this land. The destruction and desecration of sites such as Joseph's Tomb and the ongoing denials of Jewish ties to the Temple Mount are just two examples of how the Palestinian Authority has attempted to erase Jewish history from the region. These efforts are part of a broader narrative that aims to delegitimize the Jewish state by denying its ancient roots and undermining its historic right to exist.

This is not new. Palestinian leadership has long rejected peace proposals that would recognize the Jewish state. One of the most notable examples is Yasser Arafat's refusal to accept a generous offer at the Camp David Summit. Despite being offered nearly all of the West Bank, Gaza, and much of Jerusalem, Arafat rejected the proposal and instead chose a path of violence, igniting the Second Intifada. This refusal to recognize a Jewish state, even within the borders of the 1967 Green Line, has remained a consistent stance for Palestinian leaders, to this very day.

Until today, the Palestinian leadership has consistently continued this policy of rejection. The Palestinian Authority has maintained the "pay-to-slay" policy, which rewards terrorists and their families for murdering Israelis, a practice that incentivizes violence and hatred rather than coexistence. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority has not held an election in 18 years, perpetuating an autocratic rule that mirrors Hamas. The Palestinian Authority's Charter still mirrors much of Hamas's charter, both of which call for the elimination of Israel and reject any Jewish sovereignty in the region. This brings us to the so-called "Green Line" – a boundary line that, as Israeli diplomat Abba Eban once famously described, constitutes "Auschwitz borders." These borders, drawn after the 1949 armistice agreements, leave Israel in a precarious and indefensible position, vulnerable to attack from all sides. Any proposal to return to these borders ignores the security needs of a tiny Jewish state surrounded by 22 Arab countries, the majority of which are hostile toward Israel. Israel's population of 8.5 million people is situated on 8,300 square miles, compared to the Arab League with a population of 40 million people occupying over 5 million square miles.

The underlying truth is stark: no political entity charged with leading and negotiating for the Palestinian people has been willing to fully accept the presence of a non-Muslim, Jewish state. From the 1948 invasion by five Arab armies to today's continuous hostility, there has been a persistent refusal to acknowledge Jewish sovereignty. This reality persists despite numerous opportunities for peace and coexistence, from the Oslo Accords to the Abraham Accords, where several Arab nations normalized relations with Israel, yet the Palestinian leadership remained entrenched in its rejectionist stance.

This is not a conflict over land or settlements; it is a conflict over the existence of a Jewish state in a predominantly Muslim region, despite their historical right to be there. Until there is a fundamental shift in this perception, peace will remain elusive. The international community must recognize that the Jewish connection to the land is not a modern invention but a historical and spiritual reality that cannot be denied or erased.

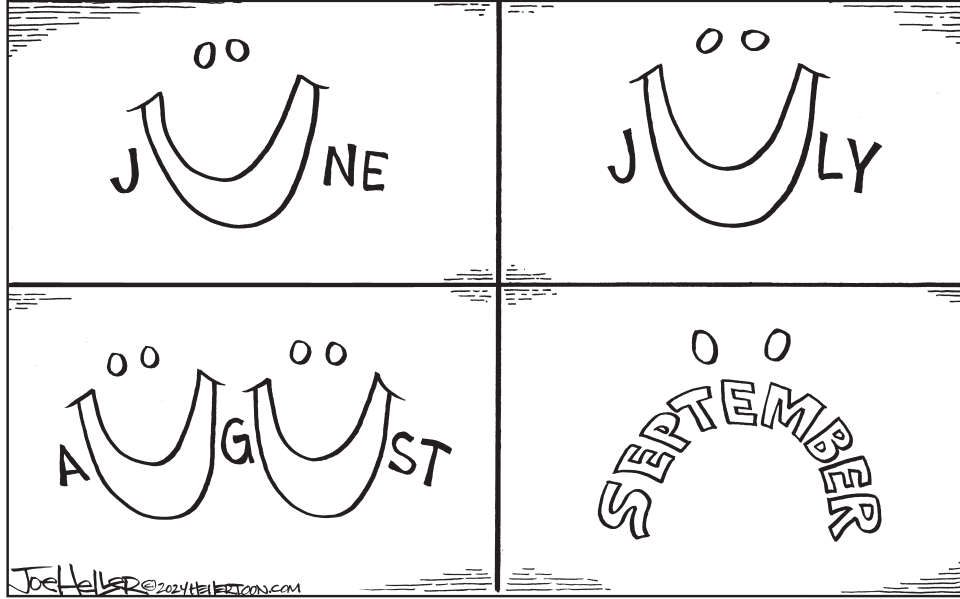
The path to peace lies not in appeasement or in pretending that this deep-rooted conflict can be resolved through superficial concessions. It lies in acknowledging the historical truths, recognizing Israel's right to exist, and fostering a culture of genuine coexistence that respects the narratives and rights of all people in the region. Only then can we hope to transform the dreams of peace into reality for all who call this ancient and contested land their home.

*Yonatan Hamburger 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.*

## 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.



Joe Heller © 2024 HELLER.COM

## Streambank Stabilization

We are very fortunate to live in a part of the country that has plenty of water. Water is important for a number of reasons. Today I want to write on how individuals can protect water that flows through their property.

**UGA extension**  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams



The biggest thing that property owners can do is to establish a buffer. On trout streams in north Georgia there are restrictions on building or clearing land within 50 feet. The purpose of this is to reduce the sediment that goes into the water. The bigger you can make your buffer the better it will do at trapping and filtering materials that would otherwise get into the water. Sediment getting into the water is very detrimental to the quality of the water. Sediment can carry all kinds

of things from fertilizers to pesticides to litter. Anything that enters the water ends up downstream. Sediment will make the water cloudier and affect the availability of oxygen in the water. Cloudy streams with no rocks in the bottom do a very poor job of supporting the insects and bugs that live in the water. Fish rely on those critters as a food source.

So how do you create a buffer? At its best a buffer consists of trees and brush alongside the river. It's best if those plants are native plants and not invasive. Native plants do a much better job fitting into the ecosystem that surrounds and supports the stream. Some plants that make a for a good buffer are red maple, pawpaw, elderberry, river birch, and nine bark. You want to plant things that are well adapted to wet soils. Fall is a great time to plant these trees and shrubs. Planting in the fall and winter allows those plants to set their roots and get established before the summer. In the summer, the plant's root system will be taxed to draw up the water needed by the plant, so any lead time we can give plants to prepare for that will benefit them. Even in the mountains plant roots will still grow some during the winter, enabling them to become established.

There are some plants that can be live staked into stream banks. Nine bark and elderberry are some examples. To live stake, you just take cuttings in the fall that are 6-12 inches long and put them in wet banks. These plants have the ability to root and grow from a simple cutting. After they have grown for a couple of years you can take cuttings from them to spread around.

Grass does not work well as a buffer. It is better than nothing, but does not slow water to help with water infiltration near as well as trees and shrubs. Most grass roots are not deep enough to hold a bank in place. It also does not help nearly as much to support the ecology of the stream. In the same regard rocks or rip rap don't work as well because they don't slow water down or assist with infiltration.

On September 18 I will be hosting a Streambank Stabilization workshop at the Reece Farm Pavilion from 2:00 – 3:30, with Tony Ward from Mountain True. If you are interested in attending call 706-439-6030 or email Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## The Heart of the Matter

There was a story my father liked to tell about the changing times in our county. I've shared it here before but it bears repeating in the context of this discussion. There was once a spring along a mountain road traveled on foot and by horseback. It was long ago frequented by travelers who would stop to water their horses or refresh themselves, but times were changing and people were leaving the high country to settle into the valleys or around the towns, so the spring wasn't often used.

A nearby landowner had made the spring a personal community service project. He kept it cleaned out, and over time had taken amethysts, which were commonly found in the area, and tiled the bottom of the spring. My dad said that when the sun caught it just right, the pool sparkled and glowed, nourishing the spirit while the water refreshed the body.

The spring remained intact for years, but one day when my uncle was a teenager, he came home with a few amethysts in his pocket. My grandfather strongly disapproved, but my uncle said the other kids were helping themselves. Nevertheless, Pa made my uncle take the gems back and return them to their places.

Sadly, however, the times had indeed changed. The grace period had ended, the bubble burst, and within a short time, all the amethysts disappeared and the spring was abandoned. No trace of it remains today.

Mumbly-peg was a game boys used to play with their pocket knives when my dad was young. To win the game, you had to flip or throw your knife in increasingly difficult ways so that it would stick into the ground. While the game is still played in some rural areas, it has all but disappeared today.

I got into trouble once in the Fifth Grade for playing mumbly-peg on the playground. The teacher confiscated our knives and gave us a lecture. At the end of the class, we got our pocket knives back. We weren't disciplined for bringing our knives to school, but for using them irresponsibly.

Some years later during high school shop class, one of my classmates was bragging about his new hunting rifle. I have long forgotten the model, but I remember we were all impressed. The shop teacher said he would like to see the rifle, so we all went out to the parking lot where it was hanging on the gun rack in the back of the boy's pickup truck. When we were finished admiring it, the teacher suggested my classmate might want to lock up his truck before we went back to class.

How times have changed in only two generations. This didn't happen in the boondocks or some isolated small town in the hinterlands. Gainesville was a sizable town with an airport and a civic center and too much traffic during rush hours. While my experience might have been unknown in the school systems of large cities facing the challenges characteristic of urban life, it was not uncommon in thousands of towns and communities across the country.

The cynic says that human nature never changes and points to the horrors of the past as proof. The romantic and the armchair warrior with the receding hairline harks back to better times and the halcyon days of an idealized youth. The latter may fight on for a few years for a return to those times and when the fight is spent, stand their ground for a while like the immovable object against an irresistible force until eventually, resigned to the inexorable turning of the wheel, from the rocking chair will say, "Those days are gone. Things will never be the same."

I believe the truth, or at least a workable facsimile of truth, lies somewhere between the cynic and the romantic. Golden days and golden ages come and go. They are bubbles, or perhaps eddies in a flood. They seem to appear by grace as much, if not more than they do as a result of intent and planning.

I don't believe, however, they ever appear without intent, and that is my concern in the wake of the recent horrors in the headlines. Politics always seeks to capitalize on horror. We need to get tough on... We need more laws... If I'm elected I'm going to crack down on... These pronouncements are cheap, heart, and predictable.

The heart of the matter is in the stories I just told. Those stories are a reflection of the numbers which prove beyond doubt that the essential element of trust in our society has rotted away. A short time ago we could trust that a hunting rifle in an unlocked truck in a school parking lot was an indiscretion rather than a tragedy waiting to happen. Today we have to wonder if we are wise to allow a sharpened pencil. All of our consuming distractions, like a fresh coat of paint, may hide the fact that termites have tunneled through the floor joists, but when our foot goes through the floor, we know the truth.

Politics does not have an answer. The corrupted version we have allowed to develop is a chimera, which promises illusions it can never deliver with one hand, and accusations, reparations, and threatened punishments with the other. Its true purpose is to divide rather than unite. Listen to all the words and notice the scarcity of kindness, forgiveness, and hope.

Our nation's sickness is spiritual at the root, manifesting in an array of psychological dysfunctions. We can address the root of the problem now, or we can wait for revolution and war to forge a new faith and unity as it has in the past, assuming of course that we survive the furnace.

## Outside The Box

By: Don Perry  
worldoutsidethebox.com

## Letters To The Editor

### Please Explain!

Dear Editor,

Someone needs to explain to me the mind of a liberal. Everyone knows that Biden's elevator doesn't go all the way to the top and Kamala is ultra-liberal, and up until she was anointed, it was obvious she was ultra-liberal and not the smartest cookie in the jar. I say anointed since no one was given a choice to choose after the Biden coup...

When confronting a few of my liberal associates, they tell me it doesn't matter if he/she are not up to the task of being president because they have good advisors to tell them what they need to do.

Then those very same liberals tell me that Trump is a threat to democracy.

What greater threat to democracy is there than to elect a secret group of people to run the country? Not knowing who is running our country IS the greatest threat to democracy I could imagine.

Mike Priven

## 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.*

## Towns County Community Calendar

<b>First Monday of each month:</b>	School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
<b>Every Tuesday:</b>	Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
<b>First Tuesday of each month:</b>	Hiaw. City Council... City Hall	6 pm
	YH City Council... YH City Hall	6:30 pm
<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	5:30 pm
	City of Young Harris Planning Commission...	
	Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
	TC Water Authority Board Meeting	6 pm

**Classifieds SELL!**  
**706-896-4454**



## 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