

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Getting the Most Out of 2024

By Yonatan Hamburger and Tzali Reicher

Echos from Sinai  
"Torah for Everyone"  
Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger



We're now deep into December, the last month of the year, and it feels like we're trudging to the finish line of 2024.

It's hard to believe how fast the year has gone by.

It feels like just yesterday we were making bold resolutions, setting lofty goals, and mapping out how this year would be the one when everything changed. But then life happened. The excitement of January faded into the routines of February, the chaos of spring, the lazy days of summer when everything is pushed off till we're back in the office, and the whirlwind of fall. Now, here we are in December, looking back at the plans we abandoned somewhere along the way and telling ourselves, "It's fine, I'll start fresh in January."

But will we? January 1 has a seductive promise: a clean slate, a fresh start. Yet, deep down, we know the truth. The calendar changing doesn't magically transform us into more disciplined, driven, or organized versions of ourselves. Meanwhile, the precious time we have now – this very day, this very hour – slips away unused.

The truth is there's still time in 2024 to make things happen. These final weeks of the year aren't just for coasting or wrapping things up; they're for taking action. Waiting for January to kick things into gear is like spotting the finish line of a race and deciding to slow down. Why limp into the New Year when you can fly into 2025 with momentum already on your side?

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, was the most influential rabbi in modern history, and he often emphasized the irreplaceable value of time. During an address he delivered in 1951, he opened with these words: "I don't want to say that our time is short, or abundance – it's about how we use it. Every moment we're given carries potential, a mission waiting to be fulfilled."

This idea isn't just theoretical; it's deeply practical. On the Rebbe's eightieth birthday in 1982, thousands of admirers celebrated his remarkable achievements, marveling at how much he had accomplished in his lifetime. But instead of reflecting on past successes, the Rebbe spoke about the value of every second:

"People worry for their monetary losses but care not for their precious time. Money comes and goes, but time never returns! Every moment that a person is granted carries a unique purpose, a mission from G-d. If time passes without it being utilized, that moment in time is lost forever!" The Rebbe demonstrated that we can do more in less time than we often believe as long as we use the time allotted with purpose and focus.

What if we adopted this mindset for the rest of 2024? What if, instead of seeing these last few weeks as time to wind down, we saw them as time to gear up? Imagine using December not as a month of excuses but as a month of action. Start tackling the goals you set back in January. Revisit the resolutions you've ignored. Even if you only make small progress, you'll be building momentum that will carry you into the New Year.

It's not about overwhelming yourself with a frantic to-do list. It's about making the most of what you have. The time is there – you just need to use it. That project you've been putting off? Start it now. That phone call you've been meaning to make? Make it today. The gym membership collecting dust? Lace up your sneakers and go.

And don't underestimate the power of even a single action. The Rebbe often emphasized that every moment carries a mission, and even a small, positive step can ripple outward in ways we can't predict. The time we spend working toward our goals today is an investment – not just in our future, but in the here and now.

As the final days of the year slip away, we have a choice. We can limp toward the finish line, exhausted and unmotivated, waiting for January 1 to give us permission to start over. Or we can use this time to take action, to build momentum, to make these last days count. By the time the clock strikes midnight on December 31, we won't just be starting 2025 – we'll already be running.

There's still time in 2024 to make progress, to make changes, to make things happen. Let's seize this time, cherish it, and use it to its fullest. The New Year is coming – but we don't need to wait for it. Let's make these last weeks of 2024 our strongest yet and fly into 2025 ready for whatever comes next.

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.

The Towns County Herald is an independent and non-partisan publication. As such, third-party views contained herein are not necessarily the opinions or positions of this newspaper, e.g. advertising, press releases, editorial content, perspectives expressed in articles covering local events, etc.

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



## 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.

UGA extension  
LINDSEY COUNTY  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams



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 temperatures 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.

## My Favorite Christmas Presents

Can you remember all the Christmas Presents you have received in your lifetime? People place a lot of emphasis on giving and receiving presents. We want to give the one that a person will remember for the rest of a lifetime. As I think back across the years I can remember some Christmas Presents that stand out from all the others I have received.

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



During my fourth Christmas I received a pair of Cowboy boots from my Uncle Bud. I still have a photograph of me posing in those boots. I think I have owned at least one pair of Cowboy boots continually for the past 48 years. I also remember a .410 gauge shotgun I received from my Dad when I was about 12. I killed a bunch of squirrels over the years with that gun. I remember my Dad getting me a toy battleship that ran on batteries. He got the thing all put together and turned it on, but, could not turn it off. Mom said he had to take it out on the back porch to keep from waking me up.

I remember one year in which I wanted an electric football game. I think I was 10 and everyone in my family knew I wanted this football game. Around 11 p.m., my brother got up for a drink of water and ran back into our bedroom. He woke me to tell me he had caught Dad playing with an electric football game. I jumped from bed and ran down the hall to find Dad tossing a football up and down while he was watching a Bowl game on TV. I thought my little brother had lost his mind until the next morning. Dad just grinned at us as we played that electric football game.

Some of my favorite memories include nothing more than candied orange slices, apple sauce cake and peppermint candy because they represent memories of my grandmother. My grandfather always took us boys squirrel, rabbit or coon hunting around Christmas. Another wonderful Christmas was the year my wife and I became engaged. Through the years she and I have many wonderful memories concerning Christmas. I was reminded of some of these the other day when we pulled out a box of LEGO building blocks.

We usually spend Christmas Eve with some friends, and one of their sons enjoys building things with LEGOs. So, we decided to get out these LEGOs and find the pirate ship we gave our youngest son on one Christmas. This LEGO pirate ship has 43 pages of instructions. That should tell you something about how many pieces were a part of that ship. My mind went back to that morning when Wade was 10 or 11. He unwrapped that ship with a bucket full of enthusiasm. My wife spent hours helping him to build that ship, and when it was finally complete the boys ended up tearing it apart and asking us to help them put it back together.

As I recall all these Christmas presents I have received or gave in the last 66 years, it occurs to me that it wasn't the actual gifts that provided so much happiness. It was the people around those gifts. All these gifts were centered on people that were important to me. People like my grandparents, my uncle, my Mom and Dad, my wife, my two sons and my friends. So, during this Christmas season, take time to enjoy the people who are close to you.

The giving of gifts began with the gifts to Christ from the wise men 2,000 years ago. Today we give gifts to people we love and appreciate. So, give the gifts and take time to make some memories with those people you love. Because at the end of your time you may not remember all the gifts you receive, but, you will remember the ones which gave them to you. Also, remember the real reason for the season!

## Au Contraire

"You're just being contrary," a friend once remarked. "I disagree," was my immediate reply.

Maybe it's the weather. I'm standing on the back porch waiting for Peaches, who just chased a squirrel into the laurel thicket, to finish conducting her morning business, and it's so cold that my coffee is starting to ice over in my hand. That can make a man contrary.

The weather station display says it's 13.6 degrees outside. That's not enough degrees, but at least the wind is calm. Just below the temperature is a little notation that says "Feels like 13.6 degrees." I suppose that saves me the trouble of doing the dew point calculations in my head, and it gives me a benchmark for how contrary I should feel.

Misery indices, ironically, seem to be "popular" with information peddlers. Every weather report comes with a "real feel" or wind chill map. This is useful, particularly if you need to be reminded that wind always makes it feel colder or if it's inconvenient to stick your head outside before getting dressed for the day. As a contrarian, I'm tempted to file that information with the "harmful if swallowed" label on a package of fish hooks, but I can see the value if you're in a hurry to get to work and you live several floors above being able to take a quick look outside.

Meanwhile, Peaches, who, having lost track of her squirrel, found another one and then lost that one too, is now captivated by a scent only she can detect. How does a nose even function at this temperature? Can you just go ahead and pee?? A mouse could ice skate on my coffee now.

Apparently, Peaches didn't notice the "feels like" temperature on the weather station. I'm not surprised. She also consistently fails to take note of the "misery indices" that various economic and academic entities compile to let us know how happy or unhappy we are. On the contrary, she seems to head out the door every morning as if it were the beginning of a brand new day, a tabula rasa, with no warnings or preconceived notions at all to guide her.

Ignorance is bliss? Au contraire. Happiness is an informed choice. I think I'll just put on a heavier coat and join my puppy for a walk. The sun peeking over the ridge is creating a light show on the frost, and a pair of American Goldfinches just landed on the feeder by the barn. The coffee in the pot will still be hot when we get back.

## Letters to the Editor

### Judge Not

Dear Editor,

There is a good reason why God tells us in the book of Matthew 7:1-2, Judge not that you be not judged. This verse has spoken volumes to me since I became a believer in Christ. To judge can mean "to decide, to condemn, to avenge." These verses do not mean that a child of God is forbidden to judge others, but it does mean that we are to judge the inward motives of others in the sense of condemning them. God doesn't forbid our judging wrong and evil actions. Even when I wasn't a believer in Christ, I never judged others. I had a hard time judging my actions. I like what Dr. James McGinley once said: I am no judge, but I am a fruit inspector, for I can tell whether or not a Christian is producing fruit. Jesus made it clear not to sit in harsh judgment upon another.

I heard a true story about a man who used to drink a lot, then he got saved. He was a legislator, and in a meeting of other legislators, one man stood up and said, "I make a motion to hear a sermon from Deacon So-and So." Everyone laughed. Then the accused man stood up and said: "I do not have anything to say. My Lord told me not to cast my pearls before swine." He sat down, and no one ever ridiculed him again.

If Christians would spend more time encouraging and lifting each other up and being accountable to one another for their actions, God would be well pleased and the Holy Spirit would be able to work in and through us to be the child of God that we ought to be. This life here is a testing ground of our faith and loyalty to the One true God we serve with gladness of heart. Lighten up and go brighten up someone's day and shine the light of God's love for all to see. Amen.

Frank F. Combs

## 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.

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

## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

Kenneth West  
Owner/Publisher

Shawn Jarrard  
General Manager/Editor

Todd Forrest  
Staff Writer

Derek Richards  
Advertising Director

Jordan Hyatt  
Office Manager

Lowell Nicholson  
Photographer