

Israeli Arabs

Israeli Arabs Live Better Than Their Neighbors

By Yonatan Hamburger and Tzali Reicher

Jews understand what it's like to be mistreated in the countries they live in.

Charting their way through history, no other people has been displaced or expelled as much as the Jewish people.



Echos from Sinai Torah for Everyone Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger

The feeling of displacement has been baked into the Jewish peoples' DNA since Biblical times, and is still felt deeply today.

This philosophy underpins the modern State of Israel's policy to its Arab citizens, despite what the world and social media tells you about the "discrimination" and "apartheid" Israeli Arabs experience.

As interviews with news outlets sympathetic to the Palestinian cause report on the Israel-Hamas war, Gazans are beginning to speak openly about the barbarity Hamas has unleashed against them in order to retain their iron grip in Gaza.

This raises a critical question: Why are Arabs in both Gaza and Israel acknowledging the role Hamas played in the destruction of Gaza, while some academics and college students in the Western world rally to support an organization responsible for harming its own citizens and those of its neighbor?

See Hamburger, page 5A

Connection and Community

Recent Harvard research indicates that many young adults are deeply troubled. The report identifies stress points and offers remedies. If you are one of those young adults, know that life can be much brighter.

Harvard found that 36% of young adults in the survey reported having anxiety; 29% reported depression. "I just wish I was able to calm down literally ever," one respondent wrote. "I always feel on edge, everything scares me...If I could just find some way to calm down a little it would work miracles."

What drives this agitated state of mind? Respondents said they lack meaning or purpose. One said, "I don't know what to do with my life." They feel like their lives matter to no one in a world that is unraveling.

The report suggests remedies - serving others, developing durable relationships, and valuing life as more than the sum of your achievements. One respondent said, "I would really like to have some sort of meaning from working towards a cause that betters humanity. I see the world falling apart, and I'd like to do something about it."

What is my place in the world, and how can I make sense of it are fair questions. But will any cause suffice to give your life more meaning? Is "doing something about it" a type of self-medication for which any chosen ingredient from the virtue-signaling apothecary will do? Something's missing here.

What's missing is a connection. Consider Jacob's experience. He had a dream about a ladder connecting earth and heaven. Upon waking up he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." He then made a vow saying, "If God will be with me...then the Lord will be my God" (Gen. 28). Connecting to God changes your outlook. He is not to you, even if you do not know it. God is doing something about a falling-apart world, and you can join in.

Perhaps the best remedy for discontentment is community. Connecting to God by faith means you are a member of a people who "are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,

See Fowler, page 5A



All Things New Wayne Fowler

Commissioner's Questions

There are many different Christmas-related activities and events happening in the first few weeks of December. Union County Government also provides opportunities for children to speak with Santa and to experience old fashioned Christmas celebrations.

Q. Will the Classic Christmas event be held as it was last year (2022)? If so, where will it be held?

A. The first annual Classic Christmas event was held at the Union County Sports Center last year. This year, it will be held in the same location with different events planned across two days - Friday, December 8th from 5pm - 7:30pm, and Saturday, December 9, 2023 from 2pm - 5pm.

Q. Can you give us a rundown of what we can expect at this year's Classic Christmas?

A. Yes, the event has been expanded to provide more activities. On Friday, December 8th, children will see a live nativity scene - complete with live animals as part of the celebration. This will of course be held in the parking lot of the Sports Center.

Q. Who is responsible for making the Classic Christmas event happen?

A. This event would not be possible without the help of Union County Recreation Department employees, individual volunteers, and volunteer organizations.

See Paris, page 5A



Q & A from Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris

Letters to the Editor

Can You Imagine?

Dear Editor,

Some of America's major population centers are struggling with financial and social upheaval caused by the unregulated flow of millions of illegal migrants across our unsecured southern border.

One alternative being considered is relocation of these persons to remote areas outside the big city.

See Gibson, page 5A

The Good Ole Days

Dear Editor,

I write to say that I very much enjoyed Mickey Cummings' article last week entitled "School Bus Drivers." Therein, he told of experiences of his youth growing up in the post-World War South such as driving tractors before being old enough to have a driver's license; school buses that would stop at the general store so that kids could purchase afterschool snacks; and goats trained to attack red handkerchiefs hanging out

See Wilson, page 5A

Election Interference?

Dear Editor,

We hear a lot about "election interference" in the news. Election Interference carries a fine and a penalty of up to five years in prison. So, when you are accused of this life-destroying crime, it is a very, very serious matter.

See Campbell, page 5A

Property Tax Liens

Dear Editor,

With the December 2023 property tax due date quickly approaching, some property owners may find it difficult to meet their obligation to pay their taxes.

See Hopgood, page 5A

Short & Sweet

Dear Editor,

My name is Fred Elias, vice chair of the Union County Democrats. I do not support a board of five commissioners.

Fred Elias

UCHS Musical Theatre Kudos

Dear Editor,

Congratulations to the UCHS Musical Theatre for their wonderful recent concert "Singing in the Rain" at the Fine Arts Center.

The students and faculty worked hard to put this together. The singing, dancing and professionally done stage and costume changes were amazing.

See Tiburski, page 5A



Word Usage IV

When we have reached a decision regarding our plans and goals, we naturally want to share them with those who are friends or relatives. The conversation may be going great until...

Without warning, a verbal grenade is thrown into our sandbox. Boom! The "What if" questions come from all sides: "What if you lose your way?" "What if you get sick?" "What if everything goes wrong?" We find ourselves "What if"-to-death.

Feelings are damaged. And we feel dismayed by all of the "What if" questions. Our plans and goals seem to be headed for the mental dumpster, and we are left to retrieve our plans from that dumpster because the dump truck is a-coming.

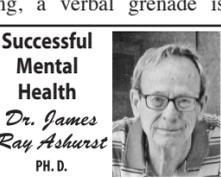
You and I have a choice of existing in a "What if" cage or of living life to its fullest, even with involved risks. "What if" individuals are always second-guessing themselves while existing in their stressful, confused state of mind.

Our risks of "What if" can be destructive, hurtful, or dangerous. Dump the "What if" existence and enjoy living to your fullest every single day.

Success is never final, Failure is never fatal. ---John Wooden

No one can make You feel inferior Without your consent. ---Eleanor Roosevelt

You and I cannot possibly have the abundance. See Ashurst, page 5A



Successful Mental Health Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH. D.

A Union County Christmas

Recently I interviewed Kathryn Litton about a Christmas celebration in Blairsville in the late 1980s. This is her story.

The time had to have been around 1987 because Blairsville had just erected its first red light up close to where McDonalds is now located, and I think 515 had just opened.

There was no Christmas Parade, and the Christmas event was having Santa Claus come to the Old Courthouse on the town square. Kathryn remembers Gene Sprayberry playing Santa for many years.

So, the next year Kathryn had an idea she shared with the new President of the Chamber of Commerce. She suggested that Santa arrive by Firetruck. She also suggested that the Old Courthouse be decorated with wreaths, lights and Christmas Trees.

That year she convinced many of the downtown merchants to decorate outside their stores for Christmas and led a group of volunteers (many were in her family) in decorating the Old Courthouse.

John dressed up like Santa while Mike Litton put on the Bunny Costume and met at the Fire- See Cummings, page 5A



Around The Farm Mickey Cummings

Chamber of Commerce

Up next, Christmas! The next few weeks are packed full of Christmas events that you won't want to miss out on.

Starting with the Holly Jolly Christmas and Breakfast with Santa at the Community Center on December 2nd. This year we have extended the hours to 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. to allow for more families to come through and see Santa and get their photos taken.

Plan to also spend some time to enjoy all of the Christmas trees in the building, or come back anytime in December. There are over 75 unique and creative trees decorated by local businesses.

The Tour of Trees is a special event that's perfect to bring the family to enjoy, bring your church group, or school group - everyone will love seeing the building decked out!

Thanks for making this holiday season better in Blairsville!



Blairsville - Union County Chamber President Steve Rowe

USDA Zones Changing

Recently the USDA released an updated USDA zone map, also called the plant hardiness zone map. Let's talk about this map, how it's made, and what purpose it serves.

Simply put, the USDA zone map gives an idea of what perennial plants will survive in which zone. This is important information for anyone considering planting perennials in their landscape.

The newest version of the map is based on 30 years of data from 1991 to 2020 to determine where the lines for the zones should be. The map was last updated in 2012, it's usually updated every 12 years.

Basically, the USDA zone that we are in has changed. Under the previous map, most of Union and Towns counties were in zone 6b. There were exceptions, of course. Places of higher elevation were in zone 6a. However, under the new map most of Union and Towns are under 7b.

Just because we shifted zones does not mean that the plants you planted for 6b are going to die overnight. It also doesn't mean that you should start planting tropical plants. The change in zones are about the extreme cold temperatures each year. So, plant species that have been struggling because of temperatures will continue to struggle.

You may wonder about the 0 or sub 0 temperatures that we had over Christmas in 2022. Those are below the 5-10 degree Fahrenheit range for zone 7b. Those temperatures were not used to create this map because the data included in this map is from 1991 to 2020. Overall this map shows that the contiguous states were 2.5 See Williams, page 5A



Watching and Working Jacob Williams

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## Paris... continued from Page 4A

of Christian Athletes Association (FCA). Union County Government is very proud of all the volunteers who make this Christmas event special for our children.

### Q. Does Union County Government offer any other Christmas events to the public?

A. Yes, the annual Kris Kringle Market will be held on Saturday, December 2 from 10 AM – 2 PM at the Union County Farmers Market.

### Q. I've heard of the Kris Kringle Market. How does a Christmas market apply to children?

A. The Kris Kringle Market provides 100+ vendors an opportunity to make their

goods and products available to the public – just in time for Christmas. While adults are searching for the perfect Christmas gifts for the people on their Christmas lists, children can take part in a miniature train ride with Santa. At 10 AM on December 2nd, members of the Union County High School Chorus will sing, and at 11am, the Woody Gap Steel Band will play. Both performances are a real treat for the entire family.

You won't want to miss these activities as well as other opportunities planned during this holiday season. It's a great time to be in north Georgia – it's a great season to be in Union County.

## Hambourger... continued from Page 4A

The answer lies in a simple but often overlooked fact: Arabs living in Israel enjoy a higher quality of life, and more civil liberties compared to their counterparts in the region. This reality has been a consistent thread since the State's founding when Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, urged Arabs to remain in the newly established state, despite the mass expulsion of Jews from Arab states in the aftermath of 1948.

By every available metric, Arabs in Israel lead better lives than those in any of the 22 Arab states in the vicinity. Since 1948, the local Arab population in Israel has grown from 150,000 to a thriving community of 2.1 million citizens in this proud Jewish and democratic state. These Arab citizens have equal rights under the law, are represented by their own political parties serving their interests in government, and even have a Muslim Supreme Court Justice. Moreover, thousands of Arab civil servants contribute to the functioning of the state, and a law mandates that every state-run company must have at least one Arab member on its board of directors. Arabic is an official language of the State of Israel, with signs posted in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.

When you consider the higher levels of education and financial well-being of Arabs in Israel compared to surrounding states, it becomes evident why many choose to express happiness with their lives in Israel. When asked whether they would move to

a new Palestinian state, they overwhelmingly respond with a resounding "no." They recognize that the current Palestinian leadership in Gaza, and the West Bank are often corrupt and retain power by terrorizing its own people. Many Gazan and West Bank Arabs are fed up and look with envy upon their brethren who live a better life in Israel, who they erroneously thought were the enemy.

What is life like for Palestinians living in other Arab countries? They mostly face second-class treatment, often confined to decrepit refugee camps without citizenship. A significant number live in Syria and Lebanon as refugees deprived of professional opportunities and government aid. In Jordan, many reside in refugee camps without citizenship, resulting in limited civil rights, poor living conditions, and restricted economic prospects.

Through all these challenges, Israel remains a beacon of stability and prosperity in a volatile region. Many Arabs have expressed a preference for living in Israel because they appreciate the Jewish and Western values it embodies. This preference reflects the positive quality of life experienced by all citizens of Israel, Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Druze.

*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.*

## Gibson... continued from Page 4A

ies. In this regard, Union County with its thousands of acres of unoccupied and unused national forests becomes a candidate. It would be a relatively simple matter for the Federal government to privatize some of this land, allocate it to developers and give them contracts to build massive villages or camps and relocate many thousands of illegals to live

in them. If/when this happens, can you imagine the costs to our way of life and the stresses on county infrastructure (medical, educational, law enforcement and all social institutions)? If American and international voters re-elect "Slo Joe" in 2024, this revolutionary process could be underway by this time next year.

**Wm. Ronald Gibson**

## Wilson...continued from Page 4A

of the back pockets of overalls. Those times may not have represented paradise, but I think it safe to say that there was a kind of innocence that is not much in evidence today – or so it seems.

Mickey's story took me back to my youth when I too was very much enamored with the thrill of driving an automobile – maybe even a classic like a 1957 Chevy or a Thunderbird of the same vintage. But at the time, one of my family's two cars was a 1964 Pontiac Bonneville. In a word that car was simply HUGE. It came standard with a 389 cu in, 333 horse power engine. From the driver's seat the hood looked the distance of a football field. I can say from experience (uh-hum) that if, from a dead stop, one double pumped the accelerator while also depressing the brake using the left foot and then immediately pushing the accelerator to the floor, that car would leave the ground before finding asphalt again, and you better be paying attention and have both hands on the wheel.

On the day of my 16th birthday, my mother drove me to the Georgia State Patrol Office in our hometown. At the time, that is where driver's licenses were issued. I had not only a passion for driving but also a skillset that had been nourished and certified by the most serious and demanding driver training instructor ever – Mr. Wooten! I wish that space permitted a complete review of all that he demanded of young would-be drivers, but maybe this one example will suffice. This took place in the school parking lot: Sitting in the driver's seat, you were staring at an orange cone in the distance. Your task was to accelerate the car to 45 mph, then apply brakes stopping just short of but not hitting the cone before coming to a complete stop and not having a glass of water in your lap

that Mr. Wooten had placed on the dashboard. And even so, if he felt the slightest recoil at the moment of stopping, you still failed. Furthermore, Mr. Wooten required that you pretty much memorize the Georgia Driver's manual and prove it by passing his 110-question final exam. Now that's driver training!

But back to the driver's license test. Mr. Adams (actually I think it was "Seargent" Adams) was the examiner. His son and I ran in some of the same circles, so I'm sure that he recognized me. I aced the 10-question written test that – I swear in the name of all that is holy – included the following question: If you come to an intersection and you have a green light but pedestrians are in the crosswalk you (1) Honk your horn and keep going, (2) Run over the pedestrians, (3) Take to the sidewalk going around the pedestrians, (4) Yield to the pedestrians.

Following that, Mr. Adams asked me what I was thinking of driving for the road test. I pointed to the Pontiac Bonneville and said, "Well, I was thinking of driving that." He said, fine, tell you what, you drive that thing around the block and if you make it back, I'll give you a drivers' license. I thought he was kidding, but when he did not take a seat in the car, I realized that he was serious. I did not go far. I went out on to the 4-lane, pulled up to a traffic light that had a sign saying "NO U-TURN." Thinking that the sooner I got back the better, I made the U-Turn and upon arrival back at the station I was presented with my drivers' license. My ticket to freedom from constant parental supervision! Woo Hoo!

Not to sound like an old fogie (I'm 76 on Monday), but in some ways those were indeed the 'good ole days.'

**Frank F. Wilson**

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

house which in those days was located up the hill south of town close to where Circle K is now located. A group of volunteers was watching, and when Mayor Allison flipped the switch that turned on the Christmas lights, the Firetruck was supposed to bring Santa, the Choestoe Bunny and a couple of buckets of Christmas Candy down the hill on US 129 toward the Courthouse Square. And that is kind of what happened.

Santa Claus and the Choestoe Bunny stepped up onto the back of the Firetruck and held on to the rail as it pulled out of the Firehouse with the sirens blaring. As the firetruck came down the hill its speed increased significantly, and as the vehicle approached the square, Santa had one arm locked around the rail at the elbow while the other held onto the bucket of candy, and that bucket of candy was parallel to the ground. Somehow he was managing to hold onto his beard and the stocking cap at the same time.

Meanwhile the Choestoe Bunny had both paws holding to the rail of the Firetruck and was in a crouching position so as to keep his ears and head from being blown off by the wind behind the truck. The vehicle was able to decrease its speed so as to navigate around the square but did not stop. The vehicle traveled 3/4 away around the square and then in a westerly direction it continued traveling down Blue Ridge Street to the library where it turned left and traveled up by the Old Hospital to 129. There it turned left again and traveled north to the square.

Arriving at the square, Santa Claus stepped down

## Williams...

### continued from Page 4A

degrees warmer compared to the map released in 2012. About half of the lower 48 states changed zones between the 2012 and 2023 maps. In Georgia there are four main zones ranging from 7b in the mountains to 9a in South Georgia.

If you have questions about what things to plant in your zone contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

## Fowler...

### continued from Page 4A

a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). God forms that community to serve others, develop durable relationships, and value the life of each member.

Harvard has identified a troubling trend, but there's hope! You can find deep meaning and purpose in life. You can find your place in the world. Connect to God and join the community of faith that embraces the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is salve for a troubled soul.

## Ashurst...

### continued from Page 4A

dant life that God promised if we are living in the shadow of the "What if" circumstances. It all depends on one person— You!

Be extra careful of associating often with "What if" people. They have a tendency to bring us down to the way of "cage thinking." As you celebrate the holidays, remember this quote:

*Sometimes you will*

*never know*

*The value of a moment*

*Until it becomes a memory.*

*---J. R. Gravitt*

## Campbell...

### continued from Page 4A

I attended the Elections Board meeting about a week ago. The Democrat Chairperson of the Elections Board threatened repeatedly to press official charges for Election Interference for handing out candy with this decoration nearby. Remember, this would send the candy person to prison for up to five years. If the Elections Board Chairperson goes forward with this lawsuit as threatened, one would naturally ask three questions: How likely are these preschoolers to vote? Which election does this decoration violate? Why would a Union County Official threaten a citizen with a five-year prison sentence for a cardboard decoration?

**Lisa Campbell**

## Tiburski...

### continued from Page 4A

We are looking forward to Dec. 7 & 8 when the UCHS Band, Chorus and Theatre present "The Polar Express" at the Fine Arts Center!

Thank you,

**Ella Tiburski**

town Blairsville. Santa will be inside the Old Courthouse from 2 PM until 4 PM. Entertainment will be on the Courthouse lawn

prior to and after the parade.

## Hopgood... continued from Page 4A

so are investors, know the tax law, and are looking for a quick profit. They are not angels sent to help you through this difficulty. If one sincerely wants to help, they will offer financial assistance to you directly so you can pay your own taxes.

When a property owner in Georgia fails to pay their property taxes, the county tax commissioner may sell the real estate to recoup some of the tax money owed on the property. Individual investors can purchase the tax deeds at public auction.

In Georgia, when an in-

vestor purchases a tax deed, they do not immediately get possession of that property. Once the original owner is properly notified about the sale, they have a one-year "right of redemption," during which time they can pay off the tax deed, plus interest and penalties. Currently, Georgia's tax lien interest rate is 20%.

If you become delinquent on your taxes, it is important to "know" the process your tax commissioner follows to collect the delinquent tax on your property!

**Wesley Hopgood**