

OPINION & EDITORIAL

BUCKS COUNTY HERALD

Serving Bucks, Hunterdon and surrounding counties

Published weekly at
875 North Easton Road,
Suite 1, Doylestown, PA 18902

Mailing Address:
Bucks County Herald
875 North Easton Road,
Suite 1, Doylestown, PA 18902
Phone: 215-794-1096
Classified: 215-794-1097
Fax: 215-794-1109
Herald@BucksCountyHerald.com

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The Bucks County Herald is distributed to local establishments at no charge.
Subscriptions are \$130 a year. Home delivery is \$260 a year. Printing is provided by Times Leader.

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LETTERS TO THE HERALD

When the truth doesn't flatter Trump, he attacks it

President Donald Trump's firing of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) official responsible for the July 2025 jobs report is yet another dangerous and disgraceful step in his long campaign to undermine truth and manipulate reality to suit his own political image. The July report, compiled by a respected team of nonpartisan economists from across the country, showed a clear and factual slowdown in U.S. job growth. There was nothing "rigged" about it — only facts that Trump didn't like.

The BLS has long been a trusted source for accurate labor data, relying on expert analysis, rigorous methodology and independent review. The truth didn't flatter Trump's narrative, so he attacked it.

He labels facts as falsehoods and demands loyalty not to the nation or truth, but to himself. His firing of the official behind this report sends a chilling message: Tell the

truth, and you're gone.
Americans deserve leaders who seek truth, not power at any cost.
H. James Hulton III
Montgomery County

Thank you for coverage of Haycock Camping Ministries decision

Thank you for following the Haycock Camp Appeal and sharing the decision Judge Trauger gave in support of the township ruling ("Court upholds restriction on Upper Bucks Christian camp," July 31).

Your reporter BJ Murphy was spot on in his coverage of events and I'm sure hundreds of neighbors were glad to hear the news.

I just wanted to clarify one point regarding building the indoor shooting range. It is true the condition was struck requiring the camp to build an indoor range in their first phase of development, however the camp is only allowed outdoor use of the shotgun range going forward. If they choose to

fire any other type of firearm, they will be required to do so in an indoor range.
Thanks again for keeping this great community informed. It is much appreciated.
Carla Sessions
Springfield Township

On Trump wanting to interview four-star general candidates

I recently read that President Trump intends to interview prospective four star general candidates.

This is a serious break from past practice. Will such action mean the politicization of our military?

Trump may be looking for future generals who are more loyal to him than the U.S. Constitution.

Would he declare martial law in 2028 in order to remain president? This might seem a stretch but considering all that has occurred in the past six months, such an event is entirely worth considering.

Paul Lang
Northampton

HISTORY LIVES

Pat Zema, Doylestown Historical Society



COURTESY OF DOYLESTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oakland Avenue Associates bought and renovated the old Mechanics Hall building in 1997. Several businesses have since been tenants there.



COURTESY OF DOYLESTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mechanics Hall was constructed in 1910 on Oakland Avenue by The Doylestown Council, No. 166, O.U.A.M., The Order of United American Mechanics, a nativist group.

Mechanics Hall. Mechanics Hall was constructed in 1910 by The Doylestown Council, No. 166, O.U.A.M., The Order of United American Mechanics, a nativist group. Founded in Philadelphia during the 1840s, this anti-Catholic nativist organization required its members to actively advocate against the use of cheap foreign labor and to exclusively support American businesses.

The building was designed by A. Oscar Martin (1873-1942), a prominent Doylestown architect, and still stands at 52-54 Oakland Ave. in Doylestown. This three-level structure encompasses 9,300 square feet and is built of brick with a stone foundation. Martin's graceful lines and formal symmetry are evident in the low-pitched hip roof and curvilinear gable, as well as the entry doors accentuated by a shed hood featuring scroll-like brackets. The windows are distinguished by extra-wide eaves with exposed scroll-like rafters and reverse curve cornices.

The second floor originally served as the fraternal organization's lodge room and contained several smaller rooms, while the first floor was occupied by the William Fretz and Co. Clothing Factory. Fretz (1870-1952) was a successful Doylestown businessman who owned several pants factories that won many government awards and honors during World War II. A rear addition to the factory was built in 1928. In 1968, Fretz's son Walter conveyed the property to Contemporary Apparel Incorporated.

This wonderful example of Martin's distinctive architecture style narrowly avoided demolition in 1970 when the borough acquired the property as a potential parking lot. It was sold in 1975 to Stack Sales when the parking lot plan was abandoned. The basement and first floor were utilized as an office supply store and the second floor as an exercise studio known as The Fitness Factory.

The property was sold again in 1997 to Oakland Avenue Associates, at which point renovations were made. The large spaces were subdivided into smaller rooms. Since then, several businesses have been tenants including Advanced Wellness and Midwifery and The Medical Healing Arts Center. Today several companies lease offices in the building.

Sources: *The Doylestown Patriot*, Nov. 19, 1998
The Daily Intelligencer, Jan. 17, 1974

doylestownhistorical.org

Was Epstein trying to save the Jewish community from a "Shonda?"

Amy Neustein

In the swirl of conspiracy theories targeting Jeffrey Epstein's cadre of high-profile clients for naturally wanting to see him silenced, I'm afraid the real motive behind Epstein's suicide at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in 2019 may have been overlooked.

I had a brief encounter with Jeffrey Epstein myself. It was sometime in the '90s when I was at my parents' home in Brooklyn. My father was a prominent rabbi whose synagogue, The Jewish Center of Brighton Beach (where Nicolas Cage would later be filmed in "Lord of War"), was a stone's throw from where Jeffrey Epstein grew up in the Seagate section of Brooklyn. My father would often be called upon to privately counsel those facing the difficulties of public life. As a member of the clergy he kept these matters confidential.

One day I recall how the phone rang at the Brooklyn home. I took the call. It was Jeffrey Epstein on the line asking to speak to "the rabbi" about a "highly personal matter." Epstein was noticeably upset. Writing in the San Diego Jewish World shortly after Epstein's suicide, I said: "I could see my father was visibly shaken (after the call) and I knew something was wrong." My father never uttered a word because confidentiality was sacrosanct to him as a member of the clergy.

Years later when I read the headline news reports of Jeffrey Epstein having strangled himself with his bedsheets at the Manhattan jail where he was awaiting trial on child-sex trafficking charges, I realized that this detestable child-sex trafficker who had reached out to my father for rabbinic guidance so many years prior might have actually taken his life to spare the Jewish community a "Shonda" — a profound community shame.

Epstein, raised as a Jew in Brooklyn, with strong family ties and a solid commitment to Israel, may have sought to end his life as a sacrificial act. After all, a protracted trial or a stringent plea agreement would have landed him in prison for years. The swarm of press stories would have inevitably damaged the name of the Jewish community, using Epstein as the emblem of a Jewish sex trafficker. News reports showed how much he detested being called a pedophile. But having his name emblazoned as a "Jewish pedophile" would have been far worse.

"Shonda" is a socially regulating

principle that controls much of Jewish life. The fear of a Shonda causes members of the Jewish community to act in ways they have never done before. For example, sex abuse coverups are common in the Orthodox community for fear of a Shonda. And in extreme cases, sexual predators have taken their own lives. Just a few years ago a famous Jewish children's author, Chaim Walder, committed suicide when it came out that he was a pedophile. Ashamed of his actions for both his family and for the community, Walder ended his life.

No one would dispute that Jeffrey Epstein had a strong Jewish identity. His passionate commitment to Israel and to Jewish causes was evident in his tax filings. He gave money to a study program in Jerusalem, to a Jewish day school in Manhattan, and he gave handsomely to the UJA-Federation of New York, an umbrella Jewish philanthropy organization providing grants to Jewish groups in Israel and throughout the U.S. The list goes on, and it even includes Jewish women's organizations in spite of his sexual exploitation of young girls.

Epstein's suicide in 2019 coincided with a very important day on the Jewish calendar. It was one day before "Tisha B'av," regarded as the saddest day of the Jewish year when as a community Jews commemorate the destruction of their Holy Temple. It is a day of mourning, when fasting and reflection occupy the minds and hearts of the Jewish community. The reason for the destruction of the Holy Temple was because of aberrant and transgressive behavior of members of the Jewish community.

Epstein, having taken his life right before the pivotal fast day makes it hard to escape the fact that his suicide was arguably a sacrificial act in his own mind. He knew his name would soon become the blight on the Jewish community, and he couldn't bear to see that happen. By strangulating himself he hoped to smother and suffocate the raging antisemitism that his name would engender.

This was an ultimate act of self-sacrifice. But one may argue that his self-strangulation boomeranged. It left the world figuratively "hanging" as to what lies beneath his extensive network of sexual exploitation and trafficking? Who was involved and who benefitted?

Sociologist Amy Neustein lives in Fort Lee, N.J.

Texas gerrymandering strips power from racial minorities

Tom Taft

Southern state Republicans are on the verge of accomplishing legislatively what the Confederate generals could not achieve on the battlefield over 160 years ago — winning the Civil War. Or at least accomplishing all of the goals that motivated the South to secede in the first place.

The forces for and against slavery stood at the symbolic center of the pre-Civil War era, and slavery was the tangible outcome of a belief, held by Southern male leaders, that all men were not created equal and that a self-sustaining oligarchy of powerful male leaders was the correct form of government.

An article by David Daley in the Washington Post on July 16 outlined the latest steps lawmakers in Texas were taking to further gerrymander its congressional districts to favor Republicans. The article concludes with a harrowing observation:

"And now, the same courts and state legislatures that tilted the maps so dramatically are executing the next phase of a long strategy that ends with entrenched lawmakers and one-party rule."

When I read that conclusion, while also noting that Trump's administration includes at least 10 billionaires (only one is a woman), I was struck by the fact that today powerful male leaders in Trump's administration are pushing to achieve a permanent and self-sustaining oligarchy, based on their belief that they know what is best for all Americans. That sounded to me a lot like what Southern Civil War leaders were pushing for, and today's Republicans are very close to achieving it — very close to "winning" the Civil War.

After the battle of Gettysburg in July of 1863, there was

a November memorial service at the opening of the Soldiers National Cemetery in Gettysburg. Edward Everett, a noted orator of the time, spoke for two hours, and then Abraham Lincoln stood up and spoke for two minutes (272 words). Lincoln's address cut to the heart of why the South seceded, why the horrific Civil War was being fought, and what was at stake.

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure."

We clearly face the same existential question today.

I have always thought that the equalizing force in America is that each of us has exactly one vote, and that, by definition, the lower 90% of Americans on the income scale have nine times as much voting power as the top 10%. The painful reality of this simple math is that the top 10% or 1% or 1/10th% seem to be rapidly accruing the power to minimize the impact of the lower 90% through gerrymandering, shockingly immoral misinformation, and fear mongering.

As the Trump administration and Republican states work feverishly to consolidate power among a few wealthy men, to gerrymander districts to assure one party rule, and to create a defacto oligarchy ruling this nation, we need to work just as feverishly to stop it. As Lincoln urged us, we must resolve that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Tom Taft lives in Chalfont.

Send letters

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