

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Cough Syrup Abuse

There are plenty of reasons for parents to be concerned about their teenagers abusing over-the-counter cough medicines containing dextromethorphan: Some 5 percent of teens report abusing these medicines; they are inexpensive, easy to obtain, and potentially deadly if combined with other drugs. Yet here's one reason for DXM - it can be a pre-emptive indicator of drug addiction.

The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition is to support an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

Children who abuse DXM typically fall into one of two groups: the first is young people looking to find out what it is like to get high; the second is those teens addicted to street drugs who go back to DXM when their drugs of choice are unavailable. These addicts may even use DXM to mitigate the effects of withdrawal.

All too often, DXM abusers move on to street drugs. They seem more likely to choose those that have suppressive effects on the body, such as painkillers, marijuana, Xanax and Valium. These have effects more closely resembling the hallucinogenic high that comes from abusing DXM.

We know that people become addicted to substances because they like the way they feel when they are under the influence. Young people certainly are not exempt from these effects, so drug abuse can and does begin at a very early age. DXM is especially risky because it is easily available in almost every home, and relatively low in cost.

Teens are particularly drawn to abusing OTC cough medicine because it is affordable, easily available and considered to be less dangerous than illicit drugs. While it is important to monitor and safeguard every type of medicine in your medicine cabinet, it is especially crucial to keep an eye out for OTC cough medicines containing DXM.

DXM is the active ingredient in cough medicine, which can currently be found in more than 100 medicines on the market. Becoming aware of which OTC medicines in your home contain DXM is the first step in preventing teen cough medicine abuse. Taking the time to safeguard these medicines is the second step.

Here are three things you can do to identify and effectively safeguard OTC medicines that contain DXM:

1. Read the Label. Medicines that contain DXM come in various forms such as liquids, capsules, gels, lozenges and tablets. If a medicine contains DXM, it will be listed on the label. Read the Drug Facts label to find out if dextromethorphan is listed under the "Active Ingredients" section. Also, be sure to look for the "Stop Medication Abuse" icon on medicine boxes and bottles as this icon serves as a DXM indicator in addition to your medicine's label. Some of the more common brands that contain DXM are Mucinex DM, Sudafed PE, Tylenol Cold & Flu, Children's Musinex, NyQuil and DayQuil, Robitussin Cold, Diabetic Tussin, Delsym and Equate Cold Multi-Symptom among many others.

2. Take inventory. In order to effectively safeguard your OTC medicines, you need to know what exactly is in your medicine cabinet. Take note of what you have and how much you have, so you will immediately know if any medicine goes missing. Make a habit of updating your medicine inventory periodically.

3. Store safely. Be sure to secure and safely store medicines that contain DXM in a place that only you can readily access. This will make monitoring your medicines much easier and your teen will have to come to you to obtain certain medications.

Most teenagers know someone who has abused OTC cough medicine to get "high," but by effectively safeguarding these medicines in your home, especially those containing DXM, you can significantly decrease your teen's likelihood of abuse.

Advice to parents is not only to watch those medicine bottles, but to watch for changes in your children. Look for changes in attitude, behavior, interest in activities, weight, sleep patterns, school performance, in the child's circle of friends. If you discover evidence of drug abuse involving DXM, it simply cannot be rationalized. Drug abuse is drug abuse. If this abuse is having an adverse effect on the life of the child or those around him or her, he or she may be a candidate for teen drug treatment.

Imagine that you have just discovered that your child is abusing over-the-counter (OTC) medication. Teen counseling experts say that you can almost guarantee your teenager is responsible for whatever it is you find, what their school says they did, or what a fellow parent insists happened or is happening. The excuses you hear are exactly that, excuses. Teenagers don't lie or dismiss our concerns because they're amoral; they lie because they want to protect us from harm and worry, and

See *Cough Syrup*, page 5A

Letters to the Editor...

Note from Mr. Crowder: Attached is a proposal to license people, not guns, that most gun owners should agree with. It says what the Supreme Court of the US has said can be done to regulate guns that will not impair the 2nd Amendment which many folks seem to think has no limitations. People need to be educated about this important subject.

License People, Not Guns

Dear Editor,

The next time someone tells you in connection with proposed gun ownership regulation, "they are after your guns" say: "Baloney!" Here's why. In DC v. Heller in 2008 the Supreme Court of the United States said "The Second Amendment protects an individual right to possess a firearm unconnected with service in a militia, and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense within the home." Your guns are safe; no one can take them away from you. However, as parents, grandparents, and members of a community we all know guns in the wrong hands are a danger to everyone, everywhere, 24/7. Most gun owners are not disturbed by the requirement for licensing for concealed carry. Why then be concerned with closing the "gun show loophole" where 40% of guns sold in America occur or private sales between gun owners? The Supreme Court in Heller also said: "... nothing in our opinion should be taken

Christmas Home

It's that time when the giving of thanks leans into the giving of Christmas. If for you that means gift-buying dread, travel concerns, or awkward parties, I'd like to offer you something that might freshen and deepen your thoughts about Christmas.

G.K. Chesterton was a dominating British writer in the early 20th century. He was a journalist, art critic, crime novelist, and defender of the Christian faith. T.S. Elliot described his poetry as "first-rate journalistic balladry" having observed a connection to common themes of life.

Among his many works we find a Christmas poem. In it, which I only excerpt below due to brevity's demands, he explores homecomings. Before reading, it helps to settle into the soft memories of your own sweet homecomings, such as that time, amidst the world's rudeness and triviality, you escaped back to family to recover some peace. It was a time of rest and a place of belonging with loved ones, good memories, and the blessing of Mom's cooking! From "The House of Christmas":

*There fared a mother driven forth, out of an inn to roam;
In the place where she was homeless, all men are at home.*

*Here we have battle and blazing eyes,
And chance and honor and high surprise,
But our homes are under miraculous skies
Where the yule tale was begun.*

*A Child in a foul stable where the beasts feed and foam,
Only where He was homeless are you and I at home.*

*To an open house in the evening, Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden and a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless and all men are at home.*

See *Fowler*, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Industry part II

Q. Is there anything else that we need to do to promote new industry in Union County?

A. Our focus has always been on attracting industry and manufacturing. It has always been difficult to attract manufacturing to our county even though we have so many things going for us. The negatives are no railroad, no interstate, no natural gas and no 4 lane connecting highways to anywhere other than Atlanta. However, we do have a good divided highway, Hwy 515, we do have an Industrial Park with space available, an airport, and we have a great quality of life. Getting that word out is the biggest need.

Q. What are the main attractions we need to come up with to find industry interested in moving to our area?

A. First, we need some additional suitable space for business to expand into. If you know someone that has the means to finance a large industrial building (30,000 sq ft to 150,000 sq ft) let us know. We certainly can try to sell it or lease it to a prospective business. Second, we need more trained workers. We are currently working with several organizations to help make this happen, but it is going to take some time. Third, we need to promote our area more aggressively so that we can attract the small to medium business entrepreneurs. While we have a great area to live in and work from, many still believe a business must be in or near a large metropolitan area.

Q. Does the county's new logo and tag line have anything to do with this process of attracting new industry?

A. It certainly does. The county, city, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Office and Downtown Development have been working together with the Carl Vincent Institute of Government coming up with a new logo and tag line for our community. Many people in the community have had input into this process which has been ongoing for the past year. That process is now complete and we are preparing for a publicity campaign for the spring and summer. It not only requires a lot of work but a lot of money. This is the important part about promoting our community and we are all working together to hopefully make the best

See *Paris*, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Twass the month before Christmas

Blairsville - Union County Chamber
Cindy Williams



By Tobie Chandler

Twass the month before Christmas, and all through the town People were shopping and running around The smart ones bought local, and others online There were some amazing hot deals from the Chamber you see Some are 50% off and some are Buy One, Get One Free!

Jingle Bell Buys runs through December 5th With 34 participating businesses, you'll get your shopping done in a jiff. On the dates of December the 4th and the 5th there is a Stop and Shop at the Civic Center that you won't want to miss.

Also that day, we are proud to say The Kris Kringle Market will be under way. From crafters and vendors and lots of live music, enjoy a s'more, see Santa, it's really therapeutic.

The trees are all decorated at the Community Center The doors are open 7 days a week so feel free to enter. The Christmas Parade is at 4 with floats, and music and more Stay for the tree on the Square to be lit and sing

See *Williams*, page 5A

Santa's Visit to the Farmers Market

Last week, when the temperatures dipped below freezing by 6 p.m., I found myself with two remote controls in hand. First, I christened the gas logs in the fireplace for this season by just pressing the "on" button. The dust burning off the log set didn't offer quite the same comforting aroma as a wood burning fire, but it radiated heat much quicker. Still looking for comfort, I decide to use the second remote to find the Holiday Music channel on my satellite television service. Johnny Mathis is in the middle of the strains of "The Christmas Song", and now I'm ready to fix some dinner.

Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



The holiday season, from Thanksgiving to New Year, brings us all different degrees of comfort. I recognize that to a few, the holidays are only a reminder of what and who they miss. If you are one of those who have a difficult time celebrating, I encourage you to start to help others find a way to celebrate. Joy is very contagious. A lifelong friend posted on her Facebook page, "be a light to an unfamiliar face this holiday season". I will grab that baton and run with it. How about you?

This Friday and Saturday, joy will be going viral at the Union County Farmers Market as we celebrate our 6th Annual Kris Kringle Market. I'm not sure where to start, but I think I want to talk to those of you who have youngsters just waiting to give Santa an earful about how good they've behaved this year.

Santa's lap and his ear will be available on Friday evening from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.. This year we have set him up by the Christmas Tree in the Food Pavilion, which is also where we'll be featuring live entertainment for all ages to enjoy. In addition for the children, we will have our Christmas Train offering free rides around the perimeter of the Market on Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. This is a hit with the kiddies every year, and you'll want to have your cameras

See *Leone*, page 5A



"Looks like I'm going to need a few more tons of coal."

A Dog's Life

Dogs have been an integral part of my life. The dog I presently call my own is a Black Lab called Jack. He thinks he is part of the family. He sleeps by the fire place. He goes hiking and even fishing with me. Why all the fuss over a dog? Two years ago Jack and I were in the woods and walked up on a sow bear with cubs. The bear charged me and Jack charged her. The bear left as quickly as she came. Jack earned his spot by my fire place.

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



About 63 years ago my grandfather bought a pair of Black and Tan coon dogs. These dogs were all around farm dogs. During the day they helped round up hogs and cattle. At night the dogs were used to hunt coons. My grandfather and his two sons enjoyed many a cool evening listening to and following "Sam and Lou" through the woods of northern Alabama.

Sometime during the summer of 1958 a panther was seen numerous times around Trapptown. Many local farms had young pigs and calves to disappear. Young parents warned their children not to wander too far from home. Papa and his two sons took to the woods on a regular basis that summer trying to catch and kill the menace that was roaming the woods. One night while hunting the bluffs and hollows of Turkey Creek my dad and Uncle Bud heard a panther scream. Next, they heard Sam and Lou open up on a hot track. The dogs trailed the animal for 30 minutes when everything went silent.

Soon, however, the quiet woods erupted with the sounds of dogs and a big cat fighting. By the time my dad and Uncle got to the dogs the cat was gone with Sam in hot pursuit. Dad found Lou at the edge of the creek. Her abdomen was split open from her sternum to her stomach. The young men carried her home and sewed up the wounds. The dog lived to a ripe old age.

Papa always lamented the fact he did not bury old "Lou" in the Coon Dog Cemetery and for a long time I thought he was pulling my leg. So, one day I just asked Papa to take me to this special cemetery. So, we loaded up in his 1967 F-100 pick-up truck and drove west of his house toward Red Bay, Alabama. A few miles before this town we turned to the north and drove into the Freedom Hills. Soon we came upon a sign entitled "Coon Dog Cemetery". We parked the truck and walked into a groomed area containing some 300 graves of man's best friend. Names, many of which I recognized, were chiseled into many of the stones. Papa recognized each name and gave me a brief description of every dog and owner.

The first we found was Creasy's Spot and by Glenn Creasy a good friend of my uncle Bud. There were other dogs listed as well with names like Preacher, Bean Blossom Bommer, Flop and many others. Any coon hunter will recognize

See *Cummings*, page 5A

to cast doubt on longstanding prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms." The solution it seems to me is to license people - owners, possessors and users of firearms and ammunition. What those licensing laws will look like is up to common sense legislation. To obtain a license one should at a minimum be required to present proof of citizenship, age, freedom from felony conviction and certification by a licensed physician of freedom from mental disability or physical disability making use of a firearm dangerous to the licensee or others. Such license would be presented to the seller at the time of purchase of any firearm or ammunition and become a matter of record as part of the sale transaction. No laws will prevent some guns getting into the wrong hands but focusing attention on the people who buy, possess or use guns and ammunition will go a long way to saving lives lost because we now have no such universal requirements; it might even save your life.

Jim Crowder

Save the Animals

Dear Editor,

As I was scrolling over my Facebook page the other day, I was saddened and brought to tears over the loss of over 37 animals at an animal shelter up North due to a fire. I was devastated by the loss of those innocent and precious little critters. Being the animal lover that I am any way and all.

I wrote to Castoff Critters as well as the Humane Society Mountain Shelter to ask if they had sprinkler systems and something like an ADT security system to detect the slightest array of fire or any thing going wrong. Castoff replied and said they did not that that would require donations, and/or some one to just do it for them.

I assume the same for the Mountain Shelter as well.

So okay, I had much rather see a wet animal, than one dead and burned up. I also don't like the idea of them having to be caged up either but I know they have to but like the fire department told me when they came to install smoke alarms the other day in our house for us, a cat will usually get frightened and run away where a dog will too but will often come back because he/she knows that is their security.

Any way...long story short...we need to get donations in, and some one to come in and install the sprinklers and some type of ADT or security system. That way the slightest thing going wrong can alert some one to respond hopefully quickly to insure the safety of the animals.

All shelters should have some type of system of this nature. They can catch fire too, be robbed, etc. just the same.

Lets get busy people! Let's help save lives even if they are animals!

Delores Barnes

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Kenneth West
Owner/Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer



Website: www.nganews.com
E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com
Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

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Phone: (706) 745-6343 Fax: (706) 745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514