

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Inhalant Abuse: Huffing, Sniffing, or Bagging?

Special to the North Georgia News
from the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition

Is your child at risk for inhalant abuse? Would you know if your teen (or pre-teen) were huffing? Inhalant abuse can be easy to conceal. Consider the telltale signs of inhalant abuse — and what you can do to prevent it. Be aware of slurred or incoherent speech, lack of coordination, confusion or irritability, paint or other stains on face, hands or clothing, chemical odors on breath or clothing, hidden rags, clothes or empty containers of products that could be abused.

Huffing is sometimes used as a generic term for any method of inhaling a chemical or aerosol, whether from a soaked rag, aerosol container or out of a bag. Many ordinary household products can serve as inhalants, including hair spray, room deodorizer, cooking spray, glue, rubber cement, correction fluid, paint thinner and gas. Huffing, sniffing or bagging causes a sense of euphoria that has a short duration. But for many kids, inhalants provide a cheap and accessible alternative to alcohol, and it might happen more often than you think. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, in the United States alone, nearly 10 percent of adolescents age 12 and older have used inhalants at some point.

What's so dangerous about a can of spray paint or deodorant? Plenty. Huffing can provide a quick high, but as harmless as it might seem to kids, the risks of huffing and other types of inhalant abuse are real, and potentially lethal. The effects of solvent intoxication can vary widely depending on the dose and what type of solvent or gas is inhaled.

It is not just the risk of injury due to dangerous behavior while they are intoxicated. The initial euphoria of huffing or sniffing may be followed by periods of headaches, nausea and vomiting, dizziness, slurred speech, and loss of coordination or inhibition. If an inhalant causes the heart to begin working too hard, a rapid, irregular heartbeat could trigger heart failure. Chronic inhalant abuse can cause serious liver and kidney damage. Permanent brain damage, hearing loss and coordination, seizures, suffocation, and loss of consciousness have been reported as well.

Discuss the risks with your children and emphasize that inhalants are deadly chemicals and not a harmless way to get high. Support your child's efforts to resist peer pressure and to make healthy choices. Parental instincts are key. If you think that your child is abusing inhalants, take action and seek professional help. Start with your child's doctor, a school counselor or a behavioral health professional.

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.

Letters to the Editor...

Social Security Issues

Dear Editor,
There is a lot of talk from presidential candidates and Speaker Ryan about Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid "entitlement" programs. Think carefully about what these programs mean and what changes could mean.

Social Security is a promise to people who contribute all their working lives that when they retire there will be a regular monthly income, or if they are disabled or die their children will be protected. While meant to be a supplement to pensions and savings Social Security has become the safety net for many people. Wage stagnation has left many people unable to fund a 401K if it is even available.

401K themselves are subject to ups and downs of the market and maybe vulnerable to predatory management fees. The number of companies offering pensions continues to decline.

Our overall economy is approximately 70% consumer driven. Social security payments make their way back into the local economy as recipients pay their bills, shop, etc. This keeps our local businesses growing and in turn hiring.

Our local hospitals and all the jobs and all things they purchase are heavily dependent on Medicare and Medicaid funding.

Healthcare especially for children is an investment in our future.

We are all beneficiaries of these programs. As with all large bureaucracies of course there is room for improvements and safeguards against fraud. However, beware the ideological drive to dismantle an integral part of the fabric of our society.

Andrea Compton
Young Harris

Clarification of Disinformation

Dear Editor,

One of your readers, William Parks, wrote a response last week to several op-eds published the week before regarding the Pastors Marriage Proclamation. Mr. Parks used the term 'religious right (wing)' and stated that Christians of that persuasion complain in a vague manner about erosion of their rights and are guilty of unfairly discriminating against the LGBT community by opposing homosexual marriage. He stated that the recent Supreme Court decision regarding homosexual marriage is a civil matter and has nothing to do with religion. He stated that America was not founded as a Christian Nation and chided 'uninformed' Christians to 'read history — and the Constitution', and, to keep their religious beliefs inside a church. And last, he stated that he is a firm believer in a 'higher power' and that he "believes in a strict interpretation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the Constitution". In short, Mr. Parks has espoused the 'progressive' party line. I vehemently disagree with Mr. Parks.

First, there is no such thing as the 'religious right'. That is a term coined by the political class for the purposes of segregation and confusion. One either believes in God and God's Commandments or does not; no left or right about it. Man cannot pick and choose which parts of God's Law he will or will not follow.

Second, there is nothing vague about the persecution of Christians and Christianity today; but only a true Christian or a true tyrant would see that. Others take no notice.

See Smith, page 5A

Ragamuffin

The movie *Ragamuffin* begins with a raspy voice declaring, "I am utterly convinced that on judgment day, the Lord Jesus will ask one question and only one question: Did you believe that I loved you?" The movie is about Rich Mullins, the Christian songwriter and artist who called himself a "ragamuffin."

Perhaps you are familiar with some of these songs composed by Mullins: "Awesome God," "Sing Your Praise to the Lord," "Step By Step," "Verge of a Miracle." You might suppose that the writer of these insightful pieces would be a person unscarred by the hardships of life. Not so.

Mullins carried some heavy baggage, not unlike the rest of us. His hurts stemmed from feeling unloved and abandoned by people near him. These wounds affected his ability to accept love, even from God. Yet he relentlessly pursued a relationship with Jesus, with as many pained steps backward as strained steps forward.

He was driving in Kansas when a friend asked to play him a tape. In a few minutes, Mullins was so moved that he pulled over to weep. It was Brennan Manning, the raspy voice. He portrayed Jesus saying, "I know your whole life story. I know every skeleton in your closet. I know every moment of sin and shame, dishonesty, degraded love that's darkened your past. I know your shallow faith, your feeble prayer life, your inconsistent discipleship. My word to you is I dare you to trust that I love you just as you are, not as you should be." Because none of us are as we should be.

Mullins later met Manning, who explained that ragamuffins "are the unsung assembly of saved sinners who are little in their own sight, aware of their brokenness, and powerless before God. A ragamuffin knows he's only a beggar at the door of God's mercy." Manning later captured his thoughts on grace in *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Mullins added the foreword to the book.

Mullins' lyrics for "Hold Me Jesus" are his honest, but hopeful testimony: Well, sometimes my life just don't make sense at all, when the mountains look so big and my faith just seems so

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Q. Are tattoo parlors allowed in Union County?

A. As long as an establishment and tattoo artist meet the requirements set forth in the ordinance they can. Everyone needs to keep in mind the regulations are strict and apply to tattoo establishments, body piercing establishments, and anyone engaging in the practice of tattooing or body piercing. These requirements and regulations are in place for the health and safety of the community as a whole.

Q. What are the requirements to open a tattoo establishment or engage in practicing tattooing?

A. There are numerous requirements which if not met, have penalties, so anyone planning to open a tattoo/body piercing establishment or practice tattooing or body piercing should read the ordinance and do their research before doing so. The most important regulation is that the individual administering the tattoo or body piercing must be a registered nurse, physician's assistant, physician, or a doctor of osteopathy. The individual also has to follow an approved exposure plan approved by the county health department.

Q. What is the penalty for administering a tattoo or opening a parlor without being in compliance with the ordinance?

A. Any person convicted of violating the provisions of the ordinance will be guilty of a misdemeanor crime. The punishment can be up to a \$1,000 fine, imprisonment for 60 days, or both.

Q. Who enforces this particular ordinance?

A. The county Board of Health or its designated representative can enforce compliance with the ordinance and the rules and regulations in it. This representative also has the right to inspect any tattooing or body piercing establishment at any reasonable time and with reasonable notice.

Q. Can I have a person come to my house from another county where tattoo parlors are approved and do a tattoo on me at my private residence?

A. No. It is illegal for anyone to perform tattoos in Union County unless they have followed all the permitting guidelines including being a registered nurse or other health care professional, and following all rules and regulations in the ordinance. Ac-

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Be a
Veterans Day
Minute Man...

...Take a minute
and say "Thanks".

Powell 2015

Thank You

Dear Editor,
This is to cordially thank all of those around Youngstown and Pleasant Hill who offered to hand out candy and let the kids go house to house, as well as the churches who gave the Trunk-or-Treat thrill. My grandkids had a blast doing this and said they know now what me and their mom & dad experienced during our childhood and growing up days.

They enjoyed it so well, they said no more "square" and "hello" to the old fashioned way!

I know many people along the way in walking door to door said the same thing as well.

You just still can't go wrong with the old fashioned way of life on some things, and those things you might as well leave alone and try not to change. The kids as well as us older ones... loved it!

Thanks to you all for still being there for us!

God Bless!
Dolores Barnes

God Bless America

Dear Editor,
The time was the 20th anniversary of Armistice Day celebrating the end of WW I. Kate Smith was looking for a song to remember veterans of that war. America was hoping that there would not be another war as hostilities and war "tensions in Europe were escalating." It was a simple plea for protection in a dark time.

Irving Berlin was a Russian born Jewish American composer and lyricist. He was widely considered one of the greatest songwriters in American history. Twenty years earlier, Berlin had written a song and had filed it away until Kate Smith's manager asked Berlin if he had a patriotic song that Kate might sing. The song was first introduced in 1938, near the end of the Depression, which had gone on for nine years.

The song was "very personal" for Berlin, for it was intended as an expression of his deep gratitude to the nation for "allowing" him, an immigrant raised in poverty, to become a successful songwriter. The lyrics *God Bless America, land that I love*, was an expression of Berlin's feeling toward the country to which "I owe what I have and what I am." It quickly became the second National Anthem after America entered World War II a few years later.

Over the decades it has earned millions for the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, of America, to whom Berlin assigned all royalties. In 1954, Berlin received a special Congressional Gold Medal from President Dwight D. Eisenhower for contributing the song.

The phrase "God Bless America" was taken from Berlin's mother. While he was growing up on the Lower East Side of New York, she would say "God Bless America" often, to indicate that, without America, her family would have had no place to go.

See Kerr, page 5A

Preacher Amos

I have always placed preachers on a higher plane than most people. Mostly, the only time I was around a preacher was at a church service. So, it was difficult for me to realize that preachers are just like the rest of us. They enjoy good food, good friends and a good laugh. This past week I went on vacation with my parents to Gulf Shores, AL. While there we went to lunch with one of my former pastors. Danny and Regina Paris met us at a place called Lamberts in Foley, AL. This restaurant is famous for "Threwed Rolls". While you are eating a waiter walks around while calling out, "hot rolls". When someone raises their hand the waiter throws a hot roll across the heads of others to the person which raised their hand. During our lunch the conversation turned to the subject of preachers we have known. Danny Paris and my father have known many preachers during their time. Finally, my father told the following story about a preacher named Amos.

Brother Amos was from over around Pikeville, TN and there was one particular fellow he had been witnessing to for quite a while. The fellow needed salvation and Brother Amos intended to make sure this person received it. The man's name was Huskey and Brother Amos and Mr. Huskey were going fishing up around Watt's Bar. The day before Brother Amos had killed a big rattlesnake and he decided to use the snake to his advantage. Early the next morning the preacher placed the snake in the floorboard of his pick-up truck and covered it up with an old newspaper. He picked up Mr. Huskey at his home before daylight and the pair headed for the lake. The road to the lake went over a mountain along a crooked road. Just after daylight the men drove around a sharp curve and that is when the fun began.

As the truck went around the curve the snake shifted and slid into the foot of Mr. Huskey. He leaned over and moved the papers to reveal an Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake. The man let out a howl that would wake the dead. Who knows why, but, instead of opening the door, Huskey rolled down the window and dove out of it while traveling down the road at 40 miles per hour. Preacher Amos just knew Huskey was dead. He pulled the truck over and ran to Huskey. Preacher Amos was afraid that he had helped Huskey to leave this world before the man received salvation. But, when he got to Huskey he found him alive and well. The preacher explained that it was all a joke and the snake was actually dead. Huskey understood and said, the next time we go fishing I will drive.

A few months later Preacher Amos was building a storage shed. It had been hot and dry that week so he had left his window down the previous night. The preacher needed some nails and as he climbed into his truck he noticed a huge

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



See Williams, page 5A

Shellacked

(This is a reprint of a column from two years ago, and is one of my favorite stories to share. I'm away from my desk this week. I'll be back next week to share with you more of my adventures.)

I'm writing today as I take some nourishment. It's a long overdue lunch consisting of 10 sesame coated almonds from Trader Joe's and a delicious apple. Well, more accurately, it is a Fuji apple that happens to be delicious. The apple says that it has been distributed by a company in Washington State, though where the distributor procured it is not addressed. My guess is, it wasn't Fuji.

I purchased a 5 lb. bag of these, so I have just a little more information about them than is divulged by that little label that is irritatingly stuck to all solo fruit. This is the label that I hope is biodegradable, because I never wash fruit, therefore, I don't usually see the label and I consume it along with the fruit's skin.

Yes, I'm slack about these things. And I know better. The small (ok, miniscule) print on the apple bag warns "May have been treated with food grade shellac based wax resin to maintain freshness." Really? Who thinks to use shellac on food? It turns out, shellac is the same ingredient that makes jelly beans and candy corn shiny and lemons look a healthy yellow.

Remember when you were fooled by the wax fruit on the dining room table at your Great Aunt Agnes's house? That probably had shellac on it too, along with two decades of dust. My mother was there to caution me against eating those, but she's not here to stop me from eating this unwashed apple.

How am I supposed to wash shellac off an apple, anyway? If you Google "hints for cleaning paint brushes covered in shellac", the experts tell you to suspend the brush in paint thinner for 24 hours. Wow, that's a whole new flavor line for Jelly Belly. It starts out tasting like toasted marshmallow, but after you remove the shellac, you now have the authentic taste of turpentine.

Maybe I'm getting bent out of shape for no reason. After all, shellac is a natural substance.

See Leone, page 5A

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