



## Your Health Matters

By Claudia Parks, R.N.



Antibiotics are fast becoming powerless against a horde of infectious diseases. You need to know when—and when NOT—to use them. How many of you have been guilty of “saving a few” (pills, capsules, liquid) of the last antibiotic prescription, so you can “have some handy” for the next time you feel like you are “coming down with something?” Or you have said, “Doc give me one of those powerful penicillin shots to knock this cold out!”

Antibiotics are the most misused medicine in America. Let me give you a little scenario, and see if it sounds familiar. Your three year old is tugging at his/her ear and crying, just as they have done in previous months and the doctor diagnosed an ear infection. So to save time, money, and the hassle of another trip to the doctor's office, you give your child a dose of the remaining pink liquid antibiotic out of the refrigerator—you have enough for two days—he/she improves—now it's the fourth day and baby is worse than

ever...so now it's back to the doctor.

Sorry, you have erred on two counts. First, you did not use up all the medication for the infection the month before. Then, giving your child the antibiotic without making sure it was needed compounded the problem. You may have unwittingly helped cause a drug-resistant ear infection, one that requires a prescription for a different antibiotic that might be capable of wiping out the more resistant bacteria.

It's this kind of misuse that's leading to a disturbing new health crisis: The emergence of tough bacterial strains that are immune to standard drugs—known as resistant strains. Among those that have public health officials alarmed are certain types of “flesh eating” strep, and bacteria that cause ear infections, TB, pneumonia, meningitis, and blood poisoning (sepsis).

A new report by the U.S. Congress's Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) calls antibiotic resistance a

major threat, stating that in the late nineties and early 21st century many diseases “are no longer treatable by antibiotics that were effective against them even a few years ago.”

Many doctors see this problem increasing from month to month. It is a very scary situation. It should be a concern of every consumer, too, since half of all antibiotics prescribed in the United States today are misused or unneeded, according to Dr. Stuart Levy, director of Tufts University's Center for Adaptation Genetics and Drug Resistance, in Boston. According to Dr. Levy, doctors too often prescribe them for viral infections, which antibiotics are useless against. (Some doctors defend this practice by saying they can't justify the use of a culture & sensitivity to confirm a bacterial infection and to see which antibiotic will work the best, since the test can often cost more than the antibiotic, take several days for results or the patient's insurance will not pay.) Patients play a role, too, by pressuring doctors to give them antibiotics.

Many of you can remember the introduction of penicillin in the 40s and 30 years later its derivative, ampicillin—they were known as “wonder drugs,” and became some of the most widely prescribed medications in the world. The trouble is that even the best antibiotics can't kill every single bacteri-

um. Adding to the crisis is a dearth of new antibiotics. Until the mid-eighties, development of new drugs had lagged for about a decade because of the mistaken impression that there were enough effective antibiotics. It is estimated that \$300 million is needed to develop and bring a new pill to market. I hate to even think about how much we will pay for any new antibiotics! (We have called them “wonder drugs”—but now it's because “we wonder how we are going to pay for them!”)

What can we do? If you get sick, don't self-medicate with antibiotics and don't pressure your doctor to prescribe them needlessly. For some infections, most notably strep throat and urinary tract infection, you should insist on getting a culture & sensitivity to confirm the diagnosis and determine the best antibiotic to treat the specific bacteria—discuss with your doctor.

Don't stop taking antibiotics if your symptoms let up. Complete the medicine as prescribed. Don't save leftover pills for future use. We've all got to work together on this problem—to protect our future from those “evil bugs” that we can't see!

Claudia Parks, RN, is a former doctor's office and emergency room nurse and retired as an educator from Fulton County Schools. She writes *Your Health Matters* as a public service; the information here is designed to help you make informed choices about your health. It is not intended as a substitute for the advice of your physician. Claudia and her husband make their home in the beautiful north Georgia Mountains, near Blairsville. Claudia can be reached at yhm@windstream.net

# Blue Ridge Grass in concert

The Blue Ridge Grass will perform at The Old Courthouse on the Square at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, September 15. Blue Ridge Grass is one of the busiest bands in the tri-state area, and we are happy to garner some of their time for a concert at The Old Courthouse.

The Blue Ridge Grass is a popular band based in Blue Ridge, Georgia. The band has been playing traditional bluegrass music for several years in Georgia and Tennessee. While the members describe their music as traditional bluegrass, they are reminiscent of the cutting edge bluegrass band of a few years ago, The New South.

Ray Ritchie, spokesman

and guitar player, is widely noted for his smooth lead guitar solos as well as his solid rhythm. Roger Watson plays bass, and John Watson (no relation to Roger) plays mandolin. Jamie Mason plays banjo. Greg Brooks plays fiddle.

The Union County Historical Society is happy to have The Blue Ridge Grass perform in the Summer Concert Series. There is no required admission charge to the concerts. The musicians donate their time and talents. The concerts are presented by the Historical Society as a public service and to keep alive the tradition of music in The Old Courthouse.

# Unaka artists to display work at festival

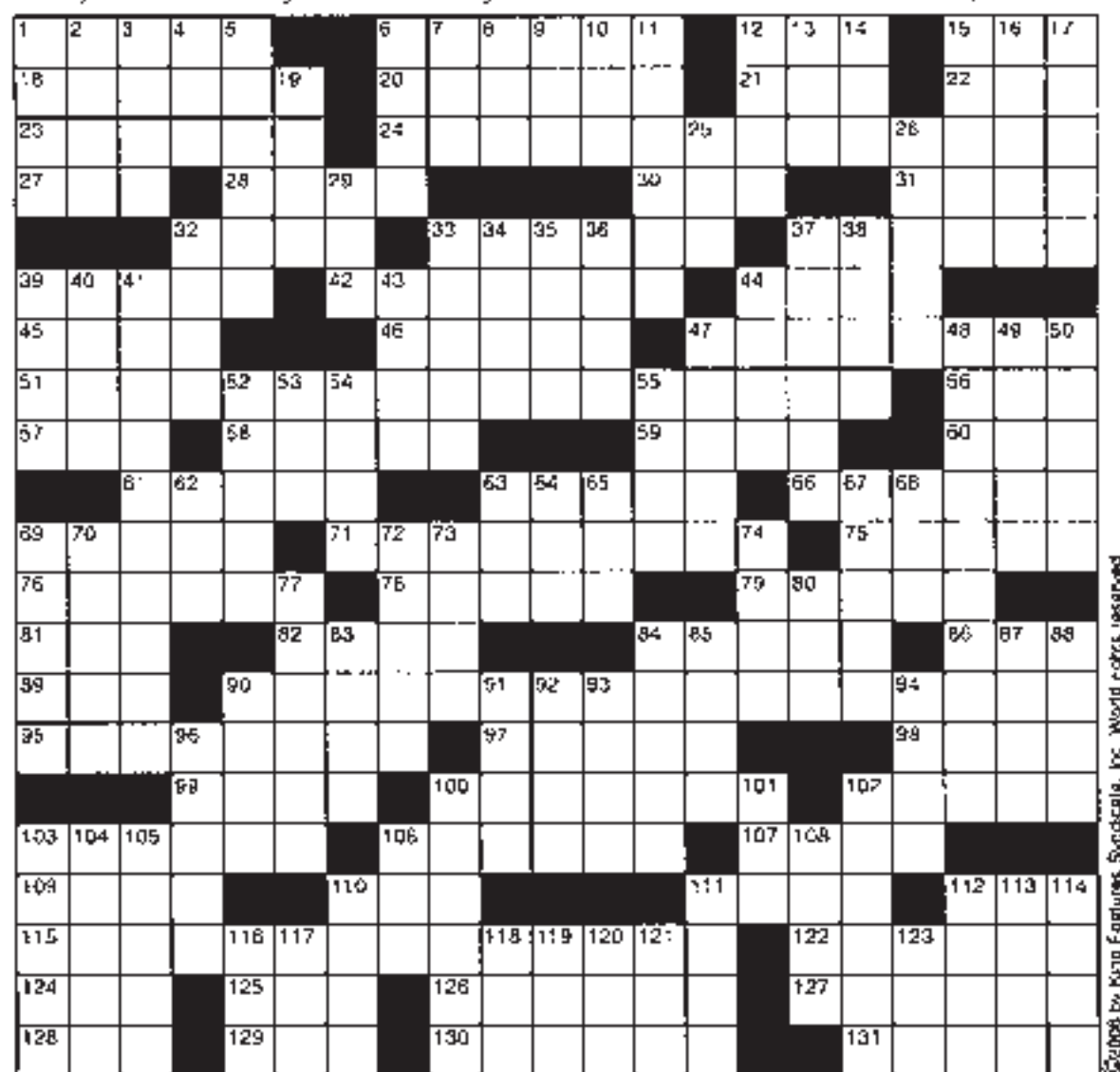


Helen Harris' sculpture and Pattie Gilley's paintings will be featured along with 45 other award winning artists from across the country at the upcoming Wildlife & Nature art festival of North Georgia, the event will be held in City Park in downtown Blue Ridge, Ga. Saturday, Sept. 16 10:00 a.m. to

5:00p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 17th 12 noon to 5:00 p.m. Both Harris; an dGilley's work can be seen locally at their studios in Unaka. For details, call Harris at 837-33856 or email fernhollow@webworkz.com. Gilley may be reached at 837-2563 or email at countrypaint@webworkz.com.

## Super Crossword YULE HOG

- |                            |                                |                              |                              |                               |                            |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>              | 57 Turkish title               | 107 Obote's ouster           | 9 One — custom               | 48 SAT part                   | 90 Decree                  |
| 1 Los — CA                 | 58 Indo-European               | 109 European capital         | 10 Charleson or Carmichael   | 49 Wooden shoe                | 91 “— fixe”                |
| 8 Shake-speara hercena     | 59 Pro toe                     | 110 JFK abbr.                | 11 Storm                     | 50 Lucas critics              | 92 Nothing in Navarra      |
| 12 “— Babou” (’65 film)    | 60 Cable channel               | 111 Candid                   | 12 Cryptanalyst's concern    | 52 Phyllis dely               | 93 Colors                  |
| 15 Esabe                   | 61 “Love Story” author         | 112 Burglarize               | 13 Impress                   | 53 Precambrian                | 94 Neighbor of Pakistan    |
| 18 ‘01 Audrey Tautou film  | 62 Boston                      | 115 Answer to riddle         | 14 RN's specialty            | 54 Auel heroine               | 96 Comic Leon              |
| 20 Drifting                | 66 “— of the North” (’22 film) | 122 Where to find a fennec   | 15 ‘78 Peace Nobel           | 55 Light wagon or             | 100 Chocolate strawberry   |
| 21 Ho gives a pool         | 69 Scotch                      | 124 Delivery truck           | 16 Glass work                | 62 Maestro de Wbart           | 101 Drink like a dachshund |
| 22 “Tarzan” extra          | 71 Ornamental material         | 125 Help                     | 17 Piano part                | 63 Vagoda or Fortas           | 102 It may be grand        |
| 23 Let up                  | 75 Sheds                       | 126 Rocco                    | 19 Short jacket              | 64 Witty one                  | 103 White wine             |
| 24 Riddle: Part 1          | 76 Cashew kin                  | 127 Dieter's portion         | 25 Rhine wine                | 65 Botanist Gray              | 104 “Fie!”                 |
| 27 Fashion monogram        | 78 Alpha opposia               | 128 Meadow mama              | 26 Harden                    | 67 Correct                    | 105 Isolated               |
| 28 Beethoven's birthplace  | 79 It multiples by dividing    | 129 Snook a peek             | 29 Apprehend                 | 68 British big shot           | 106 School crp             |
| 30 Highest card            | 81 Runner: Sebastian           | 130 Shows one's feelings     | 32 Actress Moore             | 69 Tropica screechor          | 108 Cultor                 |
| 31 Japanese city           | 82 Choir member                | 131 Author Zola              | 33 Part of HOMES             | 70 Actress Mastey             | 110 Guitarist Duane        |
| 32 Ashbrook or Carvey      | 84 Tennyson's “Enoch —”        |                              | 34 “Yeah, sure!”             | 72 Government game            | 111 Singles                |
| 33 “Taxi” star             | 86 Houston or Huff             | <b>DOWN</b>                  | 35 Tahoe town                | 73 Owl of control             | 112 Silant                 |
| 37 Savage                  | 89 — Arbo: MI                  | 1 Player or Puckett          | 36 Inquiry after-effect      | 74 Pianist Lupu               | 113 Shankar                |
| 39 Throbbcd                | 90 Riddle: Part 3              | 2 Leon of “Misic: Ed”        | 37 “Whie Christmas” composer | 77 Snowy flower               | 114 Unadorned              |
| 42 Jazzman Dave            | 95 ‘74 Abba hit                | 3 Revol                      | 38 Fad                       | 80 With 121 Down: Iamad Giant | 116 Singing syllables      |
| 44 Compo component         | 97 Moshe of Israel             | 4 Barcelona bravo            | 39 Movie mut                 | 83 Vieniane's nation          | 117 Shnil sound            |
| 45 Word with dance or dunk | 98 Arexy Jacob                 | 5 Seafang storyteller        | 40 Dra n problem             | 84 Mindul                     | 118 High dudgcon           |
| 46 Conflict site           | 100 Part of FBI                | 6 Pesiferous person          | 41 Aggravation               | 85 Barratt or Jaffe           | 119 Genetic letters        |
| 47 Generosity              | 102 Sapphire surface           | 7 Mistaken                   | 43 Sila's spouse             | 87 Competent                  | 120 Cul-de—                |
| 51 Fiddle: Part 2          | 103 Lysander's homo            | 8 “Treasure Island” monogram | 44 Covenant                  | 88 TV's “— the Press”         | 121 See 80 Down            |
| 56 Cornie J cry            | 106 Oaligh:                    |                              | 47 Pianist Paul              |                               | 123 “Run lo —” (’61 hit)   |



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