

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Dog Soldiers

No! Really four legged dogs, "man's best friends!" This true story, not a Disney fantasy, might explain why so many Veterans come home from combat or other military service to our nation, just plain out LOVE their dogs, me included! Read on for a very interesting story of Judy, the dog:

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran

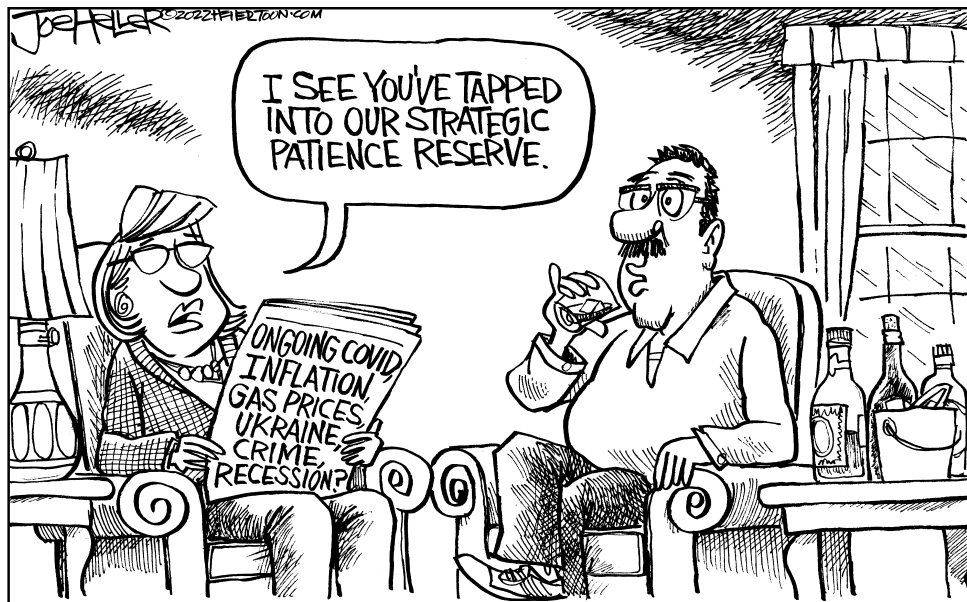


Judy was a pre-war puppy, born in Indonesia, February, 1936, and adopted by our Allies the British sailors, and became the only animal imprisoned as a POW. She was a white English pointer who wandered aboard a British Royal Navy ship in Shanghai and purchased by Lt. Commander J. Waldergrave. Initially named "Shudi", she was then crowned as "Judy of Sussex". She became a beloved crew member of the HMS Gnat, during a very precarious era, as WWII was threatening our world's freedom. Judy possessed an ability to sense danger, alerted the crew to incoming enemy aircraft and once awakened her peers from sleep as pirates tried to board their ship. An American gunboat tried to dog-nap her once and in 1938 she produced a litter of 13 puppies. Judy also survived a crocodile attack and abandoning ship.

After being transferred along with her crew to the HNS Grasshopper, their 585 ton gunboat headed for Singapore. Japan invaded in January, 1942 and Judy and her crew headed for the Dutch Indies, but were bombed by the Japs in the South China Sea. Judy and her surviving crew members were marooned on an island. There, Judy located a fresh water spring for them all, then found a Chinese sailboat they took upriver to Sumatra. Where they were then captured as prisoners. Judy had to be hidden under sacks of rice, as our Allied sailors knew the Japs would shoot and kill her. Frank Williams, a leading aircraftman won her over when he fed her his entire bowl of rice, resulting with her snarling at the guards who beat him. Williams, aware the Japs were going to kill their dog, had a plan! He waited till the camp's commander got drunk, as usual in the evening, THEN convinced him to grant Judy official POW 81A status to keep her from being killed. Judy became the only animal to become a POW, her presence and wagging tail giving those men encouragement and her loving look keeping them alive.

In June 1944 they were all transferred to the Japanese "Harukiki Maru" and were torpedoed on June 26. Williams again saved Judy by shoving her out of a porthole. Judy helped save many men by taking them to floating debris. Sadly they were again found by the Japs and transferred to another POW camp until the war ended in 1945. Williams and Judy remained together after the war, and in May, 1946 Judy was given the Dickin Medal of Valor. Sadly Judy died of cancer at age 13 in 1950 and like many, MANY military men and women who have served and known the bravery and selflessness of their companion dogs, Judy's legacy lives on forevermore.

Never forget ANY of those who have done so much for you and me! -*Semper Paratus*



Unclean! Unclean!

And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean." Leviticus 13:45 KJV

She had a cough that lingered. It wasn't unlike the "grunge" that often plagues our area during the winter months, one of the many long suffering respiratory ailments almost forgotten when Covid took the stage. She took the Covid test and then took it again, and the results were negative both times.

Over time the cough got worse and it was harder to breathe. She took the Covid test for the third time and once again, it was negative. Then she called her doctor and her husband drove her the hour trip for her appointment. A nurse asked her the now standard list of questions about the plague symptoms and she said, "I do have a cough. I've had it for several weeks, and I'm tired all the time." The nurse said, "I'm sorry but you're going to have to go outside, right now."

"But I've just taken the Covid test, three times, and the results were negative. I've never had a fever or any other symptoms." The nurse responded, "I'm sorry, but you've got two symptoms. Call us again in about a week and we'll setup another appointment."

There was no effort to further assess her condition. No guidance was given. She was summarily dismissed with an almost hostile glare that evoked ancestral memories of lepers driven outside the city walls to cry "Unclean!" should anyone approach.

After a week or so she called her doctor again and said, "Look, I don't have Covid. I've taken the test 3 times in the last 2 weeks and the results have all been negative. I have asthma - just look at my medical history. I need you to help me figure out why it's getting harder to breathe and I'm still coughing."

On the day of her appointment, she took the Covid test for the fourth time, and this was the government issued test that came in the mail. The results were negative. When she got to the doctor's office the nurse told her, "I'm sorry, but your appointment was for a tele-health visit." "But I just drove an hour to get here. No one told me this was an online visit." "I'm sorry, but you've still got two Covid symptoms and you'll have to go back outside, but you can come back at 4 o'clock this afternoon for our sick clinic."

"That's another two hours of driving, and I'm already tired." "I'm sorry," the nurse said.

She sat in her car and cried. While she was in the parking lot, another nurse dialled the wrong number and called her home phone an hour away. Her husband answered. The nurse said, "Would you like to schedule a visit to our clinic this afternoon for your wife?" "Ah...she's sitting in your parking lot right now." "We can't see her in person. She's got two of the Covid symptoms." "She's taken the test 4 times, all negative." "I'm sorry but we don't accept those tests. She'll have to take a PCR test." "We don't know what that is, but go ahead and give her one." "We don't administer those tests." "Then where can she get one?" "You can go online and find a testing location."

A few days later she went to the special "sick clinic." She walked into a room and someone yelled through a small opening for her to stand in the middle of the floor. It was hard to hear over the roar of some kind of air moving equipment. The room was cold. There was an elderly lady standing ahead of her at a distance who said, "I've been standing here for 20 minutes. I'm tired and I'm freezing to death."

Eventually a nurse came out in full "space suit" gear and took her vitals, listened to her breathe through a stethoscope. She yelled some numbers through a little opening to another nurse on the other side of the wall. They prescribed antibiotics and an inhaler. "Next."

Never be afraid to fire your doctor. Her next one wore a mask, not a space suit, and said, "You've had these symptoms so long that a PCR test wouldn't tell us anything." Within the first 5 minutes of the visit, the doctor put a pulse oximeter on her finger and saw immediately that not enough oxygen was making it into the bloodstream. Forty five minutes later she was in the ER and the next day she had emergency surgery to remove an obstruction that was beginning to collapse her right lung. She woke up the next day in ICU on oxygen with a ventilator. She came that close to losing her life but for the prayers of her supporters and those remaining angels of mercy unbroken by the plague.

In case you were wondering, she is now recovering rapidly and getting stronger every day, and with gratitude we acknowledge that in order to work long in the medical profession, you must have a calling. Even without the plague, the pressures on the medical community are enormous.

When you add the additional pressures of Covid-19, the fear festival of corporate media, the fear mongering of the political class and the overwhelming numbers of sick people added to the burden, the damage to our healthcare system and it's workers has been widespread. Some who were once healers are now just employees. You can see the exhaustion in their eyes, the anger and the despair. The woman in our story this week had the misfortune of choosing a practice where the pressures of pandemic had precipitated fear and resentment of the very patients they were meant to help.

Some have left the profession, either temporarily to recover from the stress, or permanently. I've heard stories of staff who were forced to work over 90 hours a week for a hospital corporation which played the victim of rising costs and being understaffed - but somehow managed to report record profits.

You can see it in their eyes, and it looks a lot like what you see in the eyes of veterans returning from war. Some will be bent; some broken. But many who survive the trial by fire grow stronger in the process. They are still out there in our hospitals and clinics, angels of mercy, with an attitude. Thank God for that.

Outside The Box
 By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Snakes

As the temperatures continue to rise, plants are blooming, leaves are expanding, and life is rustling in woods again.

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Some of the life includes snakes. I've already heard a few stories of encounters that people have had with snakes early this spring. Snakes are a natural part of the landscape that we're going to have to learn to live with. So, it's not going to be possible to completely eliminate all encounters with them. There are some things that you can do to make those encounters less frequent and safer for you and the snake.

Most of the snakes that live in Georgia are non-venomous. There are 46 species of snakes in Georgia of which 6 are venomous. Of those 6,

we have 2 of them in Union and Towns counties. Copperhead and Timber Rattlesnake are the 2 that we have in our area.

Copperheads can grow to be 4.5 feet long. They are usually light brown with dark brown hourglass shapes on the back. The narrow part of the hourglass is along the spine with the wide base on either side. They are mostly found in forested areas. They like spots with logs, leaf, and rocks for cover. They are capable of living in suburban areas with people around.

Timber Rattlesnakes can grow to be about 5 feet long. They have a color range from yellow to black. Their backs are covered in brown or black chevron shaped crossbands. They like to live along wooded streambanks. They like old debris piles, old burrows and rock crevices. They will also have the iconic rattle on the end of their tail.

Most people will talk about being able to tell if a snake is venomous from looking at the shape of its head. Generally speaking, venomous snakes will have a triangular shaped head. However, this can be difficult to determine in the wild without getting close and handling the snake, which is never advised. Non-venomous snakes can flatten their heads and appear to have more triangular heads too. Some of the markings on non-venomous snakes can be confused with copperheads.

To lessen the chance of having snakes around your home make sure that your dryer vent is covered with a screen to prevent snakes from wandering inside. Remove piles of debris, leaf piles, or wood piles, because those create habitats for snakes. Thick ground cover like tall grass or ivy can create hiding spots for snakes or the rodents, frogs, and insects that snakes like to eat. Keeping the space around your house clear will decrease the likelihood of a snake being present.

Most of the time people are bitten when they try to kill a snake. Non-venomous snakes are protected by state law. If you are bitten 1) stay calm; 2) Get competent medical help as quickly as possible; 3) Keep the affected limb level with the body; 4) Do not cut, suck, or apply ice or a tourniquet to the wound. Wear closed toed shoes when walking in areas where snakes might be present.

There are no chemical poisons or effective repellents for snakes. Mothballs are not registered for use as snake repellent. They also can't hear, so any kind of repellent that uses sound isn't going to work. Make sure that the area around your house is kept clear and your house is sealed to that snakes can't enter your home.

If you have any questions about snakes please contact your local Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Habitat for Humanity

Last month alone, on average our volunteers donated 206 hours of their time to our organization, helping in our ReStore. We are so thankful for their time, their friendship, and their dedication in seeing our organization succeed.

Habitat Happenings
Madelyn Bailey



We decided to create an event that allows us to give back to them. On May 2nd we will be hosting here at Habitat for Humanity of Towns/Union Counties, a Volunteer Appreciation/Recruitment Day! All are welcome as we celebrate our volunteers and the impact they have on our community. Between 10am-2pm, in the parking lot of Habitat, at 225 Wellborn St. Blairsville, we will have live music, silent auction to raise money for Habitat, and door prizes and giveaways for volunteers. We will also have information on our Helping Hands projects, our ReStore, and a sign-up sheet for those interested in volunteering!

In addition, we are proud to see local businesses come together for this event as they have offered to donate gift cards, gift baskets, and items of their trade to give away as prizes for volunteers! We have several local vendors coming to the event to share their items and advertise their businesses as well! If you are a local business and would like to take part in this event or donate items to give to volunteers, please contact us at 706-745-7101 and ask for myself! We would love to make this event a massive blessing to our volunteers, and with the support of local businesses we can do just that.

Did I mention there will also be food at this event? We will have hot dogs, and Papa John's of Blairsville has generously offered to donate pizza for the event! This community is so incredible, and we are thankful to see support for events like this one that honor those that give of their time freely and work diligently for our mission, through Helping Hands Projects, and the ReStore.

Please save the date and join us for a fun filled event, with community engagement, delicious food, live music, and opportunity to find out more about what we do and how you can get involved. We are so excited to see you there!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

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 P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546
 Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

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Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

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