Beaumont trauma surgeon to compete on reality show

By Kevin King
Staff Writer

This summer, Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson is going to challenge a diverse group of nine individuals to face extraordinary situations and see who can emerge as the ultimate champion in TNT’s new competition series “The Hero.” Dr. Dave Parkus, a board certified trauma surgeon at Christus Hospital – St. Elizabeth in Beaumont and director of its Trauma Center, is one of those nine.

Parkus doesn’t need the notoriety of a television show to be seen as a hero. In 2002, he risked his own life helping law enforcement officials tackle a terrorist in the Los Angeles International Airport. And that’s not to mention what he does every day at St. Elizabeth’s Trauma Center — saving patients from life threatening injuries caused by motor vehicle accidents, stabblings, gunshot wounds and falls. He also has a general surgery practice, Surgical Critical Care Associates, where he performs surgical procedures in the abdomen such as cholecystectomies, appendectomies, bowel resections, hernia repairs, and colon and breast cancer surgery. Parkus even performed surgery on his own mother, who was suffering from lung cancer.

“During the middle of the surgery I looked down, and there was my mom’s heart,” he said. “I put my hand on my mom’s heart. Who can say they actually touched their mom’s heart?”

“The Hero” isn’t the first reality TV show that Parkus has tried out for. Parkus said he also tried out for “Big Brother,” but didn’t make the cut. Three years later, Parkus said he endured a rough time in his life that included a torn rotator cup, a nerve entrapment, a blown knee and a pinched nerve — all of which resulted in four surgeries.

“It was just a really rough time for me,” he said. “I got out of shape.”

Parkus’ luck changed, however, when he received a phone call from casting producer Bonnie Clark, whom he’d met while trying out for “Big Brother.” Clark was producing a new TNT show, “The Hero.”

“She said, ‘We’re doing a new TV show with Dwayne Johnson, and we think you’d be perfect for it,’” Parkus said. “They flew me up to Dallas, and I did a video audition and sent it to TNT. They said I killed it.”

But the challenge had just begun for the 50-year-old trauma surgeon, who had four months to prepare for the show.

“I started really training hard — swimming 50 laps a
day, running every day. I got my weight back down. I need goals, and this came at a perfect time for me,” he explained.

Parkus endured several tests and auditions to see if he was physically and mentally able to make the cast. Out of several thousand people, he was chosen.

“The next month I was in Panama filming the show with Dwayne Johnson,” he said. “It’s been a really crazy ride the last couple of months. It’s been surreal.”

Parkus said the show is similar to “Real World” in that he and eight other contestants are stuck in a house together and not allowed to leave.

“It’s like a psychological fishbowl. Every room has a camera,” he said. “We’re wired 24/7. They give us these clues, and we go out on what are called ‘team challenges.’ If we win the team challenge in the time that’s allotted, then we win 10, 20 or 30 thousand dollars for charity.”

The next stage, following the team challenge, is called the ‘hero challenge,’” Parkus said.

“It’s a huge epic challenge that’s done by one person,” he said. “Out of the people that win the group (challenge), the house votes on who gets to be the hero.”

The person voted to participate in the hero challenge has a to win from $50,000 to $100,000 thousand, according to Parkus.

“You can keep the money or you can add it to a pot of money,” he said. “As the show goes on, the pot builds up. Some people keep the money; some people don’t. There are consequences if you keep the money, and other people offer temptations to screw other people over.”

With temptations around every corner, viewers get to see what the contestants are willing to overcome, undergo, and sacrifice on behalf of themselves and others. To keep the audience up to date, the show will incorporate social media throughout, according to a TNT press release.

“Through the series’ unique and interactive digital platform, viewers will be able to engage with the show and one another, ultimately playing an important part in the outcome and helping to define what it means to be a true hero. In the end, it’s America’s call on who will be ‘The Hero.’”

The competition includes almost every single phobia one can imagine, Parkus said.

“Claustrophobia, darkness, spiders, snakes, heights, ocean, jungle, tear gas, bees … whatever you could imagine, they throw at us,” he said. “But, there’s no way I’m gonna wimp out with America watching. There’s a million dollars up for grabs.”

Parkus, who said he believes his chances of winning are good, said the show appealed to his drive for life.

“I’m an adrenaline junkie; that’s why I chose trauma and critical care as a profession,” he said. “It’s exciting, life or death. Trauma is about taking care of the sickest of the sick and giving them the best possible chance for recovery. Being on a reality show was less stressful than my real life.”

Parkus, who enjoys rappelling, scuba diving with sharks, snow skiing and marathons in his spare time, grew up in California, where he was captain of Long Beach State’s college football team. He earned his medical degree at Emory University School of Medicine. He completed his residency at University of South Florida College of Medicine and his fellowship at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

In 1997, Parkus began serving the trauma, critical care and general surgery needs of the Beaumont area.

“They wanted to build a trauma center and they were looking for a trauma director,” he said. “I built a trauma center from the ground up. It was the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done in my life.

Parkus said he would be attending a premiere party for the show at Madi- sons, 4020 Dowlen Road in Beaumont, on June 6 at 7 p.m. The show will air at the bar and grill every Thursday through July at 7 p.m. on TNT.

For more information about the show, go to www.theroitt.com. For more information about Dr. Parkus and the Christus Hospital – St. Elizabeth trauma team, go to www.christushospit al.org/criticalcare.

Kevin King can be reached at (409) 832-1400, ext. 225, or by e-mail at kevin@the-examiner.com.
Jefferson County Relay for Life team raises more than $32,000

By Kevin King
Staff Writer

If reaching its 100th birthday wasn’t enough reason to celebrate, American Cancer Society (ACS) has even more cause to commemorate the occasion. The Beaumont Relay for Life event, held May 3 at Ozen High School raised more than $150,000 total, with Relay for Life team Survivor Jefferson County alone raising $32,096 for ACS.

The team is comprised of members that work in the Jefferson County Clerk’s Office, including Jamie Smith, who is office administrator and also serves as Beaumont City Councilmember for Ward IV.

“The cause is important,” Smith said. “Hopefully this hard work will get enough funds together so they’ll be able to fight cancer, eradicate it and save lives.”

Smith, who has participated in the relay for five years, said he knows first hand how cancer affects families, as his grandfather lost a battle with the disease. Smith said he is proud to be a part of the team.

“It’s always good to be part of something that is special like that to try and fight cancer,” he said.

Desirre Dickenson, Beaumont Relay for Life Co-chair, presented Smith and his fellow team members with a trophy as the top fundraising team. The team won the 2012 trophy as well.

“The money raised goes so far to help people get services that they would otherwise not have access to,” Dickenson said. “I think Councilman Smith does it out of the goodness of his heart, and he believes in the work that we’re doing.”

County Clerk Carolyn Guidry said her employees’ efforts included bake sales, a bowling tournament, a zumba event, a golf tournament, a

American Cancer Society celebrates 100th birthday

On May 21, relayers, service volunteers, cancer survivors and loved-ones of cancer victims alike gathered at the ACS office in Beaumont to commemorate ACS’s 100th birthday and to commemorate struggles lost and battles won. To celebrate ACS’s 100th birthday, each participant was given a birthday card and encouraged to honor a cancer survivor or victim by writing his or her name on the card and pinning it on a cancer ribbon-shaped board.

One of the participants was Mary Wilson, a member of Beaumont’s Alpha Omega Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first Greek-lettered organization for African-American women. Wilson pinned a card on the board in honor of her Greek sisters who survived cancer and in memory of those who died. She wrote her grandfather’s name, Willie Johnson, on the card as well. Johnson, who Wilson helped care for during his last days of life, lost a battle with cancer in 1972.

“Those of us who have not had to struggle with the condition of cancer … it opened our eyes to a (new) world,” she said. “It’s one where you have to keep your mind on your recovery, your wellness and your wholeness. It’s a morning-to-night mindset of, ‘We’re going to overcome.’”

Participants were also given Chinese lanterns in honor of loved ones. The wind didn’t cooperate with the release, however, and only a couple of lanterns actually took flight.

“The wind’s too strong,” said Robert Dickenson, online chair for Beaumont Relay for Life. “You just can’t do them if it’s too windy. It’s got to be a calm, peaceful night.”

Dickenson said that the thought was what was important.

— Kevin King

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As the flagship sedan of the Lexus brand, the LS 460 is exceptional when it comes to elegance and style.

While retaining many of the qualities that have defined Lexus for more than 20 years, the LS reaches new heights in 2013 with an exciting blend of beautiful design, modern refinement and superior craftsmanship.

Elegant comfort
Inside, the LS 460 integrates modern refinement with intuitive technology. For example, the Advanced Illumination System (AIS), an all-LED interior lighting system, illuminates to greet the approaching occupants and then fades in sequence with the vehicle starting procedure.

Additionally, the LS features a standard Lexus Premium Audio System with a nine-channel amplifier, 10 speakers, MP3 sound enhancement, HD Radio, a three-month trial subscription to SiriusXM Satellite Radio and more.

The optional Mark Levinson Reference Surround System provides a 5.1 home theatre surround with 7.1 architecture, 15 channel, ML3-16 Processor Power Amplifier covering a frequency range of 20Hz-20kHz, and 450 watts with less than 0.1 percent Total Harmonic Distortion (THD).

On the outside, from every angle, the LS 460 is an attractive sedan.

From every angle, the Lexus LS 460 is an attractive sedan.

The stylish LS 460 interior is offered in five color schemes: Ivory, Light Gray, Black, Black and Saddle Tan, and a newly available Topaz Brown. Optional wood trim includes Walnut, Shimamoku Espresso, Matte Brown Bird’s Eye Maple.

Interestingly, the aforementioned Shimamoku finish is an example of fine traditional Japanese craftsmanship. Shimamoku, translated as “striped wood,” involves the layering of angle-cut dark and light shaded wood veneers in a unique process, which involves 67 manufacturing steps over the course of 38 days.

Powertrain
The Lexus LS 460 is equipped with a 4.6L V8 engine that produces 386 horsepower and 367 lb-ft of torque for RWD models and 360 horsepower and 347 foot-pounds of torque for AWD models.

Fuel economy ratings are 16 mpg in the city, 24 mpg on the highway and 19 mpg combined for RWD models and 16 mpg in the city, 23 mpg on the highway and 18 mpg combined for AWD models.

To learn more about Lexus’ flagship sedan, visit www.lexus.com.
concession stand at Ford Park and a fundraising tree in the office.

“I’m glad to see my office take part in such a worthy cause,” Guidry said. “I’m so very proud of them for taking such an active role. It’s giving back to the community and outside of the community as well because it just reaches out and touches so many people. If you’ve ever had a loved one who had cancer, you know what it is (like) to go through the process of chemo and radiation treatment. It’s good to have a support system.”

Guidry said her office plans to continue to take part in Relay for Life in the future.

“I hope we can continue to stay involved,” she said. “As long as I’m here, I certainly intend to stay active in the process as long as the office wants to continue to support it.”

The funds raised by Relay for Life not only go toward cancer research but also help honor survivors of the disease, Dickenson said.

“What is so awesome about Relay is that it’s to honor our survivors,” she said. “We’re honoring them because they’re alive. This gives us hope that the work that we are doing is worth something.”

According to Relay for Life’s website, more than 5,200 communities in 20 different countries take part in Relay For Life, which is the signature fundraiser for ACS. For more information, visit www.relayforlife.org.

Barrington Heights... An Entrance to Remember

maintaining more than 13,000 short-term bank accounts the government owns but which have no money in them and never again will. Closing the accounts is easier said than done, according to the watchdog Citizens Against Government Waste, because the accounts each housed separate government grants, and Congress has required that, before the accounts are closed, the grants must be formally audited — something bureaucrats are rarely motivated to do, at least within the 180 days set by law (though there is no penalty for missing the deadline).

* It’s good to be the county administrator of Alameda County, Calif. (on San Francisco Bay, south of Oakland). The San Francisco Chronicle revealed in March that somehow, Susan Muranishi negotiated a contract that pays her $301,000 a year, plus “equity pay” of $24,000 a year so that she makes at least 10 percent more than the next highest
After a visit south of the border, my eyes were opened to the infinite possibilities of container gardening. Hanging baskets, pots, unique items used as pots, and containers brimming with flowers spilling down from walls have enormous potential for brightening up your outdoor spaces. Containers with annuals or perennials lead your eye where you want it to go. They can be used not only to dress up the front door but also add interest to any place along a home’s facade. An exciting container can keep the eye from noticing flaws in the home or yard. A stellar container with eye-catching contents can lead you down a path into another part of the yard.

Potted plant rules are few. Plant like plants together. Plants needing full sun won’t do well with shade lovers. Water frequently because most container plantings dry out quickly, especially those in terra cotta planters. Feed the container plants because they don’t “eat” or bloom well if you don’t give them some blooming fertilizer food. A 15-30-15 boost each week or every other week is a good idea. Make sure your container offers drainage. Most plants do not like to be mired down in swampy soil. Pack in smaller plants only, allowing room for roots to grow. Be generous.

You can think of plants grown in containers, whether annual or perennial, as short term, seasonal plantings. But lots of places in the world expand on that vision. Why not a more permanent planting in a container? Trees grown in large containers are super chic. A double row of terra cotta pots filled with boxwoods lining a small patio or courtyard as you would in-ground shrubs is super chic.

Some offbeat containers are old bathtubs, tin cans, a lined old wicker laundry basket, a hanging shoe organizer (for small veggies?), and an old shoe or rain boot with drainage holes drilled. Make a walled circle out of old bricks you may have around and you have a space to fill with soil and garden. Some hardcore recyclers turn used mesh produce bags into hanging planters. You may choose to go a tad more traditional with terra cotta or other commercially available pots.

Some gardeners like to mix multi-color varieties in one container, but lots of professionals stick to a mass planting of exactly the same plant or color in each pot. Make your potted vision large or small. Make it all green or colorful. You are the artist. Just like the painter with brush and watercolors, you are creating a 3-D “paintinga” with flowers and greenery.

As a side note, Jefferson County Master Gardeners would like to thank the community for its support in the annual Spring Plant Sale at the Jefferson County airport. With their hard work and the support of gardeners just like you, they raised considerable funds to keep teaching, training and learning about gardening in our community. For information on becoming a master gardener, call Texas Agri-Life at (409) 835-8461. Ask for Peggy or master gardener and president Jackie Steen.

Joette is an avid gardener and prides herself on staying up-to-date on the latest gardening activities and tips. To share your gardening news with Joette, call (409) 832-1400 or fax her at (409) 832-6222. Her e-mail is joreger@msn.com.
Expert Advice

Professional answers to often-asked questions

Q. When to Remove Wisdom Teeth?
A. People between the ages of 16 and 19 should have their wisdom teeth evaluated. If they need to be removed, it should be considered before age 20 when generally fewer complications occur. At a younger age, both roots are not fully developed, the surrounding bone is softer and there is less chance of damaging nearby nerves or other structures. There is also less surgical risk and healing is generally faster.

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Q. Are Cockroaches Omnivorous?
A. The cockroach is an omnivorous animal and feeds on decaying matter and therefore is often associated with things being dirty (you would not be happy to find them in a restaurant for example). Most cockroach species are nocturnal with the exception of the oriental cockroach, which is attracted to light. Cockroaches generally only eat organic matter but some have been known to eat even substances such as muddy wallpaper paste. Call today for a free inspection.

Q. Is it true that I could be charged with a serious crime if I am in the car with someone that is committing a crime? Even if I don’t know the person is or has committed a crime?
A. The simple answer is YES. And YES... if you are in the car, odds are you will be charged. Remember: If you have any questions, your first consultation is free at the Law Office of James R. Makin, JR. (409) 833-2827.

Q. The workflow at our office demands a high speed copier/printer that can handle high volumes at peak times during our business week, does Canon have a heavy-duty equipment solution available that will handle my applications?
A. Yes! Canon has a number of equipment and software solutions available that will handle your applications. www.canon.com
Endowment created in honor of Jefferson County Sheriff’s deputy

Jefferson County Sheriff’s Department Deputy Rod Carroll signed a permanent endowment named in his honor at Lamar Institute of Technology on May 17 in the school’s Multi-Purpose Center.

The endowment was created with funds donated to the LIT Foundation, and will help provide cadets in LIT’s Regional Police Academy with the opportunity to begin or continue their education.

The endowment recognizes Carroll’s many contributions to the citizens of Southeast Texas. Carroll is an LIT Foundation board member, and has served as chairman of the Texas Peace Officers Memorial Committee. Under his leadership, the committee raised funds for a state memorial for officers who have died in the line of duty to be placed on the Capitol grounds.

In 2005, he received the Small Business Person of the Year award from the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce. Carroll has also been recognized by the cities of Jasper and Port Neches, the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office, Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, the Memorial Hermann Baptist Hospital Foundation and Girls’ Haven.

SETMA recognized as innovative primary care practice

Southeast Texas Medical Associates, LLP is among 30 clinics nationwide selected as an exemplar primary care practice by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Group Health Research Institute, who have teamed up on a new initiative to identify practice innovations that make primary care more efficient, effective, and satisfying to patients and providers.

The Primary Care Team: Learning from Effective Ambulatory Practices (LEAP) project identifies primary care practices that have focused on teamwork and new roles for health professionals in ways that support consistently outstanding primary care. SETMA was selected through a rigorous national process to receive the designation.

SETMA has been acknowledged by many organizations for the use of electronic patient records to improve care and for excellence of care. Since its founding in 1995, SETMA has focused on processes, believing that outcomes will inevitably follow, which outcomes will the inevitably be sustainable.

The goal of the LEAP project is to identify and share innovative staffing arrangements that make primary care more accessible and effective for patients. In October 2012, a LEAP team conducted a three-day site visit to understand how the SETMA primary care team delivers high quality, patient-centered healthcare. The exemplar practices will then join together in a learning community to share best practices and distill their innovations into training and technical assistance materials that can be used by others.

SETMA will be influential in developing creative workforce models that will be disseminated to primary care practices nationwide. SETMA’s integrated approach to primary care is organized as a set of teams formed into one team. Using the same EMR in the clinic, emergency department, hospital, physical therapy, nursing home – everywhere SETMA patients are seen – SETMA has improved the continuity of care, the safety of care and has decreased the cost of care. In 2011, RTI International was commission by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) to contrast 312 Medical Home Practices with 312 non-coordinated practices. SETMA results demonstrated a 37.4 decrease in the total, annual cost of the care of fee-for-service Medicare recipients over other practices, while maintaining superior quality and coordination.

Because many of SETMA’s patients have limited resources, the SETMA partners inaugurated the SETMA Foundation to which they have personally given over $2 million in the past four years. This money cannot profit or benefit SETMA or SETMA employees but is used to care for SETMA patients who cannot afford their care. Foundational funding has been the difference in the health and recovery of many of SETMA’s patients. Other healthcare providers in Southeast Texas have either donated their services to these patients or have significantly reduced their fees to enable these neighbors to get critically needed healthcare.

“With millions of Americans about to enter the health care system, primary care must become more effective and efficient. Building high performing care teams is a key step,” said Ed Wagner, MD, MPH, co-director of the LEAP project and director emeritus of the MacColl Center for Health Care Innovation at Group Health Research Institute in Seattle. “This new project will allow us to identify best practices and help other primary care sites replicate and adopt innovations to improve access to care and the quality of care they provide.”

“Now more than ever, the country recognizes that a great health care system has to build on a strong primary care foundation. We are seeing innovation all over the country, particularly in the area of primary care but there has been little study of how practices have redefined traditional roles and developed a team approach to caring for patients,” commented Margaret Flinter, PhD, APRN, LEAP project co-director and senior vice president and clinical director of the Community Health Center, Inc. and director of its Weitzman Center for Innovation. “We are very excited to have the opportunity to study these innovations that improve patient and practice outcomes and share them so they can be replicated.”

About the MacColl Center for Health Care

Named for a Group Health Research Institute, W.A. MacColl, MD, the MacColl Center for Health Care Innovation at Group Health Research Institute (GHRI) was established in 1992 by Ed Wagner, MD, MPH, who is a senior investigator and founding director of GHRI. In the mid-1990s, the Center developed the Chronic Care Model, a widely endorsed and adopted approach to improving ambulatory care that has guided clinical quality initiatives in the United States and internationally. The Center was also the home of Improving Chronic Illness Care, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program that has been involved in further developing, testing, and disseminating Chronic Care Model-based clinical improvement efforts. To learn more about this work, visit www.improvingchroniccare.org. For information on Group Health Research Institute, go to www.grouphealthresearch.org.

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable, and timely change. For more than 40 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.
King mackerel are big, bad and fast, and they can be caught on a variety of lures. This one blasted a Heddon Super Spook fished over a school of pogies. Some of the best action can be had around anchored shrimp boats and the many oil and gas platforms straight out from the Sabine jetties.

Hit the short rigs for Sabine kings

Fishing for king mackerel can be big-time fun from 10 to 35 miles off the Sabine jetties. From now until the end of October, they can be caught all day long around baitfish, shrimp boats and the rigs. Probably the most exciting way to catch king mackerel is with a topwater plug or by fishing jigs and spoons around shrimp boats.

A “hot” king mackerel won’t even hesitate to blast a topwater lure. Two of the best are a 5-inch Super Spook and a Bomber Long A. When fishing either lure, I’ll be using a 7-foot All Star bait-casting rod that can handle line in the 20 to 30 pound class. My favorite reel is an Ambassadeur 7000. This particular rod-and-reel combo is perfect for casting lures for kings and fishing live baits. You can fill the reels up with 30-pound test Silver Thread and you’re good to go. When fishing lures for kings, I’ll rig ’em up with a two-foot length of 40 to 50 pound test wire leader.

The lure end of the leader is connected to a black barrel swivel. The Super Spook I’m using now is the new 5-inch Zara Spook XT. It’s built extra tough with two 3X treble hooks and heavy-duty saltwater grade hook hangers and split rings. In short, it’s built to catch kings without falling apart. The Bomber Magnum Long A is a 7-inch lure with a pair of beefed up 4/0 hooks. Like the Spook XT, it’s built to handle toothy fish like a king mackerel. Top colors include mackerel, sardine and silver mullet.

The Bomber Long A is a 7-inch lure with a pair of beefed up 4/0 hooks. Like the Spook XT, it’s built to handle toothy fish like a king mackerel. Top colors include mackerel, sardine and silver mullet. Top producing colors include mackerel, sardine and silver mullet. The Super Spook has a completely different action than the Long A. It’ll move from left to right in a steady walk-the-dog retrieve. Conversely, the Long A is a shallow-running lipped lure. It can be trolled or popped on the surface. The popping retrieve creates lots of action and will draw some serious blowups.

Most of the time, the best topwater action for kings will be anywhere from a half mile to five miles off the Sabine jetties. This is the time of year when huge schools of pogies will be rafted up within sight of the McFaddin Beach surf. That’s when you want to get out the topwater plugs and work them close to and over the menhaden.

Another option is to troll lures around schools of baitfish. From now through the end of September, finding schools of menhaden and shad is easy anywhere east and west of the Sabine jetties. Some of the best lures for trolling up kings are the metal-lipped divers that are anywhere from 7 to 10 inches long. One of the best is the Bomber A-Salt HD Minnow. It’s built to withstand the toothy mouths of kings and is built with a pair of tough treble hooks and a stainless-steel lip. The Bomber HD Minnow can be trolled from 4 to 5 knots with 25-pound test line to depths of 20 to 25 feet.

Trolling around the oil and gas production platforms is another option. Hit the short rigs for Sabine kings

Robert Sloan Outdoors

Robert Sloan photo

Robert Sloan photo

Hit the short rigs for Sabine kings

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Dear Annie:

I am in my 20s and am engaged to a beautiful girl. Our religion prohibits sex before marriage. But when “Donna” tells me to stop kissing her, I don’t see why not. It’s just kissing.

Donna says she has not been firm enough with me and when she says no, she means no. Yesterday, I was sitting next to Donna and started kissing her on the lips. She said no, and when I didn’t stop, she slapped my face. It felt like I had been stung by a bee. Donna told me she definitely had to slap me.

My cousin said that in a dating situation, the woman sets the rules, and it is her prerogative to slap a man’s face if she feels he has gone too far. Do you agree? I don’t think she had to slap me.

— John

Dear John:

It’s hard to believe you are living in this century. While we don’t recommend that women go around slapping men, anything you do after Donna says “no” could be considered assault or even attempted rape. She is entitled to defend herself. She could call the police. Show some respect for your girlfriend, and stop kissing her when she asks you to stop. You sound too immature to get married.

Dear Annie:

I am a 32-year-old professional woman and a newlywed. I have been best friends with “Martha” since the first grade, although we began to drift apart after college. But we always talked about our future weddings and vowed to attend each other’s. Meanwhile, I moved to the East Coast, and Martha moved to the West Coast. We stayed in touch and occasionally saw each other in our hometown.

I was not asked to be a bridesmaid at Martha’s wedding, but I traveled to California with my fiancée to attend and also went to her bridal shower in our hometown. Very few others did because of the cost and the distance. Her parents told me they were thrilled that I was there.

About 10 months after Martha’s wedding, I married on the East Coast. Of course, Martha was invited, but she RSVP’d that she could not attend. She gave no reason. My first anniversary is approaching, and I have yet to hear any words of congratulations from my “best friend” no card or gift or even a phone call. I also haven’t heard anything from her parents. Back in my hometown, my mother occasionally runs into Martha’s mother. She has never mentioned my marriage.

I am terribly hurt. It seems clear that Martha doesn’t care about me or want to continue our friendship. I am trying to put this behind me, but I am puzzled that neither she nor her family had the common courtesy to send a note of congratulations. I am thinking of “unfriending” her on Facebook.

— Raised with Manners

Dear Manners:

Martha was remiss not to send a card of congratulations. But when friends go in different directions — figuratively as well as physically — the closeness tends to fade. It doesn’t mean Martha no longer cares, only that the friendship has become a casual interest. Facebook is actually perfect for that. You can keep track of each other without having to invest any genuine effort.

Dear Annie:

I am a skinny woman with large breasts. I know there is a crazy stereotype that women like me are wild party girls. I am actually quite conservative. But women seem to think it’s OK to poke my breasts or lift them, probably to check whether they are real.

Last week at a party, some insufferable girl just met turned the entire conversation to my breasts. I walked away to cool off, but someone overheard me say that the girl was obnoxious. So “poking girl” started shouting at me, and you can guess how the rest of the night went.

Annie, please tell your readers that just because a woman has large breasts doesn’t mean she wants to be poked and prodded in public. Where have basic social graces gone?

— Staying Classy

Dear Classy:

You hang around with some inappropriate, rather creepy women. Your body, all of it, belongs to you. If someone touches your breasts, gasp in horror and perhaps yell loudly for the police. What nerve.

Dear Annie:

Thank you for recommending the NAMI Family-to-Fami-ly class to “Parents at Wits’ End.” When I took that 12-week class, I learned so much about mental illness, as well as finding support and hope from other parents. I have no doubt my son is doing better because of it.

Grateful Mother

Dear Annie:

I believe you missed the boat with your answer to “Irritated by Lack of Thoughtfulness,” who said a woman carried on a cellphone conversation during a funeral. You said it was impolite, but added that the phone could be turned on “mute” or “vibrate” and emergencies handled out of earshot.

We have lost all sensitivity to others. At funerals, weddings and church services, phones should be left at home or in the car. If something is so important that one must stay connected, one should not attend the function.

Not so long ago, cellphones didn’t exist, and we managed to survive.

— Litchfield, Maine
Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all the letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

**CLUES**

1. Cambodian ethnic group (5)  
2. made repayment (8)  
3. monetary unit of Malaysia (7)  
4. port in Cumbria, UK (10)  
5. remarkably (10)  
6. leaves permanently (8)  
7. aimlessly and at length (10)

**SOLUTIONS**

```
ND GIT REFU KH RI  
MER VEN RAM WHI ROUS  
NG LY WO NDED AN  
AB GLY DONS BLIN TEHA  
DROO AFL IN ECE ING  
SIN NG CU TT NAMO GAW  
TA KED DI ATOX PR  
HAIR PLY GLY PLEA GUAN  
ZAN MIN RM SHR KR  
AI DI OW CIN ED  
GLY ER ND AN ED  
ALE ME TAC AP IJK  
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WEIRD
from page 5 C

paid official, plus “longevity” pay of $54,000 a year, plus a car allowance — and that she will be paid that total amount per year as her pension for life (in addition to a private pension of $46,000 a year that the county purchased for her).

- The Way Washington Works: (1) Congress established a National Helium Reserve in 1925 in the era of “zeppelin” balloons, but most consider it no longer useful (most, that is, ranging from President Reagan to the Democratic congressman who in 1996 called it one program that, if we cannot undo it, “we cannot undo anything”). The House of Representatives recently voted 394-1 to continue funding it because of “fears” of a shortage that might affect MRI machines and, of course, party balloons. (2) In rare (these days) bipartisan action, congressional military “experts” of both parties are about to force the Army to continue building Abrams tanks — when the Army said it doesn’t want them and can’t use them. The tank manufacturers, of course, have convinced Congress that it needs the contracts, no matter what the Army says (according to an April Associated Press analysis).

Great Art!

- The Jewish Museum in Berlin is currently staging what has become popularly known as the “Jew in the Box” exhibit to teach visitors about Judaism — simply featuring one knowledgeable Jewish person who sits in a chair in a glass box for two hours a day and answers questions from the curious. Both supporters (“We Germans have many insecurities when it comes to Jews”) and critics (“Why don’t they give him a banana and a glass of water (and) turn up the heat?”) are plentiful.

- The weather in Hong Kong on April 25 wreaked havoc on American artist Paul McCarthy’s outdoor, 50-foot-tall piece of “inflatable art” in the West Kowloon Cultural District. “Complex Pile” (a model of an arrangement of excrement) got punctured, which mostly pleased McCarthy’s critics since his recent work, reported the South China Morning Post, has often centered around bodily functions.

Police Report

- News of the Weird has reported several times on the astonishing control that inmates have at certain prisons in Latin American countries, with drug cartel leaders often enjoying lives nearly as pleasurable as their lives on the outside. However, according to an April federal indictment, similar problems have plagued the City Detention Center in Baltimore, where members of the “Black Guerrilla Family” operated with impunity. Between 2010 and 2012, corruption was such that 13 female guards have now been charged, including four women who bore the children of the gang’s imprisoned leader, Tayvon White. Cellphones, drugs and Grey Goose vodka were among the smuggled-in contraband, and the indictment charges that murders were ordered from inside. (Baltimore City Paper had reported 14 stories in 2009 and 2010 on the gang-related corruption at the center, but apparently state and federal officials had failed to be alarmed.)

- Frequent Flyers: (1) Chicago police have arrested Ms. Shermain Miles, 51, at least 396 times since 1978, under 83 different aliases, for crimes ranging from theft (92 times) to prostitution and robbery. According to the Chicago Sun-Times, she is a virtuoso at playing “the system” to delay her proceedings and avoid jail time. (2) Alvin Cote, 59, passed away in February of poor health in Saskatchewan, following a “career” of 843 public-intoxication arrests.

The Weirdo-American Community

The biggest news out of Newtown, Conn., recently — not involving the tragic shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School — came when local environmental officials announced on April 29 that they were investigating the finding of “200 to 300 one-gallon plastic jugs” filled with urine in a home “in a state of disrepair.” No charges were filed against the homeowner, but officials sought to assure neighbors and users of the property that no health hazard was present. (The average person, reported the Connecticut Post, produces about six cups of urine a day.)

SLOAN
from page 9 C

where you will find some kings. The near-shore rigs in 20 to 30 feet of water hold lots of small kings. That’s been my experience while fishing the short rigs anywhere from 12 to 18 miles off the Sabine jetties. The rigs out at about 32 miles usually hold heavier kings.

Kings like to hang out under and around anchored shrimp boats. The best action will be off the boats that are anchored anywhere from 10 to 25 miles out. Shrimpers usually drag their nets all night, then anchor up during daylight hours. Once they anchor or tie off to a rig (usually at dawn) they will finish culling the night’s catch. That’s when the kings will move in for some easy pickings. And that’s when they will be all over jigs.

One of my favorites for kings is the Bomber twin tail shrimp and jig combo. It’s four inches long and weighs 3 ounces. You can troll them, or cast them out and reel them in on a yo-yo retrieve. Best colors are chartreuse, red/white tail, glow and white/pink tail.

A 1/2 to 1 ounce silver spoon is deadly on kings. When deckhands are shoveling out their bycatch, the kings, along with jacks and bonito, will be swarming on the surface. Pitch a jig or spoon into the melee and you’ll get an instant hook-up.
IObit releases new free and pro Malware Fighter 2

Countless times in this column over the years, I have recommended free standing anti-malware software from MalwareBytes, SuperAntiSpyware and Emsisoft. I have now had an opportunity to experiment with another newly released competing product, Malware Fighter 2 from IObit, and my first impressions are positive.

Available from the IObit at www.iobit.com are both a free version and a paid pro version ($19.95 for a one year license). Both offer real-time protection from malware attacks with a security package that does not significantly slow down the computer, is frequently updated, can detect and remove malware infections that may have penetrated the existing security software, and is explicitly designed to run on top of other antivirus and security software in order to provide security in depth. Both versions use IObit’s proprietary “Dual-Core” anti-malware engine, which claims to detect complex and deeply hidden malware, including spyware, adware, trojans, keyloggers, bots, worms, hijackers and other malware threats. If a suspicious file or behavior is detected that is not included in the updated Malware Fighter’s database, the questionable file is uploaded to the new “IObit Cloud Security” service for further analysis and resolution. For users who prefer simplicity, Malware Fighter offers a “Smart One-Stop Solution” that can detect and repair any malware security issues with a single mouse click. The only major difference between the free and pro versions that I could find is that the pro version updates automatically, and the pro version can be set to perform a scan at selected times.

As good as they may be, no security product offers 100 percent protection; it is often desirable to implement a layered defense that will impose additional barriers and defenses to a variety of cyber threats. Today, several anti-malware products are intentionally designed to run concurrently with contemporary security software in order to provide enhanced security in real-time, and Malware Fighter is one of those products. This software is written to be compatible with other antivirus and anti-malware software, firewall software and other security products.

The real-time functions in Malware Fighter provide comprehensive protection from threats, including a series of “Guards,” that each protect from an attack targeted at a specific computer function. These guards include a “Startup Guard” that prevents unwanted programs from installing themselves such that they load every time the computer is booted; a “Browser Guard” that protects the browser from being hijacked, having the startup page changed without consent, and other browser based threats; a “Network Guard” that block Web pages containing threats; a “File Guard” that protects critical system and program files as well as scans unknown files for threats; a “Cookie Guard” that protects the browser and the user from dangerous cookies (small text files placed on the computer by Web sites that can violate your privacy and safety); a “Process Guard” that monitors the running processes on the computer, continuously searching for threats that may start to run; a “USB Disk Guard” that protects from infestation from USB devices; and “Malicious Action” that protects against other malicious behaviors, threats and dangers to the computer. These real-time protections are always running and providing continuous protection, even when Web gaming, Web browsing, reading e-mail, shopping online, watching videos and performing other PC activities.

Currently, a nasty form of cyber threat is referred to as a “zero day” threat in that it can be introduced and spread so quickly that it is nearly impossible for security providers to detect the threat and devise a solution to neutralize it before it spreads widely. IObit Malware Fighters uses a variety of tools to protect the user from these rapidly evolving threats, including a form of Host Intrusion Prevention System, commonly referred to as “HIPS.” Malware Fighter has a feature it calls “DOG” to detect these new threats.

In addition to providing real-time protection, this type of software is also designed to scan the computer for existing threats. Malware Fighter allows user selectable custom scans covering critical system areas, processes running in memory (running malware can often be quickly detected here, as a memory processes scan only takes a few seconds), or specific hard drives.

IObit Malware Fighter will run fine on all contemporary versions of Windows, including Windows 8, Windows 7, XP, Vista, and Windows 2000. Hardware requirements are minimal for a modern computer, such that Malware Fighter will run on almost any Windows PC with a minimum of 256 megs of RAM, a 300 MHz processor, and 30 MB of hard drive space.

For those who would like another malware scanner in order to confirm their PC’s security, or would like a free or paid real-time malware utility that can provide security in depth in addition to the security software already installed, IObit’s new Malware Fighter 2 would be very worthy of consideration.

Technology

Ira Wilsker

“Lamar University has meant so much to my family. I was overwhelmed when my children surprised me with a brick as a birthday gift. My sister, Colleen, and I decided to purchase bricks in memory of our parents, too.”

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Tough times really don’t last forever

I have some dear friends that are going through what John would term “tough times.” Each of them is hurting in different ways and needs a friend, helping hand, and kind words. I thought about the old adage, “Tough times don’t last, but tough people do.” But then I asked myself, “Do we really want to be thought of by those we love as ‘tough people’?” I realize the word “tough” is relative, and I think I know what the writer of that little bit of sage advice meant, but I find I still question the meaning.

In a more personal manner, I know I have gone through what I would term “tough times” in my own life. I was a single mother after being married for more than a quarter of a century to one man. I had children to educate, a home to pay for, and groceries to purchase. I remember clearly having to decide whether to pay the electric bill on time, put it off, or to buy groceries and gas to get to work. This time of the year was harrowing for me because I knew I could not respond as I had in the past to graduation invitations, bridal showers, weddings and such. I felt terrible because my love for the people in my life was no less — it was just that my bank account was more meager at the time.

I have also lost those I loved dearly. My Mama Cole died and we buried her in the dark ground, I felt terrible. My sense of loss was overwhelming. I had never before that time lived one day on this earth without her by my side, either figuratively or physically. I felt that without my life anchor, I was adrift. But you know, I got through that first day and night and was able to attend the visitation, funeral and burial. And I survived. The second day was perhaps a little less frightening, and so on and on the days and nights passed and I lived. I had to live. I had children to care for, a home to keep, and a job to return to.

God really does know just how much He can trust us with at one time. I had a dear friend tell me honestly the other day that she just wished that God didn’t trust her with quite so much, and I knew what she meant.

What do we do when life is coming faster than we can comfortably handle it? What can we cling to when we don’t know where we are going or how we will get there? Where are our guidelines and our hope? What is our anchor? I can tell you with certainty that for me, it is the Word of God, my faith in Him, and the ability to pray and find comfort in being with other Christians. “My hope is as an anchor, both sure and steadfast” (Hebrews 6:19). I know that God loves me and that He cares for me and that even if death should come for me or my loved ones, they will be in Heaven waiting for me one day, or I for them. I sincerely believe that.

May I suggest that if you are struggling as you read this column, you take or make time to clear your head and heart, and ask God to give you guidance? He will be more than happy to do that for you because every single man or woman, boy or girl, is important to Him. Think of some positive insights you can hold on to until you are stronger. I tend to think that God will take care of me today as I remember the many times He has in the past. He has proved Himself to me and over and over. I wish I learned things more easily, but I’ll admit I am a bit headstrong — some would say stubborn — so there are times when the lessons have to be administered more than once.

Without sounding prideful, I have also learned to trust myself a bit more. I have undertaken new goals and succeeded in the past, and I can do it again. Secondly, ask yourself, “What does God want me to learn from this experience? Am I learning it well?” I love this quote I found in one of my darkest hours: “If the brook had no stones, it would have no song.” And I have also learned not to expect quite as much from myself and from others. Maybe things won’t go my way. I can change my way a bit without giving up my standards. When the way is especially hard, cling to good, solid, positive friends who are willing to help. Everyone has troubles. You are not alone.

Retrain your thinking to move toward something, rather than away from something. And learn to rest. Rome really wasn’t built in a day, and we cannot gain our losses back all in one quick step. Be willing to rest in the valley for a while, if necessary. God will be with you as you take one tiny baby step at a time. Stay with Him, for His way is best, and He can deliver us from our every trouble and sadness. May God bless you today in your need.

Brenda Cannon Henley can be reached at (409) 781-8788 or at brendacannonhenley@yahoo.com.

Jesus, God are one in the same

What is God like? Can I really know Him? Over the next weeks we are going to be looking at questions like these and others as we explore the theme, “Discovering God.” I am reading today from John 10:22-30:

“(22) Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. (23) And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch. (24) Then the Jews surrounded Him, and said to Him, ‘How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ (25) Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. (26) But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. (27) My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (28) And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. (29) My Father, who has given (them) to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch (them) out of My Father’s hand. (30) I and (My) Father are one.’”

Here is the key to our theme, Discovering God. Jesus said, “I and My Father are one.”

For nearly everyone, there comes a time when his “God questions” become the most important ones he has. As children, our sons used to ask such questions as, “Which cloud is God in?” As they grew up, their God questions become more insistent. They wanted contact with Him, and they wanted assurances that He is a God of love.

Those who are really serious about knowing God will have to look into the Bible. There we discover Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and we are told emphatically that He is God. This is what He meant when He said, “I and My Father are one.”

In a glorious way which escapes our understanding, this simple statement is part of the Bible’s teaching that God is a triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The benefits that come to us because God is this kind of being are marvelous. We may be so thankful that Jesus, God’s son, and His Father are one God.

This means that in Jesus all our questions about God find their answers. Jesus reveals God’s love to us. Here is real reason for joy: God has come so close to us, He has become one of our race. He has done it in the person of His only begotten son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we must work hard at knowing this Jesus better and better. Those who know that Jesus is their Savior from sin know that God will never abandon them. Jesus assures us of that in His statements here recorded by John: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they...”

See DABNEY on page 15 C
My name is Scutty. I’m a pretty handsome boy, huh? I prefer pictures without a rainbow colored cat-toy scarf (although it does bring out the yellow in my eyes!), but I’m a pretty laid back guy and just decided to go with it! You should also know that I am very sweet and love attention so much that when I think you’re one who loves me, who I love, and who I can shake my tail at in happiness because they could not care for me any more. I just want someone who loves me, who I love, and who I can share my tail quivers with happiness! I think I get so excited about a little TLC because when I was young, I was dumped out of a car and left in the woods with no one to love me or give me any attention. I was eventually rescued by a family, but they recently had to surrender me to the shelter because they could not care for me any more. I just want someone who loves me, who I love, and who I can share my tail quivers with happiness! I prefer the great indoors to the great outdoors!

Adopting a cat can be a 15-year or more commitment. Please adopt responsibly! Adoption fee is $90, or $150 for pure breed or pedigree cats and kittens. This includes the first round of vaccinations, bordetella vaccination, worming, flea treatment and spaying or neutering. All animals will be spayed or neutered before going to their new home. For information, call the Humane Society at (409) 833-0504 or visit 2050 Spindletop Ave., Beaumont.

Q. I can no longer afford to pay my car note. One friend told me that if the car is repossessed or I return it, I am off the hook for any more payments. Another said no matter what, I would still owe the remaining payments. What really happens following the return of a car? A. Actually, neither of your friends is correct. The consequences of repossession depend on the value of the car. Whether a car is voluntarily returned or repossessed, the results are the same. Following the return of the car, the creditor usually will arrange for the sale of the car. After the sale, the creditor will apply whatever is obtained from the sale against the amount you owe. At that point, there are three possibilities. First, the amount you owe might be the same as what the car sold for. In that case, you will not owe anything additional. Second, the amount obtained at the sale might be more than you owe. If that happens, you may keep the amount necessary to cover your debt but must return the surplus to you. The third and most likely option is that the car sells for less than you owe. In that case, the amount obtained at the sale is applied to the debt, and you still owe the difference. Here is an example of how this works. Let’s assume you owe $12,000. The returned or repossessed car is sold at auction for $8,000. The creditor will apply the $8,000 to your debt, leaving a “deficiency” of $4,000. You still owe the deficiency, and the creditor may pursue a claim to collect the $4,000. The bottom line is that unless the car is worth the same or more than you owe, you will still owe some money following its repossession or return.

Q. I rented an apartment to be close to my new job. After just two months, I have been transferred. Is this a legal excuse to get out of my lease? A. As a general rule, you may terminate a lease only for those reasons spelled out in the lease. Read your lease carefully to see if it gives you the ability to terminate it early due to a change in your employment. If it does not, you will be in breach of the lease and the landlord could be entitled to damages if you stop paying rent. My guess is that this will not be a valid reason to terminate your lease early. If that is the case, my suggestion is to discuss this with your landlord and see if you can work out a mutually agreeable settlement. For example, the landlord may agree to let you leave early if you forfeit your security deposit. Be sure to get any agreement in writing.

Q. Am I entitled to recover child support from my child’s father, whom I never married? A. Generally, if you can establish that someone is the father of a child, he has an obligation to help support the child. The fact that you did not marry him does not matter.

Q. My wallet was stolen. The thief charged $2,500 to my credit card. Am I responsible? A. Good news — under federal law, your maximum liability for the unauthorized use of your credit card is $50. In fact, you have no liability for any charges made after you report the loss. If your card is stolen, be sure to immediately call the credit card company.

Q. How do I get a copy of a living will? Does it have to be notarized to be valid? What does it cost? A. For a free copy of a living will, visit my website www.peopleslawyer.net and go to “Legal Topics,” then click on “Wills and Living Wills.” A living will, formally called a “Directive to Physicians,” does not have to be notarized, but must be signed by two witnesses. You may make several originals and give them to a number of people to ensure that it will be available when needed. For example, you can keep one and give one to a family member and your physician.

Do you want to know more about your legal rights? Visit my website at.

DABNEY
from page 14 C

shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.”

I need that sense of security. So many things are changing in my life and yours. More and more, our world becomes a strangely alien place. The Bible that I was taught to love as a child, both in my home, my public school and my church, is little regarded today. The moral values that we were raised to love and respect and practice seem so foreign to many. I need to know that God will never abandon me. Jesus tells me it is true.

Almighty God, we are grateful for Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Who reveals You perfectly. Answer our deepest questions, and show us the fullness of divine love, as we learn to know Jesus better each day. Amen and amen.

The Rev. Delmar Dabney was a spiritual inspiration in Southeast Texas for many years before his death in 1994. This and other messages from his daily television show, “Coffee with Pastor Dabney,” are featured here regularly.
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