

Thomas County Health Department talks ‘fishing safety’

Editor's note: The following article is provided by the Thomas County Health Department as a public service. For questions about this or any other article or to learn more about what services the health department offers, call 462-4596.

Fishing in July is a great family activity.

Let's talk "fishing safety." Before you go on your fishing adventure, some preparation is necessary for your well-being.

Ensure that all safety equipment, including the radio, is in good working order. Your first aid kit should be well stocked with all the essentials.

Healthy Haps

How about sunscreen? Catching fish is great, but catching skin cancer is not.

Bring long-sleeved, high-necked or collared shirt, trousers or longer length shorts, a broad brimmed hat or legionnaire-style cap, close fitting polarized sunglasses and fingerless driving gloves to cover the backs of your hands.

The clothing will help when the day gets long. Bug spray with DEET will keep the mosquitoes off of you and prevent West Nile Virus. A flashlight with working batteries

is a necessity. Take a cooler for water and food.

Your boat should be serviced and stocked with enough life jackets for everyone you have in the boat. What is your boat's capacity for passengers?

You should not exceed this limit. Do you have extra gasoline in case you run low on fuel? Is it in a proper, safe container?

Take rain gear in case a quick moving storm comes. Tell someone where you are going fishing and when you will return in case of an emergency or if something happens to you.

Never go fishing under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. It is wise to fish with someone else, so that if you are injured your partner will be able to call for help.

Take your cell phone if you have one and make sure it is charged. Know the weather forecast ahead of time. If it looks threatening, head for home.

Small boats can be tipped over. Put the load in the center of the boat and don't overload.

If fishing off land, select areas where the surface is not slipper or steep.

These sites can be dangerous because they are difficult to climb should you accidentally fall. Have

spare tackle and gear at hand so that snags can be cut off and lines be repaired. Do not try and retrieve tackle, especially in rocky, steep areas.

Wear shoes that are appropriate to the area. Smooth or cleated shoes are not appropriate. Wear shorts or clothes that allow you to swim should you fall in the water.

Heavy, wet weather gear, long trousers (jeans) can hamper your swimming ability. Keep a flotation device in your tackle box in case you need it in a rescue.

Never compromise yourself in a rescue attempt. Look all directions before you cast your line so as not to "hook" anyone. Carrying a nail clipper to cut tangled lines is safer than a knife.

Be snake conscious and have a snake bite kit in your first aid kit. Rattle snakes are very common snakes in Kansas and can kill you if you don't get help right away. Take antibacterial wipes with you to wipe your hands with before eating. The water carries many undesirable germs, not ones you want to eat with.

Fishing is an enjoyable recreational activity that should be a safe activity as well.

Happy Fishing...hope you catch the Big One.

Man gets wierd after long-distance friendship takes turn south

DEAR ABBY: I met a man on a business trip recently. I'll call him Ray. We spent a little over a week together and had a wonderful time. After I returned home, we decided we'd try a long-distance "whatever." (It was never defined.)

The following weekend I paid to fly Ray here, and it was great. It seemed like things were heating up. Two weeks later I arranged a weekend getaway for Ray, myself, his son and the son's friend. Again, I paid for everything. Another coworker had relocated there and joined us.

We went to a sporting event, and when we reached the ticket window, Ray said he had only enough money to pay for himself and the kids. Naturally, I paid for my own admission. My co-worker said, "I can't believe you put up with him!" I ignored the comment.

When I got home, Ray told me he didn't like it when I said, "I miss you" — so I stopped. The next day, he said he just wanted to be friends. (No problem.)

Last night, while we were online he switched screen names. I made a comment, kiddingly, "Trying to hide from me? (lol)" He went nuts! He sent an instant message that this is why he doesn't date, and if I want "secrets," then he'll keep a bunch of them.

When I tried to respond, I found he had blocked my messages.

I am crushed. I feel like I have been taken for a ride. Don't you agree that I at least deserve some explanation? What would you do in a situation like this?

— STUPID WHEN IT COMES TO MEN

DEAR "STUPID": For openness, I'd erase his e-mail address from my computer. Then I'd take a long, hard look at what had hap-



Abigail Van Buren
• Dear Abby

pened since I met the man. Once you decided you liked him, you went overboard. You made all the arrangements. You paid for everything. When he backed off, you didn't.

I don't know whether or not he was trying to avoid you when he switched his screen name, but you may have hit the nail on the head. Next time, be less aggressive. Let the man do some of the pursuing. When something comes too easily, it often isn't valued.

DEAR ABBY: We are invited to a renewing of the wedding vows of a couple who have been married for 10 years. (They're a young couple in their early 30s.)

We are trying to figure out if we have to give them another gift, since we gave them one when they were first married. Please help us out.

— BAFFLED IN BROOKLYN

DEAR BAFFLED: Call the couple and ask if (and where) they are registered. This will give them the chance to tell you whether or not gifts are expected.

A "renewal of vows" could be considered a fancy anniversary party, and if you attend, you should mark the occasion with some sort of gift. It doesn't have to be expensive — it could be a photograph of you and the couple with a short paragraph sharing a happy memory; something associated with their hobbies or interests; or a tree or plant for their yard.

DEAR ABBY: I have been married five years to a man I truly love. The problem is, he's a "neat freak," and it's destroying our marriage.

I work full time, commute about 100 miles a day, raise two children with whom I spend a lot of time, cook a homemade dinner almost every night, and keep the house clean. It is never enough for him. I walk on eggshells trying to keep the house according to his standards and let my children be children and have fun.

If the kids are going to have friends overnight, I make sure it's on a night when he'll be gone. Our children can't go barefoot in the yard, and our shoes must be removed at the door and kept in perfect alignment. If the children eat cookies at the kitchen table, he complains about the crumbs.

He was gone this weekend. The children and I cleaned the house, picked lemons from our trees and baked him a homemade pie, and prepared a nice dinner for him. When he got home all he did was yell because someone had tracked mud on the porch. He never even said hello. My 3-year-old kept saying, "Daddy, we made you a pie and cooked supper," but he wouldn't stop griping.

Please help. Divorce is not an option because it would destroy the children. How can I get him to realize that his obsessive-compulsive disorder is hurting our family? He thinks it is normal.

— AT MY WIT'S END IN TEXAS

DEAR WIT'S END: Your husband's behavior is "normal" for him. It won't change until

you realize that the only thing more destructive to a child than divorce is trying to please a sick parent who is impossible to please.

For their sakes, if not for yours, DEMAND that your husband consult a therapist about his problem. Thankfully, it is one that's treatable.

Please don't wait any longer to assert yourself. Do not back down. When a 3-year-old can recognize that your husband's behavior doesn't make sense, it's time to draw the line.

DEAR ABBY: Every Wednesday I go to a teen hip-hop class to dance and have fun. On one of those occasions, my friend "Tracy" came to class crying. My friends and I asked her what was wrong and she said her dad had hit her. We asked her why, and she said it was because she was on the phone too long. She

showed us the bruises on her arms and legs. They looked very bad.

I told Tracy she could come home with me and she said, "No thanks. I'm fine." This week, she didn't make it to dance class. If she shows up with bruises again, should I make her come home with me and call the police? Please, Abby, I don't want Tracy to get hurt anymore.

— SAD AND CONFUSED IN SAN DIEGO

DEAR SAD AND CONFUSED: If it happens again, get the dance teacher involved. It is important that an adult docu-

ment what is happening, and teachers are required by law to report abuse. You are a caring friend, and Tracy is lucky to have you. It is not unusual for an abuse victim to protect her (or his) abuser. The victim may be afraid that speaking out will cause the abuse to escalate. If Tracy does not return to class, a report can be made by calling ChildHelp U.S.A. The phone number is (800) 422-4453.

Editor's note: Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

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