

# THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF HUMOR

## Humorist brings laughs to 2008 Wellness Symposium

He who laughs, lasts. This is the wisdom Randall Munson, humorist, brought to the 2008 Wellness Symposium at the Bridgewood Resort and Conference Center in Neenah. Munson delivered a gut-busting presentation titled "The Serious Business of Humor" where he talked about the importance of humor and laughter between a montage of jokes and antics.

"Humor allows us to connect on a human level," says Munson. "When we recognize it's important, we seek it out and others see a change in us."

Munson offered a few tips on how to incorporate more humor in our daily lives. He starts with a funny file. "If you read something

funny, like an e-mail or an ad, save it. You then can come back to it when you need a laugh."

Munson also suggests that physicians should laugh with their peers. "You're in a profession where you can see some very serious situations. Humor can help you connect with your peers through stronger relationships and a realization of being in the same situation."

For more information about "The Serious Business of Humor" visit, [www.creativelyspeaking.com](http://www.creativelyspeaking.com).



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BALANCE is a quarterly newsletter for Affinity Health System medical staff. The purpose of this newsletter is to raise awareness of medical staff health and wellness issues. If you would like to contribute, please contact any member of the editorial board: Jen Norden, MD, Trish Howe, MD, Sudeep Sodhi, MD, Cookie Fielkow, Carole Bleck, Affinity Marketing department or e-mail: [pkoehler@affinityhealth.org](mailto:pkoehler@affinityhealth.org).

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Balance



# Balance

A newsletter dedicated to promoting and enhancing clinician wellness

July 2008

## MENTAL KICKS

### Area physician uses karate for clarity and balance

Three years ago, Dr. Brian Scott, a family physician at Affinity Medical Group in Little Chute, took his two boys to their first karate class at Karate America in Appleton. From that moment on, the Scott family became a karate family.

"After watching our sons' first class, my wife and I signed up," says Dr. Scott. "It was something completely out of my element."

Though an athletic person, Dr. Scott admits he never saw himself in this type of hobby. "I was more of a basketball kind of guy," he says. "But, I found the self-defense and mental commitment of karate very appealing."

And the appeal stuck.

In late 2007, Dr. Scott earned his black belt. Two months before his black belt test, he entered into black belt candidate training.

Dr. Scott's training consisted of two-to-five hour training sessions a few days each week. He practiced kicks, punches, strikes and forms (a simulated fight where a person performs a series of moves into the air), and he sparred against his classmates and instructors.

"Training was non-stop and it really pushed me to my physical limits," he says. "One week prior to our black belt test, we had an extreme day where we went through a five hour conditioning



session that included running, push ups and strength conditioning, all of our kicks and punches and then sparred the instructors."

Dr. Scott credits his family for helping him fulfill the time commitment required to train in martial arts. "I have the full support of my wife. She realizes how important it is for me to have time to pursue activities away from work."

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**Caring for health. Caring for life.**

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# BEING MORE THAN A PIECE OF SALAMI

## How to survive taking care of your parents while being a parent

In 2006, the term “sandwich generation” was added to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. Though the term conjures up images of bologna, salami and other cold cuts, it’s used to define an adult who is taking care of a parent in addition to their own children.

This phenomenon is happening all over the country. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, one in eight Americans between the ages of 40 and 60 is currently caring for both parents and children. Though there is no official data for the Fox Valley, the Affinity Employee Assistance Program (EAP) sees approximately five families each month dealing with problems associated with being in a sandwich situation.

“People often come in because of an overwhelming amount of stress, burnout and even guilt,” says Laurie Raupp, RN, MS, CEAP, a counselor with the Affinity Employee Assistance Program in Oshkosh. “When we explore the issue at its roots, we find that families need help managing care.”



Raupp continues that it is more than just medical care. “Caregivers struggle balancing their own needs for sleep, rest, relaxation, socialization and productivity with the needs of their loved ones,” she says. “They have more responsibilities and time demands where the caregiver stretches him or herself to the limits.”

What are some things caregivers can do to balance these needs? Raupp says it all starts with permission. “Give yourself permission not to be perfect,” she says. “No one can do it all, and determine what level of involvement you are comfortable and capable of giving to your parents.”

Caregivers should take time for themselves. “It can be five minutes a day, one day a week or whatever works for you,” she says. “Just take time to recharge and do something you enjoy.”

Also, talk to everyone involved in the situation. Siblings, older children and spouses can help divide the workload and offer support and relief for the primary caregiver. Younger children need their questions answered about what is happening. Raupp says, “Young children are concerned about what’s happening. They may not understand why grandma asks the same question because of her dementia or why mom spends so much time with grandma. Addressing these concerns, appropriate for their age level, helps children cope with changes.”

Preparatory planning answers a lot of unforeseen questions. “Encourage family members to complete advance care directives, estate planning and a will,” says Raupp. She also recommends having parents participate in their own care. “Even if it’s early, tour care facilities and talk about their needs and wishes. Listen to your parent’s concerns, and respect their need for empowerment and independence.”

Many community resources are available for caregivers and their families. Raupp suggests finding support groups and accessing your county’s Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC). “People are more aware about being in the sandwich generation,” says Raupp. “Help is available as long as you ask for it.”

*For more information about resources and support, visit the Affinity Libraries at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Appleton or Mercy Medical Center in Oshkosh.*

space and moving at your own pace,” he says.

Emotionally, karate gives the doctor a way to balance his life as a husband, father and physician. “Karate gives me my mental break,” he says. “For one hour, I’m completely focused on what I’m doing and I can leave the office and any worries behind.”

Dr. Scott works with adults and children from all walks of life. He says the people make it fun. “I’ve developed relationships with such a variety of people whom I never would have met otherwise.”

He advises anyone curious about karate to watch a class or to talk to the school’s staff. “See what it’s all about, and if you like it, just start.”

## SAVE THE DATE

### PEDIATRICS CME: 17TH ANNUAL UPDATE IN PEDIATRICS

When: **Oct. 16, 2008**

Where: **Bridgwood Resort and Conference Center**  
*Neenah, WI*

5 p.m. Registration  
5 - 6:30 p.m. Complimentary Back Massages  
5:30 - 7 p.m. Buffet Dinner  
6:30 - 9 p.m. Presentations by:

**Greg DeMuri, MD, Pediatric Infectious Disease, UW Health Physicians**  
*Top 10 Calls to the Pediatric ID Specialist*

**Terence Edgar, MD, Pediatric Neurologist, Prevea Health System**  
*Epilepsy 101*

**Chris Laufer, MD, Pediatrician, Affinity Medical Group**  
*Toxins and the Environment: How Human Behavior Affects Human Health*

**For more information, please contact Carole Bleck at (920) 720-1787 or [cbleck@affinityhealth.org](mailto:cbleck@affinityhealth.org).**



## SUMMER FUN FOR THE FAMILY

**Looking for a quick retreat? Wisconsin is filled with local hot spots for family fun. Here are some ideas for making the most of your summer.**

### Art

- Art in the Park, Appleton – The Valley’s most popular art festival is scheduled for July 27 at City Park.
- Art on the Town ([appletondowntown.org](http://appletondowntown.org)) – Stroll College Avenue as local businesses present visual and performing art exhibits the third Friday of the month, June – September.
- For more art festivals, visit the Wisconsin Arts Board at [arts.state.wi.us](http://arts.state.wi.us).

### Water Parks

Splash, slide, swim and dive in Wisconsin Dells ([wisdells.org](http://wisdells.org)) or Blue Harbor Resort in Sheboygan.

### Interesting Places

- Take a two-day tour of Frank Lloyd Wright’s designs ([www.tourism.state.wi.us](http://www.tourism.state.wi.us)).
- Scuba divers can tour popular historic shipwrecks in Lake Michigan ([maritimetrails.org](http://maritimetrails.org)).
- The new Harley-Davidson Museum opens this year in Milwaukee ([harleydavidson.com](http://harleydavidson.com)).

### Farm Market

- Downtown Appleton Farm Market – Saturday mornings through Oct. 25. The area’s largest farm market offers more than 100 vendors and now hosts an art market on select dates.



### Camping, Hiking, Fishing... and Everything Under the Sun!

From cherry-picking in Door County to biking through Amish country, Wisconsin has something for everyone. For a list of outdoor adventures and more, visit [www.tourism.state.wi.us](http://www.tourism.state.wi.us).

### Stress-Free Family Outings

Traveling with kids? Keep these “stress-less” tips in mind:

- Be prepared. A “family backpack” filled with maps, snacks, sunscreen and wet wipes will be your best travel companion.
- Let each child choose a destination, restaurant or travel game so they feel a sense of ownership in the trip.
- Bring distractions for the drive. Hand-held games, DVDs, CDs or books on tape can help pass the time.
- Encourage older kids to keep a photo journal of the trip. It’ll keep them interested and provide the family with a keepsake.

## MENTAL KICKS

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Since becoming a black belt, Dr. Scott helps instruct both children and adults at the karate school. He believes the lessons learned on the mat help children grow and develop in their daily lives. “The instructors spend a part of each class talking about life lessons, such as goal setting, meeting people and developing good habits,” he says. Dr. Scott continues that children develop not just physical skills but have emotional growth as well.

As for the adults, Dr. Scott understands that starting a karate program can be intimidating. “I felt awkward when I first started, but everyone feels that way,” he says. “No one knows anything when they come in.”

Dr. Scott stresses that karate is not just about the moves or sparring. “Martial arts are about self-improvement, finding that quiet