



OUR VIEW

Is your pet fixed?

The story of Dog Dynasty, the no-kill shelter in La Marque, is another example of how an enormous social problem can overwhelm people with the noblest intentions. The shelter opened on FM 1764 in 2013. It was supposed to be a temporary place for animals that would otherwise be euthanized at a public pound. It started with a few animals and some volunteers. The number of dogs grew rapidly. Volunteers who originally signed on for a day or two a week found themselves with seven-day, unpaid jobs. When the shelter announced it was closing and would no longer accept

animals, people tied dogs to the shelter door. People pleaded. The shelter is going to close Jan. 10. Volunteers are trying to find homes for about 100 dogs. Supporters used phrases like “very overwhelming” and “financially straining” to describe the experience. There have been other cases of people getting overwhelmed in caring for growing numbers of animals. Perhaps the most widely publicized was the case of Whiskerville, a private no-kill shelter in Texas City. In January 2012, animal control officers found dozens of dead cats at the shelter. The owner, who said she left the cats in the care of an



Want to help?

Donations to Dog Dynasty can be made by contacting the Texas City Feed Store at 409-945-7731 or the Angel Animal Hospital at 713-944-2424. Donations also can be made through a PayPal account at kymann@triumphantails.net.

employee while she visited family, was prosecuted. It’s a social problem that society itself hasn’t been able to solve. Pets should be sterilized. Until the overwhelming majority adopts that principle, the problem of unwanted animals is going to be overwhelming.

• Heber Taylor



The Dog Dynasty no-kill animal shelter in La Marque will officially close next month. Not sterilizing pets has become a social problem that has left abandoned animals even more displaced as animal caretakers become overwhelmed with the spike in the number of animals at shelters. STUART VILLANUEVA/The Daily News

Let cities set a minimum wage

Minimum wage is an important issue not for only the low-wage earner, but also for our society because it has both economic and moral dimensions.

Guest column



Norman Pappous is a member of the Galveston City Council.

Legislated minimum wage levels affect the economic power of both the employee and employer. Morally, the minimum wage level serves as society’s suggestion that there is a minimum quality of life that a worker must be provided with in exchange for his or her labor.

The single most important, and neglected, element of the debate is that wages often do not represent all the value the worker receives. Depending on their situation, low-wage workers may qualify for subsidies for food, housing, education, health care and more. The government pays for those subsidies with taxpayer, or borrowed, money.

Which is why (and this is significant) any talk of allowing the free market to set wages is grossly incorrect — there is no free market regarding low wages because the government subsidizes those wages. And, let’s face it, having to ask for subsidies is not an exercise that provides workers with the dignity they deserve.

Additionally, the price you pay the business (employer) for goods or service is lower than its actual labor cost. Will a higher minimum wage increase prices? The answer is yes. And no.

The taxes you pay now, and the money the government borrows, funds worker subsidies. Imagine the following exchange at a company’s board meeting:

Consultant: We have determined that we can pay \$7.25 per hour and keep stores fully staffed.

CEO: That’s ridiculous! There is no way people will work for that wage. Based on a 40 hour workweek, they would not have enough to pay for their clothing, food, housing, education, health care and save for retirement.

Consultant: Well here is the beauty of our recommendation — the government will pick up the cost difference for all that! The government will supply subsidies

to your workers that enable them to have all that.

CEO: Wait. I smell a rat. How much of our revenue will we have to pay Uncle Sam for that service?

Consultant: Nothing. The government will fund the benefits from taxes and money they borrow from the Chinese!

CEO: You’re kidding! We get to reap the entire financial reward of our employee’s labor but the taxpayer and Chinese pay for part of the cost?

Consultant: Well technically your taxes will pay for a very small portion of the borrowing. But the benefit to cost ratio is simply amazing!

CEO: I’m sold! All the revenue and only a portion of the labor expense. Now that’s good business!

While fictional, this is fairly accurate.

The government spends hundreds of millions administering subsidy programs for food, housing, education, health care and more. Yet the business earns 100 percent of their employee’s labor.

Why not simply set a higher minimum wage and allow the worker to fully participate in the economy and make their own spending decisions? Would that not be more fair and transparent?

Seattle has set a higher minimum wage. One of the surprising results is that workers from the suburbs have started applying for jobs downtown.

Seattle employers are now enjoying unexpected competition for hourly jobs and those that get hired are more productive — leading to higher revenues and profits.

I don’t pretend that allowing municipalities to set a minimum wage is a perfect solution. But it’s better than what we have now.

It’s impossible for any one doctor to know it all

Perhaps you’ve heard the story. A man dies and goes to Heaven where St. Peter tells him that everyone is of equal status. The man sees someone break into the front of the line at the cafeteria, however, dressed in a mask and a green suit. “I thought you said everyone was equal. Why is he so different?” asks the man. St. Peter replies: “Oh, that’s God. He likes to play doctor now and then.”

It’s Your Health



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We can blame the age of specialization for much of the frustration that doctors feel when they realize that they can’t answer every question. The body of knowledge in medicine is now so enormous that physicians and other professionals have been forced to focus on specific areas of their profession.

And specialization is getting narrower and narrower. Now, there are orthopedic surgeons who only operate on knees, hands, or shoulders, but not all three. There are urologists who treat only kidney stones, cancer or infections.

For the patient, the advantages are great. The chance of a physician who devotes his or her entire professional energy toward treating kidney stones and not understanding any problem that arises is minimal. But don’t ask that same specialist about your orthopedic concerns!

Even in the doctor’s own area of expertise, there might be a time when he or she simply does not know the answer. Some physicians think that to admit this is a sign of weakness, but realistically, if a doctor does not know the answer, you should hear: “I don’t know, but I’ll find out” or “I know another physician who should be able to help you” or “I’m mystified; let’s get input from another source.”

Your doctor might also need to run tests, take X-rays, go to the medical library and call fellow physicians for advice whatever it takes to get an answer.

You should never be dismissed with a

litany of medical terminology that leaves your head spinning and your questions unanswered. And if you suspect that your doctor is not being completely honest with you, seek another opinion. You have a right to an accurate evaluation of your medical condition, even if the answers to your questions are “I don’t know, but I’ll find out.”

Once the physician has an answer, it should be explained in plain English. If you don’t understand, ask again. And never leave a doctor’s office until you understand your medical problem completely.

“I don’t know” should be one of the most important phrases in any physician’s vocabulary and should be used without shame or embarrassment. The patient should be able to expect and be thankful for such honesty.

From the files of Texas’ oldest newspaper

From the archives of The Daily News for December 9:

» In 1914, Galveston Artillery Company hosted its 75th annual ball.

» In 1914, El Mina Temple held an annual election of officers.

» In 1964, it was announced that planning of a bridge connecting Bolivar Peninsula and Pelican Island would possibly begin the next year.

» In 1964, the total valuation of city building permits issued in five days at the city building department was \$4.8 million.

» In 1989, Beach Park Board members met in a special meeting to approve \$17,000 in claims that included overdue payments for utility bills and missed paychecks for at least four contract laborers.

From Staff Reports