

Television

Professor shares his battle with cancer

When award-winning photographer John Kaplan was diagnosed with lymphoma in 2008, he started documenting his journey with pictures as a way to cope with the fear and uncertainty surrounding cancer.

Kaplan, a University of Florida journalism professor, says that early on during his treatment he decided that if the cancer went into remission, his story might help others.

It has. Kaplan's documentary "Not as I Pictured" won more than 20 awards and is airing on PBS stations around the country. It airs at 10 p.m. Thursday on WUSF Knowledge (Bright House channel 616, Verizon channel 471), which features documentaries, news and public affairs series.

But more importantly for Kaplan are the positive reactions from cancer patients and their families. "This is an upbeat, life-affirming film," Kaplan said in a telephone interview from Gainesville. "You have got to listen to your doctors and follow treatments, but your belief system, your attitude and your will to fight it are also important. There have been actual clinical studies that show increased stress during and after treatment can lead to cancer spreading."

Kaplan says that during his battle with cancer he never missed a day of teaching at UF. "Continuing to teach was part of my healing," he says, adding that a cancer patient needs to feel the same sense of self-worth as before the diagnosis.

"Teaching was a way to keep normalcy in my life," he says. "And my students were wonderfully supportive."

Kaplan, a former newspaper photojournalist, has been a UF professor for 13 years. He has been a Fulbright scholar and was once named National Photographer of the Year. His cancer went

into remission in late 2008.

The soundtrack to "Not as I Pictured" was donated by musicians such as Michael Stipe (R.E.M.), Chris Martin (Coldplay), David Bowie, will.i.am (The Black Eyed Peas), Justin Timberlake, Pantera and Cowboy Junkies.

This husband and father of two young children is on a mission to share his film with as many people as possible. "During my treatment, I received so much help and encouragement that I want to give back," he says.

He's giving away 10,000 copies to anyone with cancer. Viewers can order free copies at: www.NotAsIPictured.org. Even the shipping is free. A cancer coping kit produced by the American Society of Clinical Oncology accompanies the DVD.

Kaplan says that after he went into remission he and his family visited Sarasota and fell in love with the coast. They now have a vacation home there.

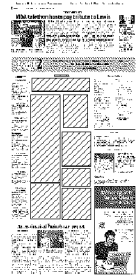
"One in three Americans will get cancer so just about every family will be touched and I hope this film offers a small nugget of courage," he says. "One of the themes is that cancer is treatable and beatable."

SHOW CANCELED: "Hawthorne," the hospital drama starring Jada Pinkett Smith, won't get a fourth season on TNT.

"TNT truly appreciates the tremendous dedication of everyone involved in 'Hawthorne,'" a statement read.

At the end of this season, Christina Hawthorne (Smith) had divorced her doctor husband (Michael Vartan) after a fling with a police detective (Marc Anthony).

Two weeks ago, Smith and Anthony's steamy love scenes on the show prompted rumors the actress and her husband Will Smith had separated. The couple denied strife in their marriage.





Walt Belcher
The Tampa Tribune

Tune In Tonight

"The Glades," 10 p.m., A&E

In the season 2 finale, Jim and Callie must work together to keep everyone safe when ex-cons seize a hospital and take hostages.



JOHN KAPLAN

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