Emotions and Humorous Paragraphs

**Having a Bad Day?**

Fire authorities in California found a corpse in a burned out section of forest while assessing the damage done by a forest fire. The deceased male was dressed in a full wet suit, complete with scuba tanks on his back, flippers, and face mask. A post-mortem revealed that the person died not from burns, but from massive internal injuries. Dental records provided a positive identification.

Investigators set about to determine how a fully clad diver ended up in the middle of a forest fire. It was revealed that on the day of the fire, the person went for a diving trip off the coast some 20 miles from the forest. The fire­ fighters, seeking to control the fire as quickly as possible, called in a fleet of helicopters with *very* large dip buckets. Water was dipped from the ocean and then flown to the forest fire and emptied. You guessed it. One minute our diver was making like Flipper in the Pacific, the next he was doing the breaststroke in a fire dip bucket 300 feet in the air.

Apparently he extinguished exactly 5'1O" of the fire. Some days it just doesn't pay to get out of bed - This article was taken from the California Examiner, March 20, 1998

STILL THINK YOU ARE HAVING A BAD DAY?

A man was working on his motorcycle on his patio and his wife was in the kitchen. The man was racing the engine on the motorcycle when it accidentally slipped into gear. The man, still holding onto the handlebars, was dragged through the glass patio doors and along with the motorcycle dumped onto the floor inside the house. The wife, hearing the crash, ran into the dining room and found her husband lying on the floor, cut and bleeding, the motorcycle lying next to him, and the shattered patio door.

The wife ran to the phone and summoned the ambulance. Because they lived on a fairly large hill, the wife went down the several flights of stairs to the street to escort the paramedics to her husband.

After the ambulance arrived and transported the man to the hospital, the wife righted the motorcycle and pushed it outside. Seeing that gas was spilled on the floor, the wife got some paper towels, blotted up the gasoline, and threw the towels in the toilet. The man was treated and released to come home. Upon arriving home, he looked at the shattered patio door and the damage done to his motorcycle.

He became despondent, went to the bathroom, sat down on the toilet and smoked a cigarette. After finishing the cigarette, he flipped it between his legs into the toilet bowl, while seated. The wife, who was in the kitchen, heard the loud explosion and her husband screaming.

She ran into the bathroom and found her husband lying on the floor. His trousers had been blown away and he was suffering burns on the buttock, the back of his legs, and his groin. The wife again ran to the phone to call the ambulance. The very same paramedic crew was dispatched and the wife met them at the street. The paramedics loaded the husband on to the stretcher and began carrying him to the street. While they were going down the stairs to the street accompanied by the wife, one of the paramedics asked the wife how the husband had burned himself. She told them and the paramedics started laughing so hard, one of them slipped and tipped the stretcher, dumping the husband out. He fell down the remaining stairs and broke his arm - Taken from a Florida Newspaper.

STILL HAVING A BAD DAY?

Just remember, it could be worse.....

The average cost of rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska was $80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensive! saved animals were released back into the wild amid cheers and applause from onlookers. A minute later, in full view, a killer whale ate them both.

A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen, shaking frantically with what looked like a wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current she whacked him with a handy plank of wood by the back door, breaking his arm in two places. Until that moment he had been happily listening to his

Walkman.

Two animal rights protesters were protesting at the cruelty of sending pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn Germany.. Suddenly the pigs, all two thousand of them, escaped through a broken fence and stampeded, trampling the two hapless protesters to death.

And finally...

Iraqi terrorist, Khay Rahnajet, didn't pay enough postage on a letter bomb. It came back with "return to sender" stamped on it. Forgetting it was the bomb he opened it and was blown to bits.

In the Jan. 6, 2002 edition of Parade magazine, Kirk Douglas wrote the following that I think applies well to anybody struggling with any adversity:

My "Operator's Manual":

To help people understand and recover from a stroke, I constructed the following guidelines. Then, I had an epiphany: Dealing with a stroke--­ dealing with any ailment or misfortune---is no different than the way we all should live our lives.

WHEN THINGS GO BAD, always remember: It could be worse.

NEVER, NEVER GIVE UP. Keep working on your speech and your life.

NEVER LOSE YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR. Laugh at yourself, laugh wit others.

STEM DEPRESSION by thinking of, reaching out to and helping others.

DO UNTO OTHERS as you would have them do unto you.

PRAY, not for God to cure you but to help you help yourself.

**Words of Wisdom from Kirk Douglas.**

Kirk Douglas says having a stroke made him appreciate life more. "I'm still alive," the 85-year-old actor said. "The sky is bluer, the trees are greener. People talk of heaven, but maybe this is heaven and we don't know it."

Kirk Douglas constructed his new outlook and survival upon these 4 great human values:

The love of his wife, Anne, and his four sons.

His intuitive conviction that laughter truly is the best medicine.

His immersion in the Bible study.

The gratification of reaching out and helping others.

Book buying info:

My Stroke of Luck , Autobiography by Kirk Douglas. Publisher: William Morrow & Company Inc., New York, January 2002. Price: $22.95, 196 pages.

**Fun with answering machines!**

1

"We are unable to come to the phone right now. At the tone, please leave your name, number, and Master Card, Visa, or American Express account number and we'll get back to, pending credit approval."

2

"You have reached the, Strategic Air Command Nuclear Missie Storage Facility. We are unable to come to the phone right now. At the tone, please leave you name, number and target or list of targets and we'll launch as soon as we can. And have a nice day.''.

3

"Hello . This is Chris. John and Mike aren't here right now, but if you leave a message, they'll get back to you as soon as they can."

4

[imitating Ensign Chekov]

"Oh, sair...it was \*Khan\*! He made us say things...do things...he kept us from answering the phone! But Keptin was strong, and if you leave your name and number, Keptin will get back to you as soon as he can!"

5

[imitating Mr. Rogers] "Hello. I'm in the Magic Kingdom right now, so I can't come to the phone. Can you leave your name and number when you hear the sound of the tone? Sure...l knew you could."

6

Steve: Hello. Steve and Matt aren't here right now but if... Matt: Steve, what are you doing?

Steve: I'm leaving a phone message since we aren't here. Matt: But you left the last one -- it's my turn.

Steve: No, I'm sure it's my turn.

Matt: No, you're incorrect. It's definitely my turn.

Steve: You fool. I know it's ... wait ... Matt ... what are you doing with that frying pan?!?

BONK [really loud thud]

Matt: Steve is out right now, so please leave your name and number.

7

"Hello. I'm David's answering machine. What are you?"

8

"This is (#include phone.addr). We are not ... excuse me a moment, please Put your sister down. PUT YOUR SISTER DOWN! (sound of window breaking) Great! What a mess. I'll have to get back to you later."

9

"Finally get an answering machine. Now how does this thing work? Hmmm. Press record button, I did that, and the light should be on. I wonder why it's not working right. Hmmmm, I wonder what this button does "

10

A friend of mine at school has this message, read by three people while the STAR TREK theme plays in the background.

1: Room 17, the final frontier.

2: These are the messages of Chad's answering machine. Its 2 semester mission: to seek out your name and your telephone number.

3: To boldly inform you to wait for the tone.

11

(Annoying flute music in background) Good day, Jim. Your contact, [insert name], is not available right now. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to leave your name, number, and a brief message at the tone. This tape will self-destruct in thirty seconds. Good Luck, Jim.

12

"Steve is reassembling Elvis' brain and can't come to the phone right now, but if you leave your name ...", etc.

13 .

"Steve has been captured by a flying saucer and can't come to the phone right now, but if you leave your name, phone number, and a message I'll have him call you back as soon as he gets away. Read all about it in next week's National Enquirer."

14

In the background can be heard Gregorian Chant or some other church music Good Day My child, you have reached {name} dial a confession. At the tone if you will leave your name, number and short confession I will get back to you with your penance. Thank you and may God go with you.

15

Hi this is. I'm sorry I can't answer the phone right now. Leave a message and then wait by the phone until I call you back.

16

A friend was at a mutual friend's sister's house, and when she went out for beer, he changed her answering machine message. In a loud, deep, gravely, horror-film voice he recorded, "HI, THIS IS KATHY, l'M NOT MYSELF RIGHT NOW. IF YOU LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER, I'll GET BACK TO YOU WHEN l'M FEELING BETTER."

17

I worked for a bit in the coastguard in Wales and I used to send weather reports to other bases, using a sort of antique FAX machine. I would call first on a special telephone and then send the data. They used to answer the phone with: " Epicentre of the Universe, God speaking."" Hartland home for lost whores." (that was Hartland CG)" Da, zis iz Ivan: do you have zee secret information, Boris?" " Pentagon command: transmit destruct sequence (pause) sequence correct: T minus one minute and counting" And then there was one phone we didn't use, with a number one off that of the local take-out. With my, non-British, accent I had some great fun with that phone.

- "Starship Enterprise, Uhura here, can you hold please? -- Captain, there is a transmission coming in on hailing frequency seven, do you want it on screen?" (silence...click) "Vancouver coastguard, may I help you." British long distance rates are phenomenal and I had this poor dude sputtering with horror that he had managed to make a long distance call by dialing five digits.

18

This is one of my old ones that got a lot of laughs:

Noisy pick-up of phone Uh... Hello?

Hi, I 'm a burglar and I was just about to steal Troy's answering machine.

If you give me your name and number I'Il.. uh, I'll post it on the 'frige where he'll see it. Uh.. by the way, where did you say you live?

19

But right now I'm using "This is a boring answering machine message. Leave a message anyway." because I'm sick of people ringing the phone a 1Oam just so they can hear the clever messages I usually have, and then hanging up without even leaving a "like your message" message. Feh!

20

[Must have good Australian accent] G'day mate. Can't come to the phone now because I'm a bit tied up with this crocodile. Just leave a message, and I'll get back to you.

**Can Humor and Laughter Influence Health Outcomes?**

History

Using humor to decrease stress, diminish pain, improve quality of life and even attempt to improve immune functioning has recently become a popular topic in the lay and professional literature (1-4). Laughter in response to a humorous stimulus is a natural occurrence and does not

require large amounts of time or money in order to implement. While therapies such as relaxation and exercise require significant time and commitment, and therapies such as herbs or massage can be expensive, use of humor can be easily implemented and cost effective. However, clinical benefits must still be documented before this therapy can be widely supported by the health care community.

Diverse literature suggests that effects of humor on various outcomes such as stress, health and immune function have been well-documented by empirical research and are therefore commonly accepted. The work of Cousins(§), Fry (§- 11), Berk (12-1I)or the field of Psychoneuroimmunology **(PNI)** is frequently cited as supporting the role of humor in healing. However, despite media claims, relatively few professional articles examine the scientific basis for these claims. There are a few studies that have examined the effects of humor or laughter on psychological outcomes, such as stress. However, there are a very limited number of studies that document the effects of laughter on physiological outcomes, and no controlled studies have been identified that document the effects of laughter on clinical health outcomes.

So what do we really know about the role of sense of humor, use of humor by patients with various illnesses, or the effects of laughter on various health related outcomes? Is use of humor an approach that we should implement in our practices and/or recommend to our patients? This is the first of the four articles that reviews, clarifies and synthesizes the professional literature concerning humor and health outcomes. This first paper presents basic background on the theoretical underpinnings concerning how the mind can affect the body, such as the effects of stress on immune functioning. Research in this area provides fundamental support for the supposition that interventions that lower stress may also help improve physiological outcomes. The second paper reports studies that document patient interest in and use of humor as a complementary therapy and provides evidence to support that humor may be one of the more frequently used complementary therapies. The third paper describes studies that report the relationship between sense of humor and various health outcomes. The final paper examines either the effect of a humorous stimulus and/or effects of laughter on health outcomes. These latter two parameters are difficult to separate, since patients who are exposed to a humorous stimulus usually respond with laughter, however, not all studies separately document laughter and exposure to a humorous stimulus.

This review is based on a search of Pub-Med and PsychINFO, using the search terms humor and laughter, plus bibliographic review for older articles that may not be documented in the databases. A search using those terms produced 324 hits, from which 55 relevant articles were

obtained. Only original empirical research reporting the psychological or physiological effects of humor or laughter are reported here, with the main focus on research documenting health related outcomes. Owing to small sample sizes in most studies and the limited number of available reviews, sample size was not used as a determinant to exclude certain analyses from our review. A meta-analysis was not possible owing to the use of multiple measures of sense of humor and various outcomes utilized in the studies reviewed.

Definitions

A full discourse on humor theory is beyond the scope of this review, but certain basic definitions are essential. From a psychological perspective, humor involves cognitive, emotional, behavioral, psycho-physiological and social aspects (18). The term humor can refer to a stimulus, which is intended to produce a humorous response (such as a humorous video), a mental process (perception of amusing in congruities) or a response (laughter, exhilaration). Laughter is the most common expression of humorous experience. Humor and laughter are also typically associated with a pleasant emotional state (ill ). For the purpose of these reviews, humor is defined as a stimulus that helps people laugh and feel happy.

Laughter is a psycho-physiological response to humor that involves both characteristic physiological reactions and positive psychological shifts.

Sense of humor is a psychological trait that varies considerably and allows persons to respond to different types of humorous stimuli. It is necessary to differentiate between these variables, as some analyses of humor use a humor stimulus (such as a video) to determine the effect of 'humor' on an outcome, while others look specifically at the effects of laughter on these outcomes. Still others analyze various ways to measure sense of humor, in an attempt to determine whether scoring higher on a sense of humor instrument is related to various health related outcomes.

► Stress, Psychoneuroimmunological Reactions and Health

Theoretical Framework and Early Experiments

What is the underlying theoretical framework that helps explain why use of a complementary therapy, such as humor, may affect health? It may be that these therapies work by reducing the effects of stress. Interest in the influence of psychological factors on susceptibility to certain disease states goes back to the times of Galen (\_lit), when it was noted that persons who developed cancer often had a 'melancholic' personality. Since then, numerous clinicians have shared anecdotal data concerning the development of cancer or other diseases in persons with certain psychological styles, or after a stressful life event, such as bereavement (20).

Selye's work was one of the first to document the general effects of stress on the sympathetic nervous system, endocrine system and lymphatic organs (.fl). Further studies established that activation of the stress response could also be triggered by acute emotions, physical exertion, col and pain (22). Later, Lazarus and Folkman (23) broadened the definition o stress from Selye's concept of 'environmental demands' to include psychological components such as appraisal and coping. While Lazarus and Folkman's theory helped to explain the moderation of stressors using coping mechanisms, it did not attempt to explain the possible consequences of these coping mechanisms in terms of physiological effects on immune functioning. The field of PNI brings all of these factors together in a testable theoretical framework. PNI started from a multi­ factorial model of illness, which included stress, coping and disease formation (24). This theory was further developed by Solomon (1987) to include the impact of stress on the immune system in disease formation (25). Later, the term 'psychoneuroimmunology' was coined by Ader and Cohen (26) to describe the basic phenomena of this theory: interactions between the nervous system and the immune system, and the subsequent effects of these interactions upon disease development/progression.

PNI and Stress

PNI researchers have repeatedly documented that increased stress levels can lead to changes in psychological and physiological

functioning. In addition to changes in the usual stress hormones such as ACTH, cortisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine, many other messengers are influenced by exposure to stressors. Production and release of prolactin, growth hormone, insulin, glucagon, thyroid hormone and gonadotrophin can be affected by physical and emotional stress (27). Levels of neurotransmitters, neurohormones, cytokines and various cells in the immune system can also be affected by stress (28).

A Neurological Approach to Laughter

Ideally, we would be able to draw a flow chart that outlines all of the neurological processes involved in the effects of laughter on stress and immune functioning . But unfortunately, the state of the science is not to that level at this time. We really know very little about how the brain functions in response to a humorous stimulus. According to Curtis (27), speech and laughter are both uniquely human. But while there is considerable information on the neuronal representation of speech, little is known about brain mechanisms of laughter. We do have some evidence that the supplementary motor area of the brain is involved in this response. Curtis reports that 'electrical stimulation in the anterior part of the human supplementary motor area (SMA) can elicit laughter' (29). Moreover, it has been proposed by Tanji (30) and Picard and Stick (fil) that the anterior part of the SMA is part of a further development in humans to accommodate the specialized functions of speech, manual dexterity and laughter. This area might correspond to the pre-supplementary motor area, a region situated anterior to the SMA proper, recently described in non-human primates, and thought to be involved in high-level motor programming (30,fil). Finally, Fried and Wilson (32) have examined putative regions in the brain using electric current that stimulates laughter. The data suggest that this is at least one anatomical location for the neurological response to humorous stimuli. However, more research is needed to determine how these neurological changes subsequently affect the physiological response to stressors, and possibly improve immune functioning.

**The Kids' Take on Church**

A little child in church for the first time watched as the ushers passed the offering plates. When they neared the pew where he sat, the youngster piped up so that everyone could hear: "Don't pay for me, Daddy, I'm under five."

A little boy was attending his first wedding. After the service, his cousin asked him, "How many women can a man marry?" "Sixteen," the boy responded. His cousin was amazed that he had an answer so quickly. "How do you know that?" "Easy," the little boy said. "All you have to do is add it up, like the Bishop said: 4 better, 4 worse, 4 richer, 4 poorer."

\* After a church service on Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, "Mom, I've decided to become a minister when I grow up." "That's okay with us, but what made you decide that?" "Well," said the little boy, "I have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell, than to sit and listen."

A 6-year-old was overheard reciting the Lord's Prayer at a church service: "And forgive us our trash passes, as we forgive those who passed trash against us."

A boy was watching his father, a pastor, write a sermon. "How do you know what to say?" he asked. "Why, God tells me." "Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"

A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

After the christening of his baby brother in church, little Johnny sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That priest said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I want to stay with you guys!"

Terri asked her Sunday School class to draw pictures of their favorite Bible stories. She was puzzled by Kyle's picture, which showed four people on an airplane, so she asked him which story it was meant to represent.

The flight to Egypt," said Kyle. "I see ... And that must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus," Ms. Terri said. "But who's the fourth person?" "Oh, that's Pontius - the pilot. ·

The Sunday School Teacher asks, "Now, Johnny, tell me frankly do you say prayers before eating?" "No sir," little Johnny replies, "I don't have to. My Mom is a good cook."

A college drama group presented a play in which one character would stand on a trap door and announce, "I descend into hell!" A stagehand below would then pull a rope, the trapdoor would open, and the character would plunge through. The play was well received. When the actor playing the part became ill, another actor who was quite overweight took his place. When the new actor announced, "I descend into hell!" the stagehand pulled the rope, and the actor began his plunge, but became hopelessly stuck. No amount of tugging on the rope could make him descend. One student in the balcony jumped up and yelled, "Hallelujah! Hell is full!"

Pastor Dave Charlton tells us, "After a worship service at First Baptist church in Newcastle, Kentucky, a mother with a fidgety seven-year-old boy told me how she finally got her son to sit still and be quiet. About halfway through the sermon, she leaned over and whispered, 'If you don't be quiet, Pastor Charlton is going to lose his place and will have to start his sermon all over again!' It worked."

A little girl was sitting on her grandfather's lap as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up to touch his wrinkled cheek. She was alternately stroking her own cheek, then his again. Finally she spoke up, "Grandpa, did God make you?" "Yes, sweetheart," he answered, "God made me a long time ago." "Oh," she paused, "Grandpa, did God make me too?" "Yes, indeed, Honey," he said, "God made you just a little while ago." Feeling their respective faces again, she observed, ."God's getting better at it, isn't he?"

''The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts.

It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do.

It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past . . . we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude ...

I am convinced that life is I0% what happens to me and 90% how to react to it. And so it is with you… we are in charge of our Attitudes.”

- Charles Swindoll

When the sunlight strikes raindrops in the air, they act like a prism and form a rainbow. The rainbow is a division of white light into many beautiful colors. These take the shape of a long round arch, with its path high above, and its two ends apparently beyond the horizon. There is, according legend, a boiling pot of gold at one end. People look, but no one ever finds it. When a man looks for something beyond his reach, his friends say he is looking for the pot gold at the end of the rainbow.

I hate the idea of going under the knife. So I was very upset when the doctor told me I needed a tonsillectomy. Later, the nurse and I were filling out an admission form. I tried to respond to the questions, but I was so nervous I couldn’t speak.

 The nurse put down the form, took my hands in hers and said, “Don’t worry. This medical problem can easily be fixed, and it’s not a dangerous procedure.”

 “You’re right. I’m being silly,” I said, feeling relieved. “Please continue.”

 “Good. Now,” the nurse went on, “do you have a living will?”

* Edward Lee Griffin

As a ‘secret shopper’ for a large department store, my sister made purchases at the various chains and then reported back to the

supervisors the clerks’ performances. After a few weeks, my mother asked her if she was enjoying her new job.

“I love it!” my sister replied. “I’m getting paid for doing two of my favorite things in life- shopping and criticizing people.”

* Becquet.com

I was reviewing my client’s case with him in prison when it was announced that visitors had 15 minutes to leave or be locked in for the three-hour prisoner head count. I bade my client farewell and left. But somehow, I managed to get lost on my way out. Desperate for directions to the exit, I noticed some men wearing orange jumpsuits. Mistaking them for workmen, I called out to one of them, a no-neck, barrel-chested man.

“Sir,” I said. “I need to get out of here.”

He shrugged. “Lady, so do I.”

* Suzan Porto

The spotlight on the corner buzzes when it’s safe to cross the street. I was walking with a co-worker of mine, when she asked if I knew what the buzzer was for.

“It signals to blind people when the light is red,” I said.

Unhappy with my explanation, she shot back, “What on earth are blind people doing driving?”

* Rinkworks.com

One of my students could not take my college seminar final exam because of a funeral. No problem, I told him. Make it up the following week. That week came, and again he couldn’t take the test due to another funeral.

“You’ll have to take the test early next week,” I insisted. “I can’t keep postponing it.”

“I’ll take the test next week if no one dies,” he told me.

By now, I was suspicious. “How can you have so many people you know pass away in three weeks?”

“I don’t know any of these people,” he said. “I’m the only gravedigger in town.”

* Srinivas Nippani

Lost in the woods, a hiker spends two days wandering around with no food. Finally, he spots a bald eagle, hits the bird with a big rock and eats it.

A park ranger stumbles on the scene and arrests the man for killing an endangered species.

In court, the hiker explains that he was on the edge of starvation and had no choice.

“Considering the circumstances, I find you not guilty,” says the judge.

“But I have to ask-what did the eagle taste like?”

“Well, Your Honor,” the hiker replies, “it tasted like a cross between a whooping crane and a spotted owl.”

* Submitted by Eric Fleming

A man is in the hospital after getting drunk and swallowing 120 coins on a bet. Doctors monitoring his situation say, so far, no change.

* Jay Leno, “The Tonight Show” (NBC)

Two friends were beginning a game of golf. The first man stepped up to the tee, hit the ball and got a hole in one. The other man said, “Now I’ll take my practice swing, and then we’ll start the game.”

* Submitted by Edward W. Strickler

Reporter interviewing a 104 year-old woman: “What is the best thing about being 104?”

She replied, “No peer pressure.”

* Submitted by Sylvia R. Shiner

On the first day of college, the dean addressed the students. He stressed one rule: “The female dorm is off-limits for male students, and the male dorm for females. Anyone who breaks this rule will be fined $20. Anyone caught a second time will be fined $60. Third offense, $180. Questions?” A young man raised his hand. “How much is a season pass?”

* Submitted by E.T. Thompson

A woman goes to the drugstore and asks for arsenic.

“What do you want that for?” the pharmacist asks.

“I want to kill my husband,” she replies. “He’s having an affair with another woman.”

“I can’t sell you arsenic to kill your husband,” says the pharmacist, “even if he is cheating.”

The woman pulls out a picture of her husband with the pharmacist’s wife. The druggist turns pale and replies, “Oh, I didn’t realize you had a prescription.”

* Submitted by Marsha Schauer

Q: Why did the cowboy buy a dachshund?

A: Someone told him to get a long little doggy.

* Submitted by Savanna Smith

Hitchhiking on a dark night, a man sees a car coming toward him. When it stops, he hops in the passenger seat.

No one is behind the wheel. But, suddenly, the car stars moving. The man looks down the road and sees a curve coming up. He panics and reaches for the steering wheel. But then a hand reaches through the window and turns the wheel, smoothly navigating the turn. Paralyzed with terror, the man watches as the hand appears before every curve.

When the car finally coasts to a stop, the man gets out and runs to a bar and tells everybody about his amazing experience.

Pretty soon, two guys walk into the bar. “Look, Pete,” one says, “it’s the guy who got in the car while we were pushing it.”

* Submitted by George Mark

A woman had a dream God appeared to her and said, “I’m going to grant you another 40 years, 8 months, and 22 days of life.” Well, she woke up and she was too excited. And she thought, if that’s gonna happen. I’m gonna get a little bit of work done.

So if you could nip it or tuck it, push it or pull it, she had it done. And, man, she was looking too good. So she decided she was going to take herself out for a night on the town. She wad downtown walking across the street and a car ran a red light.

Bam! Hit her, killed her dead.

She woke up in heaven and said, “Now, God, I don’t understand this. You said you’d grant me another 40 years, 8 months and 22 days of life, and here I am standing before you. What’s up with that?”

God looked at her and said, “I didn’t recognize you.’

* Terri Arnett

The chairman of the board of our company called me into his office to tell me the good news: I was being promoted to Vice President of Corporate Research and Planning.

Of course I was excited, but that didn’t stop me from asking for my new title to be changed to Vice President of Corporate Planning and Research.

“Why?” the chairman asked.

“Because,” I said, “our organizational charts list names with abbreviated job titles, and I don’t want to be known as Robert E. Reuter, VP of CRAP!”

* Robert E. Reuter

Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night will stop my fellow mail carriers and me from delivering junk mail.

One day, I delivered an envelope full of coupons to a home that was

addressed: “To the Smart Shopper at…”

The next day, the envelope was returned with this note scrawled on it: “Not at This Address.”

* Vanessa Peebles

Gail, a neighbor, wanted to buy her workaholic boss a special gift. Knowing that I create handcrafted items as a hobby, she came to me. I made a few suggestions, all of which she said weren’t quite right.

Frustrated, Gail asked, “What do I get for a person who has no life?”

“How about a nice urn?” I replied

* Kenny Lee Sky

One of our clients brought in his massive Doberman pinscher to be spayed. As a veterinary assistant, I escort the patient into the doctor’s office. But before taking this dog’s leash, I glimpsed those large teeth of hers and asked the owner, “Is she friendly?”

“Friendly?” said the man. “She’s had five litters!”

* June Gouvas

Even though I’ve worked in many state government agencies over the years, I still don’t get the jargon. Here’s an example of what I read every day and -worse- am expected to understand:

“Most of you will be developing subleases instead of subsubleases, so any reference to ‘susubleases’ needs to be changed to ‘subleases’ except for paragraph 38, which will become ‘subsubleases’ instead of ‘subsubsubleases’. Also, there will no longer be any references to ‘Subsublessor’ or ‘Subsublessee,’ which become ‘Sublessor’ and ‘Sublessee,’ respectively. I hope this information will get you started.

* Trudie Mixon

Are today’s college grads ready to enter the workplace? A study conducted for Commemorative Brands, a marker of class rings, asked executives to recall their oddest interviews with young job seekers. Thre was no dearth of examples.

“The reason the candidate was taking so long to respond to a question became apparent when he began to snore.”

While speaking with a prospective employee, there was a knock at the door-pizza delivery! “He had arranged for a pizza to be delivered to my office. I had to ask him not to eat it until later.”

“I had asked the candidate to bring a resume and a couple of references. He arrived with the resume-and two people to vouch for him.”

* Larry McShane in AP

My co-worker was being let go due to a nasty habit she had of not always showing up for work. As an officer in our union, I was preparing to argue on her behalf when she took matters into her own hands and insisted, “But I was really sick this time.”

* Gina K. Manu

Selecting watermelons is an art form. You have to thump a bunch of them before finding the right one. One hot summer day a blind man, a piano tuner by trade, came into my store. He felt and thumped some of the larger melons, but he always returned to the same one. Then, with two final resounding thumps, he announced, “B flat! I’ll take it!”

* Becquet.com

Rather than hire actors to portray homeless men, the director wanted the real deal, with all the grittiness and despair that comes from being on the streets. I was working as the assistant director when the location scout found some down-and-out men who fit the description. They agreed to show up the following week. But when it was time to shoot the scene, our destitute men arrived on the set- freshly shaven and dressed in new clothes.

“What happened to my homeless people?!” yelled the director.

“We cleaned ourselves up,” one replied. “We wanted to look good for the movie.”

* Mike Messinger

It had been a nerve-racking experience for my attorney husband. He was working with the FBI on a federal sting operation. Worried for his safety, they had put him under protective surveillance.

Finally the bureau told him they had rounded up all the criminals and were lifting the surveillance. A few days later my relieved spouse was on the telephone with his brother, telling him about the whole adventure.

“Did you happen to mention to the FBI that you have an identical twin?” his horrified brother interrupted. “Who lives next-door?”

* J.D., Lake City, Florida

For my grandmother’s 80th birthday, we had a huge family celebration and even managed to get a photo announcement about her in the local paper.

“That was such a nice shot,” I commented.

“It’s my passport picture,” she revealed.

“Really?” I stared in complete amazement at my homebody grandma. “Where did you go?”

“Walgreens,” she replied.

* Karen Thompson, Owatonna, Minnesota

Eight and a half months very pregnant with twins, I was used to getting nervous glances from strangers. But I never realized how imposing I was until my husband and I went out to dinner at a new restaurant.

The hostess sat us at our table, took a long look at my stomach and asked, “Would you like me to get you a high chair just in case?”

* Clarissa Lucyk, Mesa, Arizona

Living in a dry county was the bane of my friend Robert’s existence. He was complaining to me one day about having to make a 60-mile round trip to get his favorite brand of bourbon.

“I buy it by the case,” he said.

“Are you addicted to that stuff?” I asked.

Robert thought for a second. “I don’t know. I’ve never run out.”

* Rick Workman, Palmersville, Tennessee

For over 40 years, my grandfather put in long hours at his job, so I was more than a little curious about the way he filled his days since his retirement. “How has life changed?” I asked.

A man of few words, he replied, “Well, I get up in the morning with nothing to do, and I go to bed at night with it half-done.”

* Dennis Lundberg, Hyrum, Utah

In a misguided burst of creativity, I installed a night-light in a conch shell I found on the beach. My wife took an instant dislike to it, and at the next yard sale it was the first thing she put out.

I felt vindicated when a woman kept coming back to check it out, then finally bought it. “That will look great in your home,” I said.

“Oh, it’s not for me,” she explained. “My bridge club is having a charity auction and we were asked to bring the most hideous thing we can find. What I’ve got here is a winner.”

* Jerome Jorissen, Clearwater, Florida

While shopping in a supermarket in Florida, I heard over the PA system: “A wallet was found containing a large sum of cash but no identification. Will those laying claim to it please form a double line at the

customer service counter?”

* Larry Jannarelli, Deer Park, New York

To our shock and horror, my sister-in-law and I realized we had each been married nearly 50 years.

“That’s a long time,” I observed.

“A long, long time,” she agreed. Then she smiled. “Something just occurred to me.”

“What’s that?”

“If I had killed your brother the first time I felt like it, I’d be out of jail by now.”

* Barbara Mason, Whittier, California

I became friendly with the fortune-teller, one of the more popular attractions at the amusement park where I worked.

One chilly, windy afternoon, I stopped to chat. “How’s business?” I asked.

Not good, she said. Only two customers had come by. She then added, “If I’d known things were going to be this quiet, I wouldn’t have bothered to open.”

* Iain Macpherson

The day I started my construction job, I was in the office filling out an employee form when I came to the section that asked: Single \_\_\_, Married \_\_\_, Divorced \_\_\_.

I marked single. Glancing at the man next to me, who was also filling out his form, I noticed he hadn’t marked any of the blanks. Instead he’d written, “Yes, in that order.”

* Becquet.com

On the way home from my job at the pet boarding kennel, I stopped at the grocery store. I was on line at the checkout counter with a full cart when I noticed a man on a longer line buying only two items. Without thinking, I did what I always do when calling to another of God’s creatures- I whistled at him and commanded, “Come!”

As the man got in line in front of me, he grumbled, “Lucky for you my tail’s wagging.”

* Sandi Spurgeon

Working as a court reporter, I listen to a lot of testimony that you won’t hear on “Law and Order,” including the following give-and-take between the judge and a mother during a paternity suit.

Judge: Was the child born out of wedlock?

Mother: No, sir, just outside of Louisville.

* Mary Gale

The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress and grow brave by reflection. ‘Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct will pursue his principles unto death.

* Thomas Paine

I have always felt that the moment when first you wake up in the morning is the most wonderful of the 23 hours. No matter how weary you feel, you possess the certainty that anything may happen. The fact that it practically always doesn’t matters not one jot. The possibility is there.

* Monica Baldwin

People obey the law for one of two reasons: they either love God or fear punishment. When both of these break down, the result is an environment that breeds violence, poverty, and anarchy.

* Jack Kemp

The winter wind is like a cold surf beating through the bare treetops and sweeping through the valleys. It roars in the night, an element voice; it whistles at the house corner and rattles the shutter and the pane.

We sit before our fires and cherish our warmth, our snug security. And we know that the rush of wind just beyond our stout walls if the rush of winter passing. It is the fierce breath of change itself. The earth turns and the winds eddy and swirl. And one fine night there will be a whisper of spring in the wind, and another winter will have blown itself away.

* Hal Borland

Communism was condemned the day it was born. It had declared that everything was determined by economics and, by an irony of history, it was the economy that killed it. Inside the Soviet Union it held on for 70 years only thanks to repression and bloody violence – don’t forget it killed up to 60 million people.

Abroad it was able to hold sway to thanks for demagogy and lies. It fascinated the West, because it was like a sickly blossoming of humanism. Didn’t the intellectuals of the ‘20s and ‘30s believe that it had brought us paradise on earth?

* Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn

Courage is not limited to the battlefield or the Indianapolis 500 or bravely catching a thief in your house. The real tests of courage are much deeper and much quieter. They are the inner tests, like remaining faithful when nobody’s looking, like enduring pain when the room is empty, like standing along when you’re misunderstood.

* Charles R. Swindoll

True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost.

* Authur Ashe

America is not just another country whose wealth others covet. It is a unique home where diversity and democracy swell, where the creative resources inherent in our individuality yield a nation greater than the sum of its parts.

But too often lately we define ourselves by race, ethnicity, creed, and class; we build walls of suspicion and shun opening doors. As a result, we chip away at the shared values on which we stand tall. We need to practice at home what we trumpet abroad. If American fails at *e pluribus unum*, what hope is there for peoples who do not enjoy our democratic traditions? Divided into we and they, America is history.

* Bette Bao Lord

A musical instrument is a mysterious thing, inhabiting a complex sort of space: it is both an ordinary three-dimensional object and a portal to another world; it exists as a physical entity solely so that it- and, indeed, physicality- can be transcended.

* Joyce Carol Oates

Much of the social history of the Western world over the past three decades has involved replacing what worked with what sounded good. In area after area- crime, education, housing, race relations- the situation has gotten worse after the bright new theories were put into operation. The amazing thing is that this history of failure and disaster has neither discouraged the social engineers nor discredited them.

* Thomas Sowell

One of my superstitions has always been when I started to go anywhere; or to do anything, never to turn back or to stop until the thing intended was accomplished.

* Ulysses S. Grant

The way I picture it, adulthood is a big, sleek jungle snake. It swallows you subtly, an inch at a time, so you barely notice the signs: you start reading the labels on things before you eat them; you find yourself listening to a talk radio because the hit songs they play on the radio stations (can this really be you thinking this?) all begin to sound the same. Before you know it, your furniture is nice. And suddenly you realize that you’d rather sit around on your furniture and talk about the warning signs of colon cancer than, say, find out what happens when you set one of those plastic milk jugs on fire. And if your kid sets a milk jug on fire, you yell at him, “Somebody could get hurt,” and really mean it, from inside the snake.

* Dave Barry

The greatest danger to liberty comes from the men who are most needed and most powerful in modern government, namely, the efficient expert administrators exclusively concerned with what they regard as the public good.

* Fredrich Hayek

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts.

It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company… a church… a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past… We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and this our attitude…

I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you… We are in charge of our Attitudes.

* Charles Swindoll

Age gracefully? I think not. Age ferociously instead. Seize everything valuable within reach. Extend. Questions. Give. The face will follow. All cosmetic surgeons in the works could never produce such a face.

* Roger Rosenblatt

Authority without wisdom is like a heavy ax without an edge: fitter to bruise than to polish.

* Ann Bradstreet

Non-golfers frequently ask what the big deal is about golf. I’ve given up trying to explain the haunting feel of a perfect shot: the magical flight of the ball as it defies gravity, wind and all things physical in search of the tiniest of goals.

While most of the man’s athletic competitions imitate war, golf imitates life, each player pitting his own skills against the hazards of the way. On the basic nine-holer, it is you against the lay of the land; and if bad breaks conspire against you, they also show whether you have what it takes to overcome them.

* Turk Pipkin

There is an art to wandering. If I have a destination, a plan- an objective- I’ve lost the ability to find serendipity. I’ve become too focused, too single-minded. I am on a quest, not a ramble. I search for the Holy Grail of particularity and miss the chalice freely offered, filled and overflowing.

* Cathy Johnson

At Phoenix House, the highly regarded drug-rehabilitation center in New York, a typical therapy group will start out by listening quietly to all the victim chatter of a recently arrived addict. Then someone will say something like “It isn’t your mother or society or even the pushers who put the needle in your arm. You did.” Therapy starts there.

* John Leo

If there is one secret to survival- note that I’m saying survival, not success- in business, it is tenacity. If you have some minimal talent, bathe with regularity and aren’t certifiably insane, you can survive in any field if you simply are determined to hold on. I was astonished to discover in the theater that although some talent was necessary, the fellow who lived, slept and ate the theater, wanting to be part of it above all else, might not become a start but was certain to endure.

* Charles Peters

Maybe it’s best to treat happiness like a deer in the forest. Sometimes it will emerge from the woods and pay you a visit. But it dislikes undue attention. And if you chase it, it will run away.

* Phyllis Theroux

There is only one basic human right, the right to do as you please unless it causes others harm. With it comes the only basic human duty, the duty to take the consequences.

* P.J. O’Rourke

A professor was invited to speak at a military base and was met at the airport by unforgettable soldier named Ralph. As they headed toward the baggage-claim area, Ralph kept disappearing: once to help an older woman with her suitcase; once to list two toddlers so they could see Santa Claus; and again to give someone directions. Each time he came back smiling.

“Where did you learn to live like that?” the professor asked.

“During the war,” said Ralph. Then he told the professor about Vietnam. His job was to clear minefields, and he saw friends meet untimely ends, one after another, before his eyes.

“I learned to live between steps,” he said. “I never knew whether the next one would be my last, so I had to get everything I could out of that moment between picking up my foot and putting it down again. Every step felt like a whole new world.”

* Barbara Brown Taylor