

Laughing Our Way Through Coronavirus

With our country wrapped in the coils of coronavirus, April has brought its usual splendors to Virginia: brown lawns turned green, forsythias in bloom, flowering dogwoods and Japanese maples, balmy temperatures and soft rains. The contrast between this wealth of ornamentation and a season of economic hardship, sickness, and fear – all caused by a tiny virus – seems cruelly ironic, a glaring reminder of both the barbarity and beauty of an indifferent Mother Nature.

Here's another irony: April is National Humor Month in the U.S.

Until last week I was unaware of National Humor Month. A friend mentioned it, and sure enough, here we are at the tail end of that month which, according to one [site](#), “was conceived as a means to heighten public awareness of the therapeutic value of humor. Laughter and joy – the benchmarks of humor – lead to improved well-being, boosted morale, increased communication skills, and an enriched quality of life.”

Far be it from me to neglect such a worthy endeavor. I've come late to the game, but I'll do my patriotic duty and take a few shots. Heaven knows we can always use laughter, and the ridiculous and zany of the COVID-19 meltdown provides perfect fodder.

First up is a sight that gave me a chuckle while driving home from town through open country. I passed a woman alone in her car waiting to pull onto the highway, windows down, facemask in place. On my arrival home, I was sitting on my front porch when the woman who delivers the mail drove past, again with the windows open on her vehicle and again wearing a mask. Meanwhile, in New Jersey one man wearing an N95 [mask](#) inside

his car for several hours passed out from lack of adequate oxygen and crashed into a pole.

Why are people wearing masks inside their cars? Am I missing something?

Some customers in my local grocery store who wear gloves also bring a smile. They pick up items from the shelves, dropping some into their cart, depositing others back in place. When their cell phone rings, they answer, apparently unaware they are depositing all sorts of microbes from the gloves onto their phone, which they will later use gloveless. A nurse has told me that, unless you are following surgical protocols, gloves are [ineffective](#) as protection against germs.

We all know that smoking is bad for the lungs and heart. But here's the kicker: French researchers have found [evidence](#) that smokers in good health fall ill from coronavirus much less frequently than non-smokers. These scientists are exploring the possibility that nicotine may inhibit the virus from attaching to cells, and the government is taking this research so seriously that it has banned online sales of nicotine patches to prevent a run on these devices.

Yesterday I knew we had turned a corner in our war against the Chinese virus when I visited my local grocery store. For the first time in weeks, I saw customers carrying rolls of toilet paper to the checkout lines. I walked to the paper product aisle and found 20 or 30 packs of TP standing tall and proud amid the desolation. I purchased one package, came home, poured a glass of chardonnay, and toasted a minor triumph for civilization.

My friend John reports going to a sporting store near Richmond to purchase some cleaning equipment for his firearms. According to him, the store is enormous, the size of two football fields, but because our governor has declared such stores "non-essential" only 10 customers at a time could be

admitted. John stood in line for 45 minutes.

The nearby country store I frequent posted this expression on its display sign: "We're all in prison now. If you're going to work, you're a trustee."

The Internet brings a smile almost daily. In California, [officials](#) in San Clemente dumped sand into a skateboarding park to prevent its use. Dirt bikers showed up and had a field day roaring around the park, then grabbed shovels and wheelbarrows to remove some of the sand for the skateboarders. Go for it, gang!

Somewhere online I saw a poster from a store encouraging customers to wear facemasks or "bananas." Though not a banana fan, I did think of buying a few, stitching the skins together, and walking about town masked in yellow peels.

In Seattle, some tin-pot dictator nailed 2x4s to park [benches](#) to prevent people from sitting. Such overkill could enrage us, or we could laugh at it as absurdity. (Or we could get creative, sit on the back of the bench, and still enjoy the sunset.)

When faced with such follies, we can either laugh or cry. As we're still in National Humor Month, patriotism demands laughter.

For my fellow prisoners who have long ago lost their smiles and who fear they are losing their minds, take heart in yet another irony: May is "Mental Health Awareness Month."

You see? There's always a silver lining.

—

[Image Credit: Pixabay]

Image Credit: [Image Credit: Pixabay]