

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

Pandemic threatens musician’s life when we need his art most

By TOM PURCELL

When I was a junior at Penn State, I had a front-row seat when legendary singer-songwriter John Prine performed on campus.

If you aren’t familiar with Prine’s work, you aren’t alone. He’s often called the greatest singer and songwriter you’ve never heard of.

New York Times columnist Dan Barry explains that Prine is an “influential singer and songwriter with a gift for articulating moments almost beyond words. His songs have won the respect of Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Pink Floyd, the Library of Congress, you name it. One admirer, Bob Dylan, once described his canon as ‘pure

Proustian existentialism’ and ‘Midwestern mind trips to the nth degree.’”

Prine’s apparently simple lyrics and melodies are chock-full of complexity and humanity — funny, thought-provoking, hauntingly poetic.

“Dear Abby,” the first Prine song I heard, made me laugh out loud. It’s about fretting over trivial matters: “Dear Abby, Dear Abby, My fountain pen leaks My wife hollers at me and my kids are all freaks Every side I get up on is the wrong side of bed If it weren’t so expensive I’d wish I were dead Signed Unhappy”

Prine responds to the complainer with hilarious common sense:

“Unhappy. Unhappy, You have no complaint You are what you are and you ain’t what you ain’t So listen up buster, and listen up good

Stop wishing for bad luck and knocking on wood.”

“Sam Stone” is about a heroin-addicted Vietnam veteran who returns with a Purple Heart — and eventually dies from an overdose: “There’s a hole in daddy’s arm where all the money goes ...”

Prine said most Vietnam War songs at the time were about protest. He wanted to address returning vets’ struggles. “Sam Stone” remains regrettably relevant amid America’s opioid epidemic.

“Hello in There” is

about a lonely elderly couple wishing their children would visit. It’s more powerful than ever as millions of elderly people self-isolate at home:

“So if you’re walking down the street sometime And spot some hollow ancient eyes,

Please don’t just pass ‘em by and stare As if you didn’t care, say, ‘Hello in there, hello.’”

Right now, I’m appreciating Prine, who’s 73, more than ever — because he’s hospitalized in critical condition, another victim of COVID-19.

The past few weeks have been bizarre, surreal, with the pandemic playing out like a chintzy B-movie. I find myself wondering, “So

this is what a pandemic is like?”

I’m comfortable at home all day. With 300 TV channels, the Internet, phone, texting and a stocked pantry, I have everything I need.

My large extended family worries about its elderly members — we’re keeping our distance to keep them safe. All of us are well, though.

Still, the seriousness of this pandemic hasn’t quite sunk in yet. But it better. Dr. Anthony Fauci warns that the virus could claim up to 200,000 Americans.

But John Prine? No!

That makes this virus suddenly personal for me. Now I’m getting angry.

I pray we find a way to stop its spread — before it

hurts my loved ones and close friends.

I pray for Prine, who’s already beaten cancer twice, to beat this thing.

God knows we need the healing power of Prine’s music right now. This horrible virus has no right trying to rob us of his much-needed beauty and humor when we need them most.

Copyright 2020 Tom Purcell. Tom Purcell, author of “Misadventures of a 1970’s Childhood,” a humorous memoir available at amazon.com, is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc. Send comments to Tom at Tom@TomPurcell.com.



Argus Hamilton: The Lighter Side

HOLLYWOOD — God Bless America, and how’s everybody?

President Trump called upon the nation to give our talents and skills to the cause of defeating this virus together so it’s my calling to help us laugh it to death. I apologize if I annoy your sense of propriety by joking about COVID-19. Please remember that lack of taste is the first sign of the virus.

The White House urged home-bound Americans Tuesday to help save the restaurant business by telephoning your favorite eateries and ordering in or going for takeout. This transition period could bring a lot of changes. If Hooters begins home delivering, will it change its name to Knockers?

Beverly Hills residents were advised by police and officials Wednesday do not call the police if they see strange or dangerous looking people walking down the sidewalks. They said all your 911 calls have been an honest mistake. Those are your neighbors without makeup or hair extensions.

President Trump trotted out U.S. military and DEA officials to warn the cartels not to try to run contraband into the U.S. during this crisis. DEA agents just uncovered a 2,000-foot long tunnel running from Tijuana into the U.S. The agents seized \$50 million worth of toilet paper.

Dr. Deborah Birx told White House reporters Wednesday that Chinese misinformation misled the U.S. about the virus’s high contagiousness. It turns out COVID-19 is a combination, in layman’s terms, of Harvey Weinstein and Jeffrey Epstein. It screws everything around and it doesn’t kill itself.

The White House offered an olive branch to Democrats for the sake of national unity against the coronavirus Wednesday. Trump told reporters he would be completely open to a phone call from Joe Biden. Amazingly the president of the United States

still has the time to check on the elderly.

Joe Biden remained sequestered in his Delaware home all week staying safe. This may be a presidential campaign like we’ve never seen. The DNC announced Wednesday the Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee cannot proceed as planned, with a speaking role for Joe Biden.

The Department of Health urged Americans to be creative while home quarantined in finding ways to stay healthy and in shape. In the last two weeks, U.S. alcohol consumption has risen by an alarming 57 percent. It’s obvious what’s happening, people are making their own sanitizer.

Adam Schiff asked to be chairman of a House Committee to investigate Trump over his initial reaction to the outbreak from Asia. They are sure they’ve got him nailed now. First it was Russia, then it was Ukraine and now they think he had advance knowledge about the attack on Pearl Harbor.

National Basketball League officials held a press conference Wednesday and floated the idea of holding the NBA playoffs this year in front of no fans in attendance at the games. This is an idea that may get the league embroiled in a trademark lawsuit. An empty arena is the WNBA logo.

Los Angeles liquor stores on Tuesday were declared essential out of compassion for alcoholics and will remain open. During home confinement, other addicts have to wait for their fix. The good news for gambling junkies is that the Two Flies Walking Up the Wall season begins in just two weeks.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo put the state on home lockdown last week. In New York Harbor, the inscription on the Statue of Liberty that faces Europe across the ocean was just replaced by an eye chart. It reads, “If You Can Read This You Are Four Thousand Miles and Six

Feet Too Close.”

New York City and Baltimore began releasing non-violent offenders from local jails this past week in an effort to keep the coronavirus from rapidly spreading through the crowded jailhouses. The virus has already spread to prison inmates in Chicago. R. Kelly just tested positive for COVID-14.

Argus Hamilton is the host comedian at The Comedy Store in Hollywood and entertains groups and organizations around the country. Email him at Argus@ArgusHamilton.com.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

OF NORTHWEST TENNESSEE
Union City
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THE POSITIVE PLACE FOR KIDS

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NYSE 10,062.37 +217.52				
GAINERS (\$2 OR MORE)				
Name	Last	Chg	%Chg	
ION Geo	2.25	+1.09	+49.0	
MY Oitr	2.96	+0.81	+37.7	
Ampco	3.25	+0.84	+34.9	
WPX Engy	3.49	+0.74	+26.9	
ProPetr	6.81	+0.58	+26.0	
ParsleyEn	6.91	+1.36	+24.5	
CanvusE	2.36	+0.45	+23.6	
Matorfor	2.66	+0.50	+23.1	
PenRE pIB	3.09	+0.56	+21.9	
FortTr pIA	12.12	+0.21	+2.12	
LOSERS (\$2 OR MORE)				
Name	Last	Chg	%Chg	
RedwdTr	3.00	-1.34	-30.9	
AG Mtg pIB	3.67	-1.43	-28.0	
AG Mtg pIB	3.41	-1.14	-25.1	
AG Mtg pIB	3.31	-1.05	-24.1	
TeqTnk rs	17.80	-5.30	-22.9	
WashPr pIB	3.88	-1.08	-21.7	
WashPr pIB	3.78	-0.92	-19.5	
GranPrnt	2.93	-0.66	-18.4	
ScorTf	15.84	-3.56	-18.4	
FlyLeasing	5.15	-1.08	-17.3	
ACTIVES (\$1 OR MORE)				
Name	Vol (00s)	Last	Chg	
Carnival	2615407	7.97	-0.83	
GenElec	966872	6.90	-0.14	
FortM	907088	4.36	-0.04	
Marathon	863519	3.47	+0.35	
OciPet	789772	12.77	+2.03	
BkoAm	699073	20.57	+0.80	
ExonMbl	619433	40.40	+2.87	
Petrobrs	603374	5.81	+0.40	
Apache	531248	4.69	+0.67	
Hallbirt	512276	7.52	+0.92	

STOCKS OF LOCAL INTEREST														
Name	Div	Yld	PE	Last	Daily Chg	YTD Chg	%Chg		Name	Div	Yld	PE	Last	Daily Chg
AT&T Inc	2.08	72	13	28.76	+0.71	-26.4			Lowes	2.20	2.7	18	82.86	+2.44
AMD	...	...	...	44.49	+0.83	-3.0			LuckinCr n	...	...	...	6.40	-19.80
AirLines	4.0	4.0	3	10.06	-0.63	-64.9			MFA FncI	...	...	...	1.10	-18
Amgen	6.40	3.1	17	208.88	+11.07	-13.4			Maays	1.51	33.9	1	4.45	-0.02
Apache	1.00	213	3	4.69	+0.67	-81.7			MarathonO	...	...	...	3.47	+35
Apple Inc	3.08	13	22	244.93	+4.02	-16.6			McUnids	5.00	3.1	24	161.50	+3.33
AuroraC	...	...	...	83	+0.02	-61.4			Merck	2.44	3.2	29	76.87	+3.07
AutoZone	...	...	...	14	794.65	+17.79	-33.3		MicroT	...	...	...	5	41.09
BkoAm	7.2	3.5	7	20.57	+0.80	-41.6			NikeB	2.04	1.3	31	155.26	+3.15
Boeing	8.22	6.7	11	123.27	-7.43	-62.2			NokiaCp	...	...	...	3.04	+0.07
CallonPet	...	...	...	43	+0.02	-91.1			NovCrus	...	...	...	2	8.4
Carnival	2.00	25.1	2	7.97	-0.83	-84.3			OasisPet	...	...	...	34	+0.05
CollectBI rs	...	...	...	1.97	+0.59	-11.3			OciPet	3.16	24.7	10	12.77	+2.03
ChesEng	...	...	...	17	+0.02	-79.7			Oracle	...	...	...	49.80	+1.09
Chevron	5.16	6.8	11	76.12	+7.56	-36.8			ParkerHan	3.52	3.0	15	118.84	+2.75
Cisco	1.44	3.6	16	39.80	+183	-16.4			Penney	...	...	...	30	-0.33
Citigroup	2.04	5.2	5	39.23	+2.7	-50.9			PepsiCo	3.82	3.1	14	123.86	+5.74
Citox	4.24	2.4	30	179.70	+5.04	-17.0			Pfizer	1.52	4.6	13	32.87	+1.12
CocaCola	1.64	3.7	27	43.95	+183	-20.6			ProctGam	2.98	2.6	26	114.40	+5.07
DeltaAir	1.61	7.1	3	22.68	-1.19	-61.2			RyCarb	2.80	11.3	3	24.82	-9.5
DollarTree	...	...	...	9	70.46	-2.48	-25.1		Schmbrg	2.00	14.4	8	13.88	+1.29
EgyptTrnsfr	122	23.4	6	5.22	+19	-59.3			Sherwin	4.52	1.0	33	436.91	+11.93
ExonMbl	3.48	8.6	9	40.40	+2.87	-42.1			SwthEngy	...	...	...	2	1.70
FstHorizon	60	7.8	4	7.70	+27	-53.5			TOP Sh rs	...	...	...	22	-0.1
FortM	60	13.8	3	4.36	-0.04	-53.1			Taronis rs	...	...	...	16	+0.1
FrtMcm	20	3.1	4	6.39	+0.08	-51.3			Transcon	...	...	...	110	+1.02
GenElec	...	...	...	6.90	-1.14	-38.2			Tyson	1.68	3.1	10	54.15	+1.19
Goodyear	64	11.1	2	5.76	+0.07	-63.0			Uber Tch n	...	...	...	23.68	-1.74
HP Inc	70	4.6	5	15.49	+65	-24.6			VFCorp	1.72	3.5	14	49.12	+4.4
Hallbirt	72	9.6	4	7.52	+0.92	-69.3			VerizonCom	2.46	4.5	14	55.25	+2.33
HomeDep	6.00	3.3	18	181.31	+2.68	-10.1			WalMart	2.16	1.8	68	118.65	+4.51
Intel	1.32	2.4	19	54.35	+2.47	-9.2			WellsFargo	2.04	7.5	6	27.22	+6.5
IBM	6.48	5.9	11	110.00	+4.86	-17.9			Wendys Co	4.8	3.6	15	13.35	-82
UnprNtwk	80	4.1	11	19.86	+4.4	-20.2			WhitingPet	...	...	...	31	-0.6
Kroger	56	18	15	31.60	+1.10	+9.0								

Stock Footnotes: q = Dividends and earnings in Canadian dollars. h = Does not meet continued-listing standards. I = Late filing with SEC. n = New in past 52 weeks. rs = Stock has undergone a reverse stock split of at least 50 percent within the past year. S = Stock has split by at least 20 percent within the last year. W = bankruptcy or receivership. Source: The Associated Press. Sales figures are unofficial.

STOCK MARKET INDEXES									
Dow Jones Industrials									
Close: 21,413.44									
Change: 469.93 (2.2%)									
10 DAYS									
52-Week									
High	Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	%Chg	YTD %Chg	12-mo %Chg		
29,568.57	18,213.65	Dow Industrials	21,413.44	+469.93	+2.24	-24.97	-18.84		
11,359.49	6,481.20	Dow Transportation	7,445.71	+93.13	+1.27	-31.70	-30.34		
963.80	593.52	Dow Utilities	729.36	+21.32	+3.01	-17.04	-5.57		
14,183.26	8,684.94	NYSE Composite	10,062.37	+217.52	+2.21	-27.68	-21.81		
9,838.37	6,631.42	Nasdaq Composite	7,487.31	+126.73	+1.72	-16.55	-5.13		
1,522.26	1,015.63	S&P 100	1,168.51	+29.20	+2.56	-18.98	-8.09		
3,393.52	2,191.86	S&P 500	2,526.90	+56.40	+2.28	-21.79	-12.22		
2,109.43	1,181.96	S&P MidCap	1,375.35	+14.14	+1.04	-33.33	-28.91		

MONEY RATES		
	Last	Pvs Week
Prime Rate	3.25	3.25
Discount Rate	0.75	0.75
Federal Funds Rate	0.00-0.25	0.00-0.25
Treasuries		
3-month	0.10	0.00
6-month	0.14	0.02
5-year	0.38	0.45
10-year	0.62	0.81
30-year	1.27	1.39

CURRENCIES		
	Last	Pvs Day
Australia	1.6531	1.6465
Britain	1.2394	1.2373
Canada	1.4191	1.4222
Euro	.9216	.9151
Japan	107.84	107.84
Switzerland	24.2695	24.3833
Mexico	.9732	.9671

British pound expressed in U.S. dollars. All others show dollar in foreign currency.