

TUSCOLA REVIEW EDITORIAL BOARD: David Porter, Jennie Porter, Mike Carroll, Bill Englehardt — Email: publisher@tuscolareview.com

Perspective

Laughter is great medicine for your health

As I struggle like everyone else with this pandemic, I remember the advice of Norman Cousins who said "Laughter is an antidote to apprehension and panic."

So, like him, I turn to comedy to deal with stress, increasingly watching old TV reruns of "The Beverly Hillbillies," or "The Andy Griffith Show," and funny movies, from silents with Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd to anything with Peter Sellers or Mel Brooks.

In the car, I increasingly avoid the political talking heads of radio and listen, instead, to Sirius radio's Comedy Channel—especially the comedians of the past who had to be funny without profanity. Such as David Brenner who wondered who in the world thought up the practice of acupuncture.

Brenner mused: "I mean someone was the first person who had this idea of acupuncture. Can you imagine that first moment when, say, a guy complains his knee is killing him, that he's racked with pain and can hardly walk and then says 'I think I'll stick a needle in my head.'"

I'm just sayin'

By Mike Carroll mike.carroll@tuscolareview.com



Or how about this one from Brenner: "I went for acupuncture therapy the other day and while lying nude on this exam table, someone comes in and starts sticking these big needles in me, all over my body. He stuck needles all over my face and head, on my ear lobes, down my arm, and on every finger, then all around my stomach, down my legs and on every toe. He must have stuck over 100 needles into me. He then left the room saying he'd return soon. And I worried: What if he doesn't work here?"

Ah, laughter: a powerful medicine that doesn't carry the negative baggage of possible side effects of drugs.

Cousins knew about the medicinal effects of not only laughter but also of a positive

attitude, and a hopeful and joyful outlook on life. He used this philosophy to beat the odds on various life-threatening illnesses for which he was told there was little to no hope.

I first encountered Cousins while serving in the U.S. Army in the early 70s. Cousins was the editor of "Saturday Review," a magazine I liked.

At that time, my high blood pressure had worsened to the point of hospitalization plus I started developing heart problems. And I was only 24.

Anxious and concerned, I read everything I could get my hands on to address these problems. This was before smart phones, Google, Siri and Alexa. This was the Dark Ages, wedged between the Pleistocene epoch and the Digital

Era—but closer to the Pleistocene epoch—when one had to go to libraries and read hardbound books. Really.

Around this time, Cousins himself was having serious health problems, racked with pain, bedridden, barely able to move. He had developed a sudden-onset case of a crippling connective tissue illness plus the serious arthritic disease known as ankylosing spondylitis.

He was told he had only one chance in 500 of recovery. So Cousin "developed his own recovery program" based upon his research on the "biochemistry of human emotions, which he long believed were the key to human beings' success in fighting illness." This program included "self-induced bouts of laughter" brought on by watching comedy movies such as ones featuring the Three Stooges or the Marx brothers and TV series like "Candid Camera."

It worked. Until his death, 36 years later, Cousins was pain free with no movement restrictions. Cousins said: "I made the joyous discovery that 10 minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic ef-

fect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep."

His struggle with that illness and his discovery of "laugh therapy" was first published in the New England Journal of Medicine, then later made into the book "Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient."

Years later, Cousins suffered a heart attack, failed a stress test within the first minute and was told he needed emergency surgery. He asked the doctor to give him six months and he'd try the stress test again. The doctor said "no," so Cousins shopped around until he found a cardiologist who'd work with him.

Cousin continued his laugh therapy, cut back on his stressful work, ate better and exercised. Six months later he passed the stress test and was declared heart healthy. This experience was detailed in his 1983 book "The Healing Heart."

Now, none of this is to suggest you fire your doctor and become a "The Three Stooges" groupie. Cousins admitted that his message can be misunderstood and oversimplified. "We mustn't regard any of this as a

substitute for competent medical attention," he said in an interview. "But the doctor can only do half the job. The other half is the patient's response to the illness. What we really mean by a patient's responsibility is that we've got vast powers that are rarely used. It's important to avoid defeatism and a sense of panic and despair."

I say this by way of noting that on the Tuscola Review podcast you might notice that my good buddy, Bill Englehardt, and I laugh an awful lot. We both were told in our 20s that we'd probably not make it to our 30s. But here we still are, two silly old fools, trying to not take ourselves too seriously, loving life, enjoying the moment, and laughing out loud every chance we get—like when celebrated humor writer and fellow podcaster, David Porter, almost sets the ceiling of his man cave on fire when lighting his stogie with a blow torch filled with rocket fuel because he accidentally hit the "burn entire forest down" button.

Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk. mike carroll

Examining a day in the life of a punster

Waking up this morning was an eye-opening experience.

I threw my alarm clock out the window because I wanted to see time fly.

The coffee was having a bad day because it got mugged.

Bathing was a bit risqué because the shower got turned on. I knew something was going on; I saw it innuendo. [If that one doesn't make sense, try saying it out loud.]

I went to see a foot doctor. Turns out, he's just a regular doctor but he's only 12 inches tall.

I didn't want to take the stairs to his office. Stairs are always up to something. The elevator is OK. It has its ups and downs.

In the lobby, I saw a guy with two prosthetics. I asked him if they were expensive. He said they cost him an arm and a leg. It happened to be his left leg and his left arm. He's all right now.

The new nurse is a crash test dummy. She's doing a bang-up job.

I told her I need to see the doctor because I'm afflicted with invisibility. She said the

doctor can't see you right now. I said, "I know."

I told the doctor that I think I'm shrinking. Give it time, he said. You'll just have to be a little patient.

I went to a circus and saw a guy riding an elephant. I asked him how do you get down from an elephant? He said you get down from a goose.

The circus had to shut down because of a fire. It was in tents.

I stopped in the police station to use the restroom but all the toilets had been stolen. The cops have nothing to go on.

Ramblin' Man

By David Porter porter@ramblinman.us



The police were all over at the daycare center. A 3-year-old was resisting a rest.

I went outside and it was raining cats and dogs. I

stepped in a poodle.

While I was outside, I taught myself how to be a trash collector. I just picked it up as I went along.

I've had a pun time with this, but my friend, Judge Carroll is averse to puns (or maybe it's just my puns), so I wrote this one for him (I'll be brief): How much justice can you fit in a bottle? About a court, but no liquids; it's "just ice." I haven't perfected that pun, so don't judge me; it's just a trial.

© Copyright 2022 by David Porter who can be reached at porter@ramblinman.us. Now I'm working on inventing a machine that can listen to people's minds. I'd love to hear your thoughts.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20 Aries, you may be tempted to overspend this week, as you have a mind to remodel or redecorate your home in a major way. Try not to get carried away.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21 You are ready to pour a huge investment of time and resources into a creative project that is dear to your heart, Taurus. Let the ideas flow organically instead of pushing too hard.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21 Phone calls and emails keep coming in, to the point where you may want to turn off your devices for the rest of the week. Find opportunities for peace and quiet.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22 Cancer, you may feel like you have all of the answers. But you can still heed advice from those who came before you — especially in the work setting.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23 Leo, you have high hopes for a productive week, but you may not check off everything on your to-do list. It's fine to let one or two things slide.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22 Virgo, why make things difficult for yourself when others are willing to lend a helping hand? You don't have to chart the course alone, so accept any offers of help that come along.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23 Libra, if you are feeling immense pressure to make an important decision, take all the time you need to work through every scenario. This way you're confident in your choice.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22 Scorpio, this week will feel like a lot of hurrying up and waiting. For a go-getter like you, this can be very frustrating. Use the down time you have productively.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21 This is a good week to pursue dreams that have been put on the back burner, Sagit-

tarius. Don't tell yourself things are impossible. Find ways to make things happen.

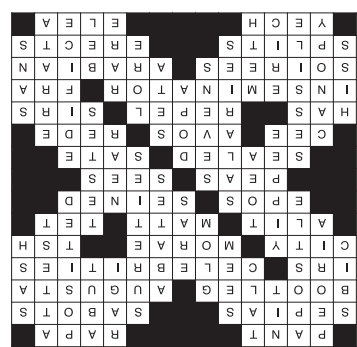
CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20 It's fine to be goofy and playful once in a while, Capricorn. This is the week to let loose and have fun for a while. Others may join in on your antics.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18 Intense dreams may crop up in the evenings this week, Aquarius. Jot down things as you remember the details so you can better reflect on their meaning.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20 Consider giving yourself a little rest from work, Pisces. You've been working hard and now you need to restore your energy levels.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- JANUARY 16 Lin-Manuel Miranda, Actor (42)
JANUARY 17 Betty White, Actress (100)
JANUARY 18 Karan Brar, Actor (23)
JANUARY 19 Dolly Parton, Singer (76)
JANUARY 20 Rainn Wilson, Actor (56)
JANUARY 21 Booboo Stewart, Actor (28)
JANUARY 22 Guy Fieri, TV Chef (54)



SUDOKU

9x9 Sudoku grid with numbers 4, 1, 2, 3, 8, 5, 2, 7, 1, 4, 6, 9, 4, 2, 6, 9, 5, 6, 2, 7, 3, 2, 3, 5, 4

CLUES ACROSS

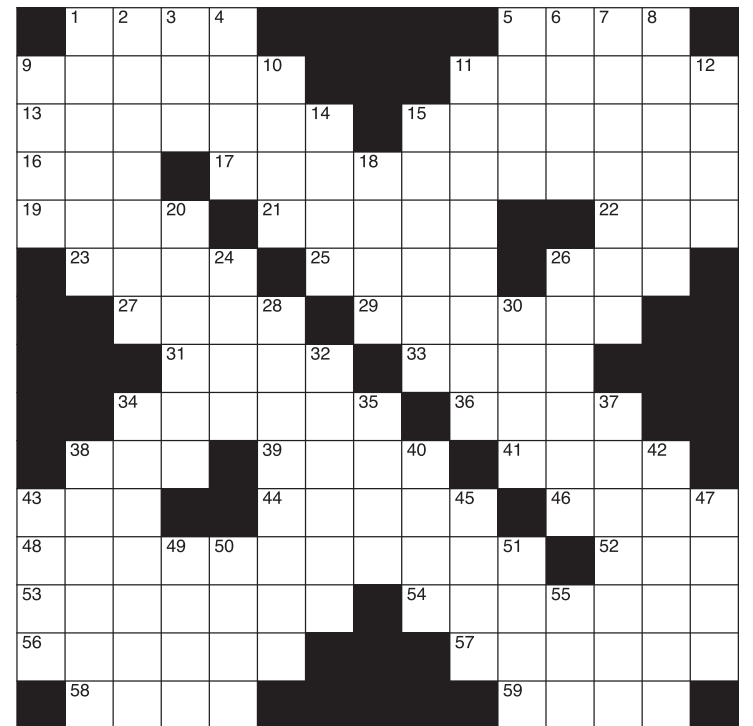
- 1. Breathe noisily
5. __ Nui, Easter Island
9. Reddish browns
11. Simple shoes
13. Produce alcohol illegally
15. Home to famed golf tournament
16. Tax collector
17. Famous people
19. Urban area
21. Units of syllable weight
22. Pituitary hormone (abbr.)
23. Dismounted
25. Actor Damon
26. Vietnamese offensive
27. Retail term
29. Netted
31. Partner to carrots
33. Witnesses
34. Caulked
36. Satisfy

- 38. R&B performer __ Lo
39. Monetary units of Macao
41. Give advice, explain
43. Possesses
44. Turn back
46. Gentlemen
48. One who fertilizes
52. Italian monk title (prefix)
53. Parties
54. Type of horse
56. Cuts in half
57. Raises
58. Expresses contempt or disgust
59. Ancient Italian-Greek colony

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Illinois city
2. One of the original disciples chosen by Christ
3. Young form of a louse
4. Type of powder

CROSSWORD



- 5. Finger millet
6. Share a common boundary
7. Assumed as a fact
8. Provide clear evidence of
9. Invests in little enterprises
10. A way to be
11. Monies given in support
12. Fashion accessory
14. Steal
15. Becomes less intense
18. Geological times
20. Hooray!
24. Monetary unit
26. Male reproductive organs
28. Earnings
30. Close by
32. Small integers
34. Fixed in place
35. Used to treat Parkinson's disease
37. Large, imposing building
38. A rooflike shelter

- 40. Stiff, hairlike structure
42. Print errors
43. To show disapproval
45. Body of traditions
47. Without
49. __ Clapton, musician
50. Dangerous illegal drug
51. Infrequent
55. Sound unit

