

The Heady, Hempty Joys of Laughter

Written by Alex Baer

Sunday, 16 February 2014 20:04 - Last Updated Sunday, 16 February 2014 23:34

Sometimes, even in the face of cruel and absurd realities, I find myself reaching down to retrieve my buttocks, having laughed them clean off me, and onto the floor.

Hard-working professionals are sometimes responsible for any lingering twitches I may harbor to create LMAO messages that I may still feel inclined, even now, when I know better, to send anywhere: comedians, screenwriters, authors, actors, and the like. Other times, it's the accidental, amateur all-stars from the wobbly, wearisome, warlike planets of politics, monetary systems, religious beliefs, and the ongoing unrest over Crockpot chili recipes.

Sometimes, though, it's the innocent, unplanned happenstance of the hapless, of people going about their lives, doing the best they can, pratfalling and deadfalling their way from one stretch of black ice to Crsico patch, only to make their escape jump onto a long slick of axle grease, shooting right into Vaseline Lake.

Machiavellian schadenfreude, random bursts of *deus ex machina* surprises, and other semi-sadistic skullduggery aside, it's good to take your endorphins out for a spin now and then, to get them, and you, some air. It helps to flex the muscles that work the corners of your mouth, to test the hinges on the ol' head meat -- the ones that open and close the mind.

There's also the chance to shed some excess weight, like, oh, maybe 10 to 40 calories for every 15 minutes of belly-laughing. This equates to an underwhelming 3 or 4 unsalted crackers' worth, or anywhere from 1 to 4 pounds of weight loss a year -- clearly not a big draw from the positive attributes listed on the label of *Dr. Pheeney's Phamous, Phabulous Phleelgood Phluid for Reluctant Giggers and Wayward Guffawers*.

Relaxed arteries will take you a long way through life. That's all been documented. Laughing helps survival rates in heart attack and cancer patients, it improves circulation and respiration, and *yadda-yadda*. You know the drill, you know this bit. No need to get out the drill-bit for any long-distance psycho-surgery on this point, I'm sure.

Fate, or Life, or Luck, simply provide a laughing free-for-all every once in a while, and on some sort of flimsy, whimsical schedule of its own. Just as well, I suppose. Spontaneous laughter

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would be difficult to enjoy, if you knew a rehearsed, but supposedly ad-lib burst, was coming through. It would be a grimmer world, if you could plan your life by consulting the Old Farmer's Almanac Tide Tables of Extemporaneous, Off-the-Cuff Chuckles, Chortles, Cackles, and Cachinnations.

True, you'd reduce the possibilities of being an accidental laughingstock, but at the cost of never learning to ice skate with your hindquarters, see for yourself all that is and was *Gigli*, or knowing what chocolate-covered, really fried grasshoppers taste like when blindfolded.

The unexpected nature of the proceedings helps things along. This is why there is not a hue and cry, demanding a business solution to a gap in 24-hour service providing the exact same sitcom episode, over and over again, back to back, without end, despite the perpetual clamor in Congress to do just that.

The Law of Unintended Consequences is a vampire butterfly, always ready to first dazzle on the surface and then destroy from down deep. You know, like Fox News.

* * * * *

No, really: *Exactly like* Fox News.

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But, through it all, we can take comfort in the knowledge that we humans, as supremely imperfect beings, will continue to do our level best, and, in so doing, we will fail miserably, thereby providing ample laughing fodder for us all, and for countless generations to come. Our laughter is, apparently, our own best renewable resource, and, therefore, those among us who laugh quite a lot, should thereby be allowed greater tax breaks over any of those dour, granite-faced sourpusses who last smirked during the Harding administration.

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This is why I am thankful for Presidents-elect Jon Stewart and Bill Maher, and why it is that I am additionally grateful for that Constitutional Amendment which now allows the election of a tag team to the two highest posts in the land. I just hope the tough, new audience the Stewart-Maher-Maher-Stewart-Stewart-Maher administration will have to face, along with the pay cuts and lowered status, won't cut into their well-deserved, high-spirited leadership of our country that we have lacked for so very long.

Another new opportunity in infectious laughter is the rush of investors into the marijuana marketplace, now that two states have thumbed-up recreational use of pot, and many other states have already approved, or are trying to approve, its medical uses.

That so many states are flexing their muscles on this point, over pot's continued illegality at the Federal level, certainly must have long-time State Rights reactionaries and extremists beside themselves in hand-wringing agony, trying to figure out what they sincerely believe is a permissive disaster that they have themselves somehow allowed to come to pass, and will no doubt be blamed as the cause for their usual alcoholic stupor.

This sets up splendid opportunities for displays of hyperbolic hypocrisy on so many levels, it makes my eyes red just thinking about it. Laugh-face has already started to set in.

I can see it now: Venomously rabid right-wing practitioners of capitalistic extortion and acquisition will become accidentally leveraged to the hilt in their investment portfolios, in a new, coast-to-coast *Hemp-n-Herb* chain store operation specializing in gourmet marijuana and ready-made take-out foods.

(Another good name for such an operation would be *Weed-n-Feed*, or, maybe, a nouveau mini-cheeseburgers-and-joints joint called, simply,

Bombers --

can't you just see the decor for each one of these? And, you know, maybe a full-serve location will pop up, named
Buds-Suds-and-Spuds.

Aspiring entrepreneurs may make full payment for use of these names in their ground-floor stocks, no problem there.)

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Virtuous prudes, normally hydrophobic about participation in any activities that may pleasantly engage the senses, accidentally or on purpose, from pencil-sharpening to clog-dancing, will have their minds buckle under the weight of religious superstition and prolonged exposure to narrow-minded rigidity, once the true nature of their booming auto-pilot investments becomes known.

I predict multiple and ongoing ripple effects of events that will keep our nation in stitches, and well supplied with home-grown laughter, for a great number of years, decades, and perhaps, centuries -- not only through the magic of marijuana-fed time-distortion elasticity and trickery, but through actual harping notation on calendars by sober, aimless critics.

There is, after all, a certain Time is Money fringe section in this country to entertain, namely, Republicans -- which is short for The Very Confused And Sad People Who Honestly Believe That The Whole Reason For Any Regular Human Being's Life Is To Submit To The Wealthy And Powerful In Order To Make Someone Else Even More Absurdly Richer Than They Already Are, And Then To Die Happily, Feeling Deeply Fulfilled.

You think you've seen screaming insanity with endless pronouncements of the End Times? Of bubbling craziness concerning Mayan calendar wheels that simply ran out of surface area and chiseling space? Of the inflamed, incoherent madness surrounding various Y2K apocalypses? Of blaring, continuing coverage of Snow Armageddon 2014 reports from your berserk TeeBee? Of the heartless, brutal possibility of Velveeta shortages, and this, following periodic outbreaks of frozen waffle production shortfalls....

Well, you get the picture. And, once that picture is on-screen in your mind, just fine-tune it, pop some popcorn, relax, and enjoy the fun. A pity we won't be able to harvest or harness the megatons of laughing energy about to be created in saner pockets around the country when rednecks discover their retirement investment income might well hinge on Demon Dope.

... or that the nation's budget deficit has been erased overnight, supplanted by a heady surplus, merely from allowing an end to another era of prohibition, and ending the creation, policing, persecution, and imprisonment of a criminal class whose only crime is the possession of vegetation and a desire to relax, smile, listen to a little music, have a bite to eat...

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(You probably remember how well that boondoggle of banning booze worked out. Don't get me started on that one, nor on the legality of tobacco, or how much is produced in legal, patriotic taxation every day, week, month, and year, like clockwork, from alcohol and tobacco, despite high costs not likely to be similar or shared by sidelining the phobic fears a skosh and allowing the Grim-Reaper-like, rigor-mortis-taut reigns on marijuana to slip and slide a bit.)

This already makes me laugh so hard right now, even at the leading edge of this wave, and before things really get going. I'm already considering the shift of my pauperish-to-meager investments onto the ground floor of Hemp Central, and to snack food companies, and brace for the financial windfall ahead.

In the murderous terms of capitalism, *I'm sure I'll make a killing.*

And, in other currently murderous terms: Let's see now -- a low-level, natural relaxant must be warred upon as dangerous, while the current interpretation of the Second Amendment allows no restrictions on a product whose only use is to kill people.

Well, maybe we can get the drudgery of that whole well-regulated militia business from the Second Amendment in consideration once again. Either that, or we could insist to half-blind gun enthusiasts and other purists that the Constitution, based on the time in which it was written, actually allows only for the unrestricted, unfettered access to muskets and ramrods, not AK-47s with banana clips.

I am sure no valid comparison could ever be made or proved to many, many people, even if you talked yourself paisley in the face. Booze and butts and things that go boom are legal. Lethal products are always legal. This sort of logic is difficult to accept, even when you consider the number of bar fights not caused by marijuana.

Um, sure. Remember, to keep the laughter rolling, it doesn't much pay to look too closely, ask too many questions, or insist on too much logic. After all, laughter just ain't logical. It probably needs to be a little mysterious, like allowing the magician to keep some things secret, even while we know we're being fooled. Probably for the best.

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And, you know, I wouldn't be surprised if researchers were to someday find that, *even in spite of Alzheimers, 60s flashbacks still rule, man.*

However, I am not without mercy and serious forethought, as I propose local adoption of ordinances against any resurgence of bell bottoms, Flower Power pop art, and indiscriminate, underage use of the term, *Groovy*.

After all, there comes a time when you simply have to draw a line in the sand, take a stand, and protect the innocents, and society, by limiting the most dangerous things.

Except Fox News of course. Or other lethal products that our limited human intellect and arrogant ignorance really, really likes.

Don't bogart that reality -- spread it around.

Laughing the weight off:

https://www.weightlossresources.co.uk/calories/burning_calories/laughing-burns-calories.htm

and: <http://science.howstuffworks.com/life/calories-laughing.htm>

The Greening of Neo-investment America:

<http://www.npr.org/2014/02/16/277691480/the-green-rush-begins-investors-get-in-on-pots-ground-floor>

Your bonus buds today:

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Bill Maher on weed: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wlvxiBn8ys>

Jon Stewart, ditto: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcDOAMwuhkE>

... and on Booze v. Weed: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN7p7HSgEI8>

Have a great, laughing week ~ Cheers!

[sounds of clinking glasses and the rustle of rolling-paper bombers]