



... Especially in Stressful Times

by Jeanne Robertson

Looking for humor in stressful situations won't solve problems, but it sure helps us get through them.

So where are we with COVID -19? I certainly can't answer that because I have to turn in my monthly story several weeks before you read it. Unfortunately, I do believe it will still be an issue when you read this. To what degree? Who knows?

I do know that I'm determined to see the harmless humor in connection with the virus situation that has affected all of us, while at the same time remembering that many are suffering much more than most of us during this time. I hope you'll join me in keeping them in our thoughts and prayers. But finding any piece of humor we can see in this situation will affect our attitudes? Let's do it.

For example. At my Alma Mater, Auburn University, it's a tradition to roll the beloved Toomer's Corner after each sports victory. Literally thousands of fans run to Toomer's (or at least walk briskly) ASAP after any sporting event the Tigers win to watch and/or participate in the "rolling." It took only a few hours after the NCAA called off March Madness and people started hoarding items for someone to post: "They had to call off sports at Auburn because they couldn't find enough toilet paper to roll Toomer's if they won anything."

If we don't see any small pieces of humor in what the country is going through right now, maybe it's because most of us are staying at home a great

deal lately - doing what we've been asked to do - but having less chance of seeing humor when we can't interact with

others face to face. Try this. If you don't see any current humor, think back at some of the humorous incidents from your past. Enjoy them again!

Thinking back. The tone for an annual Dupont banquet I'm remembering today is always set the year before.

At the end of each banquet, officers of the club for the next year are announced and I do mean "announced." The current committee just selects some folks for the positions, from flag bearer to president and an odd assortment of offices in between. The new slate of officers is totally surprised, pushed to the stage by laughing people who are relieved they were not on the list that year. Then these surprised elected officials are sworn in before they can get out of the room. It's all in fun. The

only assignment for these new officers is to plan next year's banquet. At the banquet the next year, they get the thrill

of surprising another group of friends by naming them the new officers. The only rule? People may not reappoint those who appointed them.

When the officers are announced, two people are also tapped to the prestigious positions of

song leaders at next year's banquet. They don't have to have musical backgrounds or be the same height so that their voices will blend better. (The Andy Griffith Show.) In fact, being able to carry a tune is not a prerequisite. Not even a tiny consideration. The only criteria for the "honor" of being named song leaders is having someone on the previous slate of officers think it would be funny if you were named one of the two song leaders for next time. In other words, they set you up.

The evening I spoke, the two

songsters of the year, holding up Dupont signs, led the group in "You Are My Dupont," sung to the tune of "You Are My Sunshine". They said the tune was "You Are My Sunshine" so I guess that is what it was. It was hard to tell. The guy next to me had one of the worst voices I had ever heard. He had a knack of hitting a note just enough off key to make anyone's skin crawl. I'm sure he was a nice person, but he couldn't sing. Not a lick. Of course, not everyone can sing, so we should be tolerant.

"You Are My Dupont", however, sounded like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir compared to what followed. That's when one of the song leaders announced it was time to sing the "Dupont 25-Year-Club Alma Mater." The lyrics (humorous) were printed in our programs. After five hundred people located their programs and fumbled to the correct page, laughing the whole time, the second leader announced, "It is sung to the tune of the Cornell Alma Mater. We have no idea what the Cornell Alma Mater sounds like so just sing it to the tune of your high school or college alma mater or fight song."

Five hundred people in the ballroom of the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, NC, then sang at the top of their lungs the same words but to the tunes of five hundred different school songs. It gave a heightened meaning to the word "caterwauling" and it was so much fun.

Actually, It was one of the funniest things I've ever seen or participated in. I knew the Graham High School fight song and could read the words. Not sure about singing on key, but it didn't matter. The group never found a common key.

Plenty of humorous incidents happen in our lives. With this stress about the virus, I remind all of us - myself definitely included - to look for the humor around us every day. Yes, especially now. It might even be a nice time to think back and chuckle at a few memories from the past. Maybe even call an old friend who will remember the same funny things you remember. "Hey. I was just thinking back. Do you remember the time we ..."

I sure laugh when I remember singing at the top of my lungs the "Dupont 25-Year Club Alma Mater" to the tune of the fight song of the Graham High School Red Devils. I was also doing a little cheerleader step, as were many others.

Keep laughing! It's a choice. Especially during stressful times.



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