

Humor

By Howie Flomberg

Humor seems to be strangely lacking lately so I am submitting a Potpourri on Humor. As usual, when I start an essay I usually do a quick scan on the topic in the Internet. In Wikipedia I found a long, humorless discussion on the Theories of humor, really. Digging around I found a dissertation simply entitled Humor. The bright point was a quote by author E.B. White: Humor can be dissected as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind. In my humble opinion, that says it all.

I think that one of the greatest humorists was Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain. Some quotes by the master about humor are:

Humor is mankind's greatest blessing.
Humorists of the 'mere' sort cannot survive. Humor is only a fragrance, a decoration.
Humor is the good-natured side of a truth.
The funniest things are the forbidden.

Bill Cosby, especially the young Bill Cosby approached Twain. Their commonality was based on their observations of life. A few of Cosby's lines are:

Through humor, you can soften some of the worst blows that life delivers.
A word to the wise isn't necessary - it's the stupid ones that need the advice.
Human beings are the only creatures on earth that allow their children to come back home.
Parents are not interested in justice; they're interested in peace and quiet.
Gray hair is God's graffiti.

George Burns is an American classic. His specialty was also observing people around him:

Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city.
If you live to be one hundred, you've got it made. Very few people die past that age.
When I was a boy the Dead Sea was only sick.
No snowflake in an avalanche ever feels responsible.
Nice to be here? At my age it's nice to be anywhere.

When I was a kid, a soft-spoken Jewish comic named Sam Levinson was a regular on Saturday and Sunday night variety shows. He spoke about my life and me. His style was simple. He'd tell a joke, then laugh and enjoy it. Here are a few of his great ones:

The reason grandparents and grandchildren get along so well is that they have a common enemy.
The simplest toy, one that even the youngest child can operate, is called a grandparent.
Lead us not into temptation. Just tell us where it is; we'll find it.
I'm going to stop putting things off, starting tomorrow!
Somewhere on this globe, every ten seconds, there is a woman giving birth to a child. She must be found and stopped.

Recently I came home from my mother's funeral. I had to make all of the arrangements including her tombstone. When I spoke to my son and told him about it. He asked me "What did you put on her tombstone?" From somewhere came the line, "Pepperoni and sausage." We laughed for about ten minutes. Timing is everything.