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Editorial

Where funny comes from

By **Walt Pickut** -

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Contributing Editor Walt Pickut

What makes you laugh? If something is funny, how come researchers say you are 30 percent more likely to laugh when you are with other people than when you are alone? If you are actually in the presence of something funny, that is.

If you're all alone and just laughing at nothing, that's a different story. I can't diagnose that without a license.

But it's just a fact that you're more likely to laugh with friends around. And if they're not friends at first, just laugh together and you're more likely to become friends soon.

So, I guess you can say laughing is just a funny thing that people do. As a matter of fact, according to the website science.howstuffworks.com, scientists say—and yes, there are actually scientists who study this stuff—there are 10 different kinds of laughter.

As a kid, I thought the funniest kind was when you laughed so hard the soda came out your nose and everybody else fell down laughing. But it's actually not that simple. It goes way beyond giggles and guffaws, chuckles and cackles.

Consider these oddball funny factoids: That soda-out-your-nose thing is technically labeled "Snorting laughter." About 25 percent of women and 33 percent of men are snorters. Sip carefully. Then there's a thing called "Pigeon laughter." You do it without opening your mouth—keeping your lips sealed. It makes a

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humming sound. Laugh scientists say it makes you sound like a pigeon. I've never heard it, unless the birds really are laughing at me.

Then there's the good old "Belly laugh." It has been said that ten minutes of genuine belly laughter can have an anesthetic effect in the face of serious pain that can give you at least two hours of pain-free sleep.

So, in the interest of science and the general wellbeing of our readers, the Jamestown Gazette invites you to another round of laughing out loud—whether by snorting, humming, or jiggling your belly—down at the National Comedy Center.

Few comics in American-, possibly world-history, have ever made more people laugh more often, and more reliably than Johnny Carson. The new NCC Carson Immersive Experience attraction will delight every kind of laughter ever invented.

But of all the things you can laugh at, maybe Madonna has the best idea of all about where laughs need to come from. "I laugh at myself. I don't take myself completely seriously. I think that's another quality that people have to hold on to... you have to laugh, especially at yourself."

Go to the new Carson exhibit and work on your laugh. It'll get you in practice. You'll find laughter is contagious. When you do it together, you just catch a good dose of friendship with it, too.

And while you're at it, please remember that The National Comedy Center also has a gift shop, snacks, refreshments, and real food. If you go there and select the beverage of your choice to go with it, please sip carefully. That soda has a way of making all your snorts and belly laughs even funnier.

Enjoy the read.
Walt Pickut
Contributing Editor

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Walt Pickut

Walt Pickut's writing career began with publishing medical research in 1971 while working at the Jersey City Medical Center and the NYU Hospital and School of Medicine. Walt holds board registries in respiratory care and sleep technology as well as bachelor's degrees in biology and communication, and a

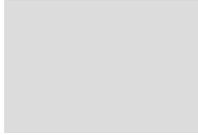
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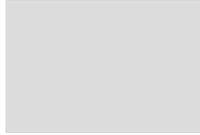
master's degrees in physiology from Fairleigh-Dickinson University in New Jersey, with additional graduate work in mass communication completed at SUNY Amherst. He currently teaches Presentational Speaking in the Houghton College PACE program at JCC and holds memberships in the Society of Professional Journalists and the American Society of Business Publication Editors. He lives in Jamestown with his wife Nancy, an MSW social worker, and has three children: Dr. Cait Lambertson in Pittsburgh, Bill Pickut, a marketing executive in Chicago, and Rev. Matt Pickut in Plymouth, IN.

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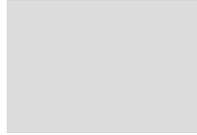
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