

AATH Doug Fletcher Lifetime Achievement Award announced

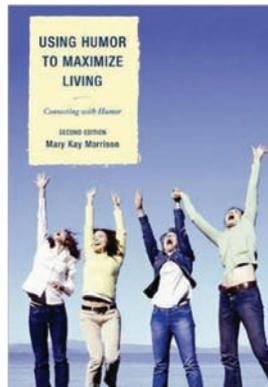
By Jill Knox, AATH Past President

Congratulations to AATH President Mary Kay Morrison, the 2016 recipient of the prestigious AATH Doug Fletcher Lifetime Achievement Award!



Mary Kay is an educator, speaker, and author who, for the past 30 years, has facilitated keynote and workshop sessions.

Her publications, **Using Humor to Maximize Learning; Exploring Links between Positive Emotions and Education** and **Using Humor to Maximize Living** are being used as texts for humor studies courses at several universities. Morrison is founder of the international AATH Humor Academy Certified Humor Professional (CHP) graduate studies program. She is founder and director of Humor Quest and has conducted seminars on brain research, leadership, and ADHD, as well as group facilitation. Her articles related to humor have been published internationally.



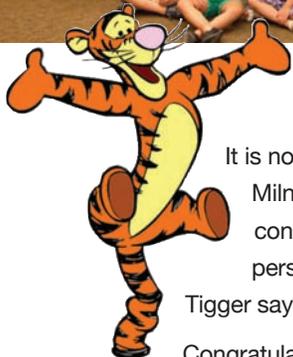
Recently Mary Kay was the featured speaker at a televised national education conference in Turkey. She has been a university commencement speaker; a guest on talk radio shows, and has served on various Illinois State Board of Education "train the trainer" teams. Still, Mary Kay's greatest pride and joy is her family, including her husband Don, her children and her twelve grandchildren. She relieves any

stresses in her life by spending time with her family, working in the garden, and laughing.

It is no surprise that Mary Kay's favorite literary character is A.A. Milne's TIGGER. Like Tigger, she is cheerful, outgoing, completely confident, and undertakes tasks with great gusto. With her bouncy personality she interacts enthusiastically with vim and vigor. As

Tigger says "Bouncing is what Tiggers do best!"

Congratulations, Mary Kay!



Author

Jill Knox is the immediate Past President of AATH. She believes in living life joyfully with an open mind, an open heart, and a sense of humor.



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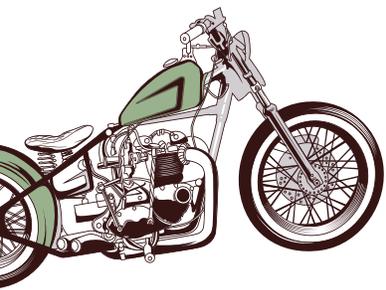
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We got our kicks on Route 66 and “revvvved” up our humor!

By Brenda Elsagher CHP,
Jae Pierce-Baba CHP, and Beth Slazak,
2016 AATH Conference Chairs



When we began planning the 2016 conference over a year ago, our initial brainstorm involved parts we liked from past conferences. We converged to being “energized and inspired” which was reflected from our theme to our speaker sessions. It was of utmost importance that we welcome everyone, be as inclusive as possible, and made people feel like they were coming home to a family reunion, (the kind with the fun families)...mission accomplished! We introduced the “high five” at the opening on Thursday night and paired new attendees with an AATH veteran. Everyone embraced the idea with gusto which comforted newbies and added a layer of comfort and fun for all.

Besides getting to know one another, our opening night included tacos, the brilliantly-funny Joyce Saltman, and a great variety show led by Andrew Tarvin and Beth Slazak with talent provided by our clever AATH members. The moments throughout the conference where we engaged in play and humor were a highlight and began with funny ribbons for name tags donated by Jae Pierce-Baba who invented fun!

We made some changes that seemed to go smoothly like enjoying the fast paced Humor Samplers (formerly night time Humor Jams) during the day, and they were well attended. It was just a taste of some of the humor people are using at community, work, and play which made you want more, and it was highly energizing for the audience as well as the speakers.

The Humor Hero breakfasts were a hit with all the wisdom that was shared by our legends involved in the study and use of humor for over 20 years, along with the delicious hot breakfast you could take in and enjoy while you listened. With the exception of Friday night free, all the meals were provided and people appreciated not having to worry about that!

We loved the handling of the business meeting by Mary Kay and the hard working board, a necessary part of the conference but not usually a highlight. This year it was presented quite creatively with “Daphne” (a.k.a. Incoming president, Maia Aziz) taking us through all the information in a playful way.

Awards were spread out over the conference, all the keynotes were outstanding and well received, and we learned a lot. The surprise performance was by the Opera singer, Kate Offer, in which she got three standing ovations during her unique presentation as part of the keynote. The Humor Academy presentations showed off the learning happening all year long and were integrated into the conference for the community at large to understand better what the Humor Academy is all about. They had some great projects. The CHP graduation was long, but it was a transition year from HAGS to the newly preferred professional title of CHP's, Certified Humor Professionals and indeed needed to be celebrated.

Continued on page 3



2016 AATH Conference Chairs:
Jae, Brenda, & Beth



Humor Heroes: Sporty King, Steve Sultanoff, Ed Dunkelblau, Bobbe Lyon.



Humor Heroes: Sporty King, Steve Sultanoff, Ed Dunkelblau, Bobbe Lyon.



Humor Heroes: Lee Berk, Karyn Buxman, Annie & Dale Anderson.
Artwork by Kyle Edgell.

Continued from page 2

The banquet, CHP ceremony and remainder of the awards were on Saturday night with musical talent by Drew Hensley and Jeffrey Briar. Our theme was Diamonds and Denim, and everyone found complimentary cowboy hats when they took their seats (donated by Barbra Grapstein... no wonder she won that Spirit award! She's got a great spirit!). Beth led us in a country line dance. The music was great, and we danced our boots off!

We felt great about the venue; the accommodations were comfortable and meeting rooms flowed with our time restrictions. Kathy and Michele, AATH office staff, did a great job caring for the details of the conference registrations and any issues that came up along the way. We could never have done it without the countless hours of help from so many volunteers. We thank you, once again.

As Brenda (the weekend emcee and challenged time keeper) predicted the first night, the speakers were all great and people couldn't get to every presentation and wanted more time at the sessions they chose. (A few wanted more time at the bar, the pool or to take a nap... who doesn't?) But... they didn't want to miss anything! The three of us felt there was a good value for the conference with 53 excellent speakers over those 3½ days. And we saw a lot of old friends visiting and new ones getting acquainted. We received great verbal and written feedback and a challenge for the future conference to meet the high expectations for next year! We hope you had as much fun as we did and look forward to seeing you all in Orlando in 2017!



"Daphne" portrayed by Maia Aziz.



Jeffrey Briar and friends.



Humor Heroes: Lee Berk, Karyn Buxman, Annie & Dale Anderson.



Barbara Grapstein – making things right in the world through laughter and play

By Kay Caskey, CHP

At the 2016 AATH Conference, Barbara Grapstein was given the Esther Hyatt Spirit of AATH award. Only two others have received this coveted award.

Barbara Grapstein has always asked, “What am I supposed to be doing?” “What is my passion anyway?” AATH has always known what she is about: Barbara is a giver, a connector and volunteer extraordinaire. Barbara has been a board member, fundraiser and THE welcoming committee for AATH.

Barb grew up in New York City wanting to be an actor. She started out utilizing her hairbrush as her microphone and then attended weekend programs at the Neighborhood Playhouse. Barb was a theater major in college and acted in an Off-Off Broadway play. Completing college, her parents thought she needed a fall back career and sent her to Catherine Gibbs secretarial school. (If shorthand ever comes back, Barb will rock it.) Typing 60 words per minute, she got her first job at Doubleday working for Madmen style bosses, i.e., “I’d be happy to get you coffee.” Life got a little better when she began working for *The New Yorker* and a whole lot better when she started working for her father, aka Willie Wonka of the nuts, dry foods and sweets Fiesta Company.

Still wondering “what do I want to be when I grow up?” Barb got “the best gig of my life” when she married Steve Grapstein and became mother to Alex and Elyna (23 months apart). Using her improvisational and acting skills, Barb created a fun and nurturing childhood for her kids. When one of the children fell on the stairs, her response to defuse the crisis was to search for a super sized bandage to fit the floor. Marrying Steve was also a gift from the universe: “He has always been so wonderful, supportive and he’s the best father ever.”

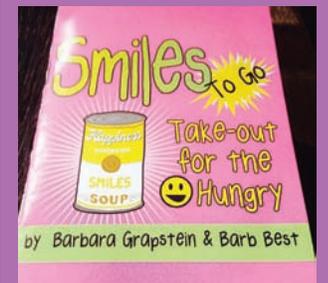
After her children were fledged, Barb experienced a period of sadness. She exercised, took medication and tried to white knuckle her way through this difficult time. Barb has always believed that the right people come along when needed. Steve Wilson appeared along with Laughing Yoga teacher, Linda Tourloukis, and Barb became a Laughter Ambassador, Certified Laughter Leader, Laughter Yoga Instructor and founded *Gold Coast Giggles*.

Trying to find one all-consuming life goal, she found a number of purposes that make a difference. During this time, Barbara Best came into her field of vision “because I really liked her name,” and she contacted her. Her intuition was right on. They shared a vision that smiles could make a life or death difference. Moved by hearing that a suicide could have been prevented if the victim had found “one person who smiled at me” on the way to the Golden Gate Bridge,” the two Barbs authored *Smiles To Go* in 2014. This book fits perfectly into a pocket or purse and when “you need a smile the most, here it is.”

AATH also came into her life in 2009. Barb, *the connector*, linked Beth Usher, Guy Girard and numerous others with AATH. As well as connecting people, Barbara is also a cheerleader for others. Hearing that Erika Ruiz needed red noses for some parent baskets, she flew down to Florida with dozens of clown noses and a supportive presence.

In 2013, Barbara enrolled in The Humor Academy and settled on a purpose that fit her perfectly. She is the founder and CEO of Healing Headbands Project, Inc., (www.healingheadbands.com). See article on *Laughter and Creativity go Hand in Headband* in this issue.

Barb has devoted her life to a number of purposes - all coming out of her passion to make things right in the world through laughter and play. We congratulate Barb and celebrate her Healing Headbands project.



Laughter and creativity go hand in hand

The Healing Headbands Project was conceived in 2014 when Barbara Grapstein was on a trip in Guatemala City. There she saw local residents wearing uniquely designed colorful headbands. So different were the designs, she decided to buy 20 with intentions to give them as gifts. Instead, Barbara kept them, giving much thought to how the headbands could be used to help people with hair loss due to cancer treatments. It wasn't long before friend and neighbor, Joanie Accolla, offered help producing headbands. Both Barbara and Joanie shared a common goal, to help those with illness feel better. Barbara's experience being a laughter leader and Joanie's experience as a designer, brought together the seeds of inspiration leading to the foundation of the project which is LAUGH CREATE HEAL.

These three main components, LAUGH CREATE HEAL are symbiotic in nature and the very backbone of its existence. "We take this very seriously," says Barbara, "Here we are laughing in a very serious environment while also empowering children and families. We work directly with the children, their families and staff. Children and adults are inspired with special laughter exercises for 20 minutes followed by 30-40 minutes of painting. All the artwork is amazing in color and design; every painting is so unique, offering its own special magic. The artwork is sent to a specialized printer in New York and then processed in full color on very soft UV protected fabric. Headbands are made and then delivered with love.

Nearly every child who participates has a serious illness. Cancer is the major illness seen in pediatric medical hospitals, however, many are being treated with other conditions such as appendicitis, broken bones or brain trauma. The project is offered to every child in some capacity. Sometimes a child must remain in bed and the project is brought to them bedside.

There is a second program called "Kids for Kids," where sponsors such as schools, businesses or organizations donate and host a workshop. In these workshops two headbands are made; one for the child/adult who took part in the project and the other is gifted to a child in a hospital that is unable to participate directly. The project is designed for all ages and there are no limitations to where it can go.

Over a thousand headbands have touched the families and children around the United States. Healing Headband Project's goal is to reach as many people as possible around the globe.



Author

Born in Hawaii into a creatively ambitious family Joan sought to become the best at what ever was put in her hands, usually it was a pen, paper and ruler. Joan's background in design is steeped in the fine arts, which includes Interior Design, holistic health and the culmination of the two. After twenty years of experience in brand identity, whether inside a house or inside the body she began "Growing Into Health," her creative business and brand marketing organization that helps build healthy connections between her clients and their environment.



Member Spotlight By Shirley Trout, PhD

Bobbe Lyon

What does a 47-year-old widow with kids at home do? Long-time AATH member Bobbe Lyon advises, you find some kind of purpose to keep you moving forward and, “You try your chops at something!” One of those “somethings” became therapeutic humor, including AATH.



In 1984, Bobbe completed her BA degree in Journalism and taught at the community college level. She created her professional company, Laughing Lyon, Ltd., loving the alliteration. Following her natural love for laughter, she designed a course titled, “Laughing Matters,” and marketed it “for older ladies and displaced homemakers.” She didn’t expect much, but was astonished when 25 people showed up!

She soon completed a Master’s degree in Counseling and treated herself to Joel Goodman’s Humor Project in Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1988. While there, a woman named Alison (Crane, the founder of the organization that became AATH) was handing out cards with “this wonderful bibliography of humor resources,” Bobbe recalls. Intrigued, she kept the card handy until, five years later, she attended her first AATH conference. She knew she had found “her people” at AATH.

In recounting her engagement in therapeutic humor, she told of the time she approached the priest who directed a retreat center near her home about possibly teaching a course there. He asked if she had ever considered teaching creative writing for an elderhostel. She responded, “Are elders really hostile?” Well, she soon discovered what elderhostels were and for the next twenty years, she taught “The Many Faces of Humor” at that facility and at other elderhostels in three states!



She joined National Speakers Association to build credentials. And the advice of everyone in that organization included, “You have to have a book.” Her first, a recipe book, she titled, *Humor-Us-Soups from Funny Bones: Souper recipes for survival*. Once in-hand, a friend held a soup party, where she invited friends to come hear “quips and quotes from the Lyon’s Den.” She loved making people laugh!

Bobbe has been an important member of AATH for decades, including being one of the infamous “Pink Ladies” who entertained conference attendees and even organized a conference or two! When asked

what keeps her returning to AATH, even now at age 82, she responded quickly, “I was getting rusty and lazy and I wanted to get revitalized.” As she gets revitalized from AATH, our members get revitalized from Bobbe’s ever-youthful outlook on life. Thanks, Bobbe!



Author

Shirley Trout, PhD, CHP, is a past president of AATH and retired professional speaker, writer and photographer. She was awarded the first-ever “Making a Difference Award” by the Humor Academy at the recent conference in Mesa, AZ.

Her Legacy

By Taylor Lyon

I watch in amazement,
In curiosity,
As she lives her life
So beautifully
With childlike wonder
And playful delight,
A connoisseur
Savoring every bite.
When she smiles sweetly,
Laughs with ease,
I say, “Grammy, tell me
Your secret, please.”
Her kind, blue eyes
Caress my face,
She wraps me into
A warm embrace,
and leaning close
So none can hear,
2.
She whispers her
Secret into my ear:
“Love,” she says,
“Will teach you how
To be in the present,
To live in the now.
It speaks with a sunset,
A giggle, a kiss.
It is at the center
Of happiness.”
Confused, I inquire with
A small, unsure voice,
“How do I be happy?”
She responds, “It’s a choice.”
So I watch how she laughs.
I watch how she lives,
I watch how she loves,
How she heals and forgives,
Her life a testimony
3.
To our little exchange,
As I her grandchild,
Stand forever changed.
And now, each day,
I choose to smile
I choose to focus on
Things worthwhile.
The choice to be happy
Is her legacy.
She found it herself,
Then passed it on to me.



A poem written
for Bobbe
by her
granddaughter



Member Spotlight By Debbie Derflinger, RN, BSN, CLL-E

Mary Laskin, MN, RN, CLL-E, LYL

On numerous occasions in her 30+ years as a registered nurse, Mary observed that humor and laughter seemed to help people bounce back from illness and to heal. She hungered to learn more about how humor affects chronic illnesses. After being invited by a friend, Laskin became a Certified Laughter Leader through World Laughter Tour. She later became a Laughter Yoga Leader and a founding member of a non-profit group called, Laughter Matters, where they would hold laughter yoga sessions for the community, train other LYL's, and network with likeminded people.

Mary was introduced to AATH through Steve Wilson, psychologist and Co-Founder of World Laughter Tour. She attended her first AATH conference in 2010 in Anaheim, California, where she was hooked on humor. After experiencing the humergy of the AATH conference, she attended a pain nurse's conference that was too painful to sit through because it was SO SERIOUS! A confirmation that she should incorporate more humor into her daily practice!



Laskin, now intrigued with how humor can help alleviate pain, investigated the effects of laughter on patients experiencing pain as a level 2 HA project. She was able to incorporate the project into her role as RN Case Manager in a Chronic Pain Management clinic. The patients who participated in her humor project overall gave very positive feedback about the physical and emotional benefits of laughter helping to ease their pain. The feedback that meant the most to her was the response to the question, "Would you recommend a laughter class to others with chronic pain?" The interesting results showed that, 99% of the participants said they would recommend laughter, 1% said, "I don't know," and NO ONE said no!

Mary especially finds the research results offered through AATH beneficial to her nursing practice because this is what western medicine is looking for to validate the use of humor in healthcare. She is often heard quoting Dr. Lee Berk's and Dr. Michael Miller's research and was very excited to hear both speak at this year's AATH Humor Conference in Mesa, Arizona.



Author

Debbie Derflinger, RN, BSN, CLL-E lives in Ohio with her humorous husband of 28 years and they have 2 grown children. She created Laughter Missions to empower others with tools for the intentional use of therapeutic humor and laughter in their daily lives to improve their overall health and well-being.



Kidding Around – Connecting Kids to Happiness, Laughter and Humour

by Sue Stephenson (illustrations Tony MacKinnon)

Author, educator, and speaker, Sue Stephenson begins this book with the simple statement, “We need to get happiness, laughter, and humour back into kids’ lives.” Amen. We also need to get that trifecta back into ALL our lives. This jam-packed easy-to-read book provides information, practical activities, and resources for adults to use with kids, and also with themselves. We all know humour is a powerful component whether we are working with kids or colleagues. (And Sue states that in Canada they put another “u” in humor as a reminder to include yourself.)

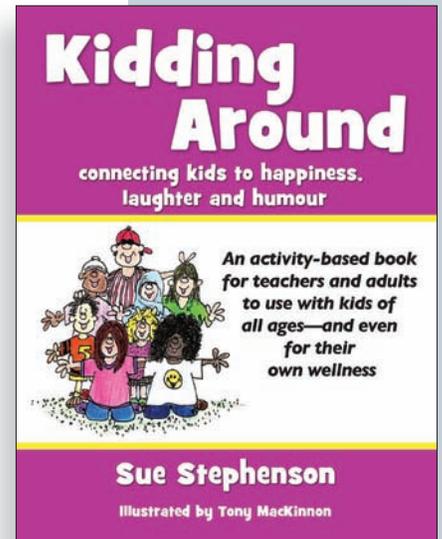
The book is set up in three sections. Part One, *Put on a Happy Face*, speaks to the happiness and positive psychology movement. Part Two, *Laughing Out Loud*, discusses the benefits of laughter and provides activities. Part Three, *Loosen Up Your Funny Bones*, addresses the need for a playful attitude in life and the difference between humour and comedy. At the end of each section are implementation ideas and lists of additional resources.

You can turn to any page and find something useful. For example, flip to page 81 and find 21 ways that laughter is good for you – physically, mentally and emotionally. A Certified Laughter Leader, Sue includes plenty of information and exercises on laughing, and organizations to further your knowledge base (including AATH). Interspersed with photos, illustrations, and quotes, the pages are visually appealing. The book can be read in short bursts or in one sitting.

Chock full of examples, statistics, activities, and resources (including songs, books, movies, videos, etc), Sue also created a supplement to this book. *The Companion Activity Guide for Kids* is a free download you can print at www.suestephenon.ca. Use the activity guide if you work with kids in any capacity or in your own family while on a car trip.

Even if you are not an educator, social worker, therapist, nurse, or camp counselor, you might be a parent or a grandparent. The tips in *Kidding Around* will help you create more happiness, laughter, and humour. We all have interactions with other humans, of all ages, and we all could use a dose of a positive playful attitude. As one testimonial states, this book does not belong on your bookshelf; keep it on your desk so you can refer to it often.

[Part of the sale of each book is donated to a Canadian organization called **Kids Help Phone**, an anonymous and confidential professional counselling service for kids to get help with stress, anxiety, peer pressure and bullying.]



Author Sue Stephenson



Reviewer

Kelly Epperson loves kidding around with clients and incorporates humor and playfulness in her work. Kelly, ghostwriter/editor/book coach, has written 30+ books, some for New York Times bestselling authors, one that sold 3 million copies. She is a judge for the Erma Bombeck Essay Competition. Kelly can help you with your writing. www.kellyepperson.com



CERTIFIED HUMOR PROFESSIONAL (formerly Humor Academy Graduates) CORNER

by Roberta Gold, R.T.C., R.C., CHP

It was wonderful having so many graduates at our 29th annual conference in Mesa, AZ this past week!! We now have 30 Certified Humor Professionals from our AATH Humor Academy!! (see below) And 21 attended the special Thursday morning graduate networking program where we shared what we doing since graduating! Then we were treated to talks from our own Bronwyn Roberts and David Jacobson who shared their stories of using humor around the world.

I am excited to continue being your graduate advisor. This year I will be joined by Jill Knox and we plan to hold bi-monthly Skype and or tele-conference meetings so we can keep in touch and learn from each other as we bring therapeutic humor to the world. As CHP's we are humor ambassadors for AATH and it is important to stay connected as well as assist and mentor our future graduates. Together we can make a difference as we share the wonders of humor and laughter!

It is our honor and privilege to recognize and celebrate our new Certified Humor Professionals. They were given their official certificates at the conference which was attended by all but three. They are listed by graduation cohort and title of their Level II projects.



2016 Humor Academy Directors:
Nila Nielsen, Kathy Laurenhue,
& Melissa Mork.

(left) 2016 Humor Academy
graduating class.

2013

What's So Funny About... Chronic Illness?
Karyn Buxman RN, MSN, CSP, CPAE, CHP

Living and Working Well with Laughter/Humor
Dwayne Covey, M.Ed, CHP

Laughter Yoga and Broad-Minded Coping
in the Homeless
Fif Fernandes BFA, CLYT/L, CLL, CHP

Wait Lifters & Mood Elevators: AATH
Awareness and Community Service Project
Deb Gauldin, RN, CHP

Humor at Work: Is Leadership Using
Humor Effectively?
Roberta Gold, R.T.C CHP.

The Role of Therapeutic Humor in the
Tucson Shooting and other Tragedies
David Jacobson, MSW, LCSW, CHP

Bounce! Going from Funky to Flourishing;
A Support Program for Military Personnel
and their Families
Linda MacNeal, MA,CHP

The Humor Academy:
Development and Implementation
Mary Kay Morrison, MSEd, CHP

Clowning to Teach Fire Safety
Merletta Roberts, LMFT, GMHSpec, CHP

2014

Interpersonal & Organizational Uses of Humor
Cheri Campbell, PhD, CHP

Hospital Humor Therapy “Not Just for Kids or Patients”: The Effect of Therapeutic Humor/
The Caring Clown on Hospital Staff
Kathy Keaton, CHP

Planting Seeds of Peace Through Humor:
Creating Peace-Able Youth
Jill Knox, CHP

Let’s Laugh Project
Bronwyn Roberts, CHP

Can Professional Education and
Community Presentations promote
Humor Habits for Health?
Diane Roosth, MSW, CHP

Uncommon Core Comedy - Celebrating and
Satirizing Education’s Transition to Common
Core State Standards
Jim Winter, CHP

2015

Parenting Style, Emotional Intelligence, and
Humor Style
Melissa Baartman Mork, MA, PsyD, CHP

Humor and Aging: a Brief Online Course
Kathy Laurenhue, MA, CHP

Leo: The Neighborhood Dog Or: The Comedic
Canine and His Fantastic Adventures
Jae Pierce-Baba, CEO/OTR, CHP

EVATEC Model for Transforming Higher
Education Teaching: Developing a
Web-based Brochure
Shirley Trout, PhD, CLYL, CHP

Always in My Right Mind: How humor
healed my soul after a hemispherectomy
Beth Usher, CHP

Health and Humor On-line Class
Laurie Young, CHP

2016

Morning Moments With Maia...Conversations of
Love and Laughter; a radio show that
pushes the positive
Maia Aziz PSW, CLYL, CHP

Write and Implement Online
Health and Humor Class
Kay Caskey, MSW, CHP

Aging Hilariously
Brenda Elsagher, CHP

World Healing Headband Project
Barbara Grapstein, CHP

Happy Lucky Me
Masako Kusakari, CHP

HAPI Rounds for Staff at a Cancer
Treatment Hospital
Katherine Pucket, Ph.D., LCSW, CHP

Joy Over Toys
Erika Ruiz, CHP

How Initiating a Study can result in Positive
Change in Standard of Care, i.e. The Effect
of Psychiatric Consultation on Assessment
of a Bowel Rehabilitation Program on
Patients after HIPEC
Laura Sunn, MD, CHP

Does Humor Work 4 You? A Wholistic Model for
Local 2 Global Community Health and Wellness
Helen Stuckey Risdon Weaver, RN, CHP

*Please congratulate our new CHPs when you
are able. And if you haven’t joined the Humor
Academy, please consider it. We would LOVE to
have you!*

AATH 2016-2017 Board of Directors

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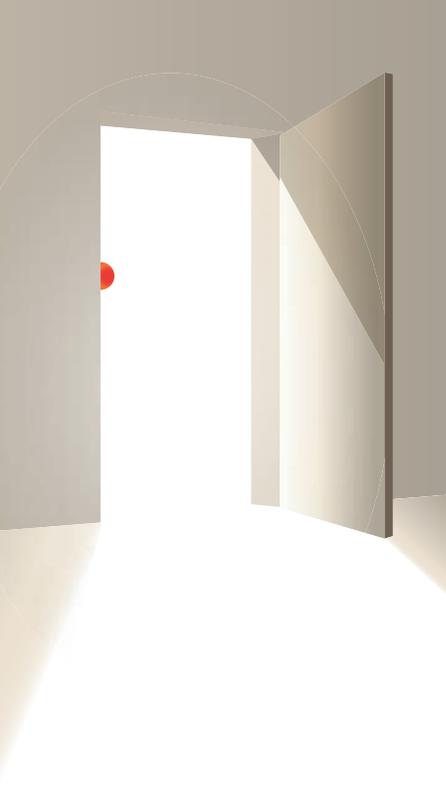
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Author

Roberta Gold, long time member of AATH, works with parents, teachers and students teaching ways to build resilience through humor and laughter.



A place for pain

by David Jacobson, LCSW

I open the door
pain walks in
filling my home with darkness and discontent

I open the door
faith walks in
illuminating my living room

I open the door
hope walks in
filling the kitchen with wonderful smells

I open the door
joy walks in
I explain that she has the wrong address
she should be next door

She comes in anyway
joy, like pain
knows not of manners or proper protocol

I open the door
humor walks in
it fills the empty spaces

Pain is still here
But it has little room



David Jacobson, LCSW suffered many losses early in his life including the death of his father when he was 8, a diagnosis with a severe form of arthritis at 22 and the loss of a quarter from a hole in his pants pocket at age 23. Through his years of struggling with chronic pain and these other losses (He's still not quite over the quarter thing), he developed humor techniques that got him through the hard times and has been a student of therapeutic humor ever since. He is a Certified Humor Professional who uses therapeutic humor in the hospital settings where he works. Mr. Jacobson was Manager of the Social Work Department at University Medical Center during the Tucson shooting tragedy and used therapeutic humor while assisting the shooting victims and their families during their recovery.



Start your class with a laugh

By Michael A. Rousell, Ph.D.

"I asked God for a new bike and prayed that he'd get one for me. I then realized that prayer doesn't work that way. So I stole a bike and asked for forgiveness."

My door opens, students arrive, and I begin class. Students look up at the screen to see a one-minute video segment from a candid camera episode, a recent cartoon, or a quote like the one above. They laugh. Even the act of dimming the lights for the daily humor-starter typically elicits a laugh. Now they are ready to learn. The feel good neurotransmitters dopamine, endorphins, and



Sammy was actually happy, he just didn't know it.

serotonin are all released when their smiles flash across their faces. Dopamine, the neurotransmitter most closely linked with humor, is often considered the brain's reward chemical. That's why it has also been linked with motivated learning and attention. The serotonin release brought on by your smile lifts their moods. The smiles also release neuropeptides that work toward fighting off stress by lowering their heart rates and blood pressure. This is the educational elixir we can all include in our classrooms.

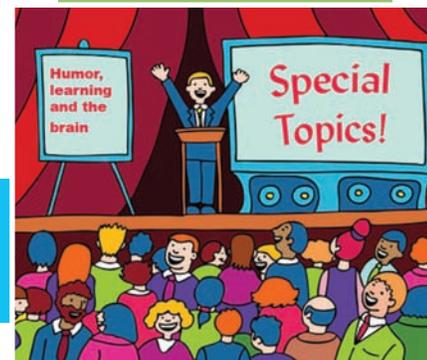
Synchronize your class with humor. Get them on the same wavelength. Research on mirror neurons demonstratively shows the contagious effects that smiles trigger. These cells, located in the premotor cortex and inferior parietal cortex, are activated when we perform a given action and also when we witness someone else performing it. Not only do we unconsciously copy the mannerisms of others, we like and have smoother interactions with them when they copy our mannerisms. Reflexively, a connection is formed. The essential educational ingredient of rapport increases. Opening with humor creates a trusting and collegial atmosphere.

Finish your class with a laugh or smile. Use the peak-end rule: we tend to remember and judge our experiences by how we felt during the peaks and ends. Musicians and performers do this regularly by finishing with their best material. Finish with a cartoon, joke, or funny clip to prepare students for the next class.



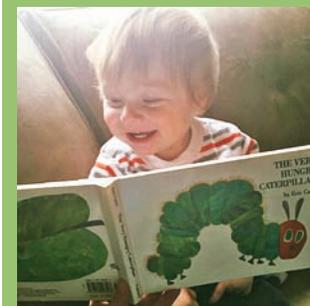
Author

Michael Rousell, Ph.D. is a Certified Counseling Psychologist and associate professor of Education at Southern Oregon University. He has taught across the spectrum from elementary, junior high, and high school to university graduate programs. His book, "Sudden Influence: How Spontaneous Events Shape Our Lives," Praeger, 2007, resides in 1000 institutions in 60 countries. He spent 25 years studying life-changing-moments. His current work is on surprise as a revision reflex.



THERE IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD SO IRRESISTIBLY CONTAGIOUS AS LAUGHTER AND GOOD HUMOR.

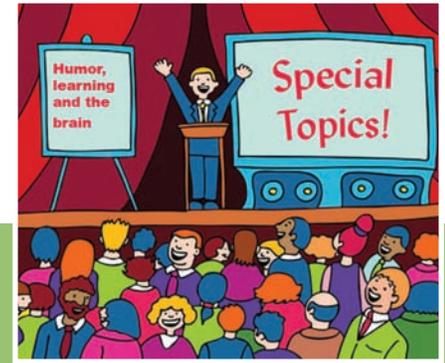
CHARLES DICKENS



Finn learns about butterflies. His favorites are the Monarchs.

The top ten reasons humor is FUNdamental for learning

By Mary Kay Morrison, Humor Quest



Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.

Humor is just the fertilizer needed to nurture stressed kids and anxious educators as they cope with the cognitive/technological revolution that is shaping 21st century education. Humor is rarely looked at as an essential part of student growth or as a credible teaching technique. However, a review of neuroscience research indicates that healthy and positive humor can have a significant impact on student learning. The purposeful cultivation of humor practice nourishes both effective teaching and learning!

Here are the top ten reasons that flourishing educators purposefully choose humor as an essential teaching strategy.

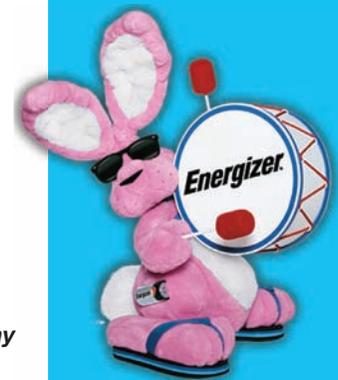
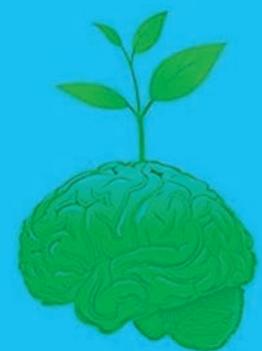
10. Humor plants memories. Powerful emotions are at the root of long-term memory. Ask your students what their strongest memory of school has been so far. Have them categorize how they felt about this experience by charting these memories as either joyful or anxiety producing. Encourage students to think about why they remember this incident. Discuss how they can use humor (a strong emotion), as a device to help them remember information. ***When the memory goes—forget it!***

9. Humor grows coping skills. Humor has often been used as a survival technique for prisoners of war. Educators are prisoners of the mandates and testing requirements thrown at them by policy makers and legislators. There are numerous “survival” issues in education today! Some research indicates that laughter increases adrenaline, oxygen flow, and pulse rate. After laughter, many people report feeling more relaxed and calm. ***She who laughs, lasts!***

8. Humor cultivates energy and engagement. The traditional auditory lecture is one of the least effective ways to facilitate learning. Purposeful games, directed play and physical activity all promote humor and learning. The research on the benefits of movement and learning supports the idea that play and laughter increase the oxygen levels and energy that are critical for learning. ***Energizer Bunny Arrested; Charged With Battery!***

7. Humor captures and retains attention. Laughter and surprise can hook even the most reluctant student. “Emotion drives attention and attention drives learning” (Sylwester, 1995). The brain cannot learn if it is not attending. Humor generates something unexpected, which alerts the attentional center of the brain and increases the likelihood of information recall. The purposeful use of humor is skill that can be practiced and enhanced. Invite the students to read a section of the lesson and create a joke or riddle about that segment. ***Lost In Thought—It's Unfamiliar Territory!***

6. Humor weeds out stress. Humor will decrease depression, loneliness and anger. The contagious nature of laughter is caused by mirror neurons or “brain cells that become active when an organism is watching an expression or behavior that they themselves can perform.” If you see someone laughing, even if you don't know the reason for the laughter, you will probably laugh anyway. The imitative behavior is due to mirror neurons being stimulated. Stress levels have been increasing for both students and teacher. Laughter is contagious. Catch it! Spread it! ***You must weed your mind as you would weed your garden.***



Stress Reduction Kit

**Bang
Head
Here**

Directions:
1. Place kit on FIRM surface.
2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
4. If unconscious, cease stress reduction activity.

Wouldn't you rather laugh?

5. Humor is the #1 Characteristic Students Value in a Teacher: They may not remember what you taught, but they will remember your sense of humor and the relationships produced in the classroom. Build a Humor Haven in your classroom filled with joke, riddle and humorous storybooks. Depending on the age of your students, you can add clown noses; squish balls, games and puzzles. Make Their Day—every single day with laughter and fun. It will make your day too! ***What would Scooby do?***

4. Humor enhances creativity: The employment market has transitioned from agriculture and manufacturing jobs to positions requiring ingenuity and inventiveness. Humor promotes creativity and critical thinking skills. Often humor comes from unconnected, random thoughts. Grow creativity through laughter yoga, telling funny stories or telling jokes. ***Do Not Disturb, I am Disturbed Enough Already!***

3. Humor facilitates communication: Humor is a great way to build relationships with students, colleagues and parents. Humor is a social lubricant. It has the power to generate a culture of trust in your organization. If you understand and nurture a constructive humor style, it will positively impact your ability to communicate. Humorous interaction between coworkers encourages a healthy, productive work environment. ***A Closed Mouth Gathers No Foot!***

2. Humor supports the change process. Educators are faced with change on a daily basis. When you can laugh about new mandates or disruptive behavior issues, you know you are able to cope with these challenges. Plan for how you and your colleagues will use humor to cope with new standards, testing, or stressed kids. A great strategy is to create a top ten list of “What’s So Funny” about the upcoming change. ***Change is good—you go first!***

And now for the number one reason to laugh frequently and often...

1. Humor Is FREE and FUN: Teaching is a joyful experience. The current focus on accountability and data-driven instruction can bury our sense of humor driving it underground. Dig around for humor resources to share with your students and colleagues. Do not let anything rob you of your passion for bringing joy to your students and remember a sense of humor is free and fun!

Hold your ground when it comes to your beliefs about how to plant the seeds of learning in your workplace. Weed out the humordoomers and their negative comments. Do not give them the time or energy required to take over the culture of learning in your environment.

Never take life too seriously, you won't get out alive.



Humor
and
Laughter
support
Creativity



Author

Mary Kay is the founder of the AATH Humor Academy Certified Humor Professional (CHP) Program and the 2016 AATH Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient. She has written two books, Using Humor to Maximize Learning; The Links between the Positive Emotions and Education and Using Humor to Maximize Learning. She has more energy than the energizer bunny and we aren't even kidding.

Teaching and Humor

By Jeffrey Powless - Paw Paw High School

My name is Jeff Powless, and I teach biology, psychology, microbiology, and genetics at Paw Paw High School in southwest Lower Michigan.

When I first started teaching in 1992, there were teachers that would advise new staff not to smile until Christmas. Thankfully I never took that advice. Humor is an indispensable part of my teaching practice. Let me explain.

To me, a teaching lesson should be like a stand-up comedy routine, but with a purpose. Humor breaks down barriers to learning and helps me establish positive relationships with my students. They know when they come to my class that it is going to be fun.

My back closet has many hats and toys. In psychology, I do a sketch called "looking for Freud in all the wrong places." I wear my Cat in the Hat hat (and read the book out loud). Thing One and Thing Two become dual repressed Id's, the tree in the front yard turns into a great phallic symbol (remember, I teach biology too!), the fish is the superego, etc. Sometimes when they tell their parents what they did in school that day they don't believe them!

There's more. What shark dissection would be complete without a great shark hat? And when we culture glowing fungus in microbiology, it would be a shame to be without my "I'm a Fungi" shirt, complete with a big, smiling mushroom. Fewer students are familiar with Steve Erwin, so I have had to retire my wind-up crock toy (with Steve on its back) and plastic snake.

I keep a Yoda Pez in my drawer. Sometimes during tough tests I'll break that out and walk Yoda around on their desk saying "eat from my neck you will" or something like that. I make him fart and say "Oh, the Force is strong with this one." When the power goes out, I keep a light sabre handy as a bathroom pass (it is DARK in there). There's a Buddha in one of my fish tanks that is impervious to algal growth. I can't remember how he got in there.

I often wear three pairs of chemical splash goggles when teaching lab safety - one on my neck, one on my forehead, and one where it is supposed to go over my eyes. The first two locations are where students are often caught wearing them, of course, solidifying my point. Students now snap pictures and post them before I can get them to back off...

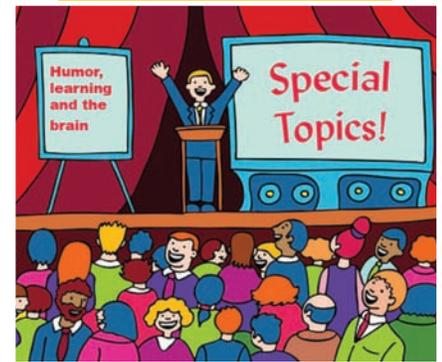
And for Beavis and Butt-head fans out there, any day I have a shirt on without a collar is a day where the Great Cornholio might make an appearance. Beware if you have bowls of sugar anywhere near me, and do not under any circumstances awaken my bung-hole.

What fun I have had throughout the years! Students don't remember all the content you teach them, but they sure do remember how they felt when they knew you. They remember the good times and how much we laughed together. Hopefully they take humor with them as one of their best, and most shareable lessons.



Author

Jeff Powless teaches psychology and biology at Paw Paw High School in Southwest lower Michigan. He is also a proud vocational rehabilitation counseling student at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.



A nice DNR guy, myself, and a sea lamprey stuck to my wrist.



Teaching really takes it out of a person! Notice the decidedly Left Brain desk arrangement.



My Skeleton Crew.

AATH Remembers By Don Baird, PsyD

Every year at our conference we like to pause and remember and celebrate those who brought us humor and laughter that left us in the past year. Here are a few of the people we will miss.

BOB ELLIOTT: He was one half of the comedy team of Bob and Ray... And both Bob and Ray kept insisting to audiences they too never were sure who was who. What was undeniable is that on radio, TV, and Broadway, their low-key humor and hilarious fake commercials brought joy to millions.

Their comedy was smart and subtle, and show business was a little out of character for two quiet men. But as Bob once explained: "by the time we discovered we were introverts, it was too late to do anything about it."

YOGI BERRA: He was one of baseball's greatest catchers, managers, and personalities. And he used the English language in hilarious ways that delighted fans everywhere.

His parents were Italian immigrants—and when he had the chance to visit Italy as an adult, he attended an opera at La Scala. Asked about it by reporters, he admitted, "It was pretty good. Even the music was good." Among his observations (which were attributed to him but not always original with him): "Always go to other people's funerals. Otherwise they won't go to yours." And "nobody goes to that restaurant anymore—it's too crowded."

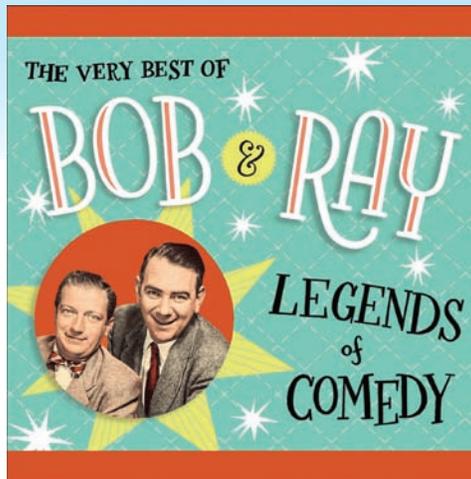
Yogi was so popular, he was even hired to do commercials for products such as Yoo-Hoo Chocolate Drink. Asked if Yoo-Hoo was hyphenated, he once responded, "No, Ma'am, it's not even carbonated."

In the spirit of Yogi, one letter writer sent the following to the New York Times: "It's a good thing he really lived—because if he hadn't, there never would've been anyone like him."

GARRY SHANDLING: He first worked in an advertising agency and moonlighted by writing scripts for "Sanford and Son." The scripts sold and fortunately for us he changed careers and became one of the most innovative comedy performers and creators of his time.

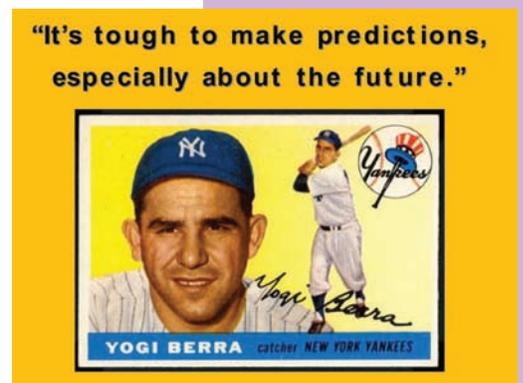
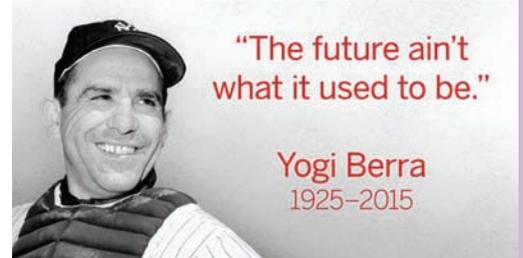
Two of his TV creations, IT'S GARRY SHANDLING'S SHOW and THE LARRY SANDERS SHOW will live on as unique series that changed TV comedy history.

To all of these famous funny people.... and to those in your life who helped you find its funnier side, no matter what—we honor them all now...with love and remembered laughter.



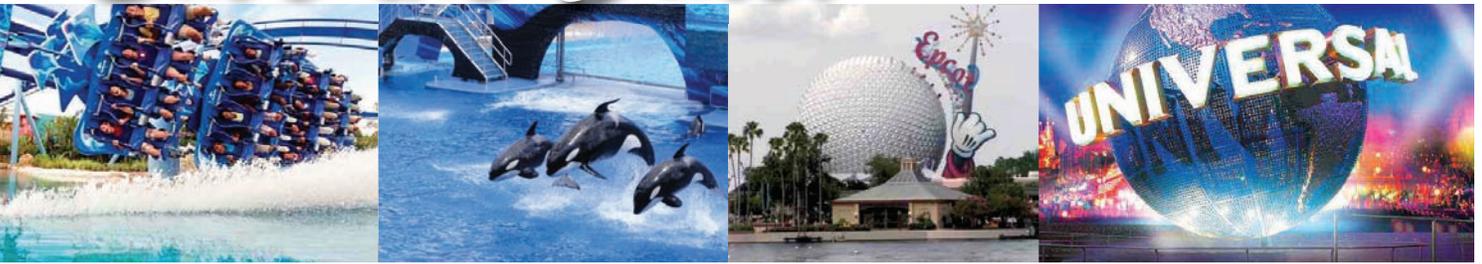
bulletin

From the Office of Fluctuation Control, Bureau of Edible Condiments; Soluble, Insoluble, and Indigestible Fats and Glutinous Derivatives, Washington, D.C.: Directive 943456201: As of September 1st, the price of groundhog meat will be fixed at a level no higher than the price of groundhog meat on October 15, 1974.



Author

Don Baird is a speaker, writer, and adjunct professor in Clinical Psychology. He is a former AATH Board Member from Chicago, and has spoken on matters of humor and psychology locally, nationally and internationally (and even sometimes sensibly). www.sufferingishighlyoverrated.net



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and Therapeutic Humor Conference in

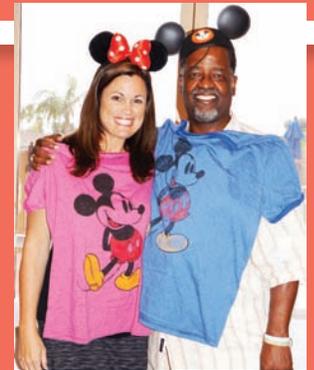
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Watch for details at aath.org



Conference Co-chairs Sporty King and Heidi Hanna are getting ready for the next Annual Conference.

*Celebrating
30 years
of AATH!*

Found Humor Contest:

Humor helps us see things in a different way. Take a day and just notice the humor all around you. Send us your observations. We will print 'em. As always, **FABULOUS PRIZES!**

Below are a couple of photos taken by the editors, Laurie Young and Kay Caskey.

Send us your ideas Laurie@Laughways.com.



Taken by Laurie Young in New York City. Apparently no one taught that dog to read.



Taken by Kay Caskey at our small local hospital in Paw Paw, Michigan—the very same small town where Jeff Powless teaches (check out his article in our special topics section in this issue).

Our editorial staff:



Laurie Young, Hunter and Gatherer — the place to come if

you need to be hunted or gathered. Send her your ideas! Laurie@Laughways.com.



Sporty King, Master of all Things Correct—if you need to

know how to correctly spell (or even eat) a pomegranete pomegra pomegranate or want to know how many times adults laugh each day compared to children, he is the man to ask.

Message to Members:

Welcome to our 4th AATH *Humor Voice*, a newsletter for, about, and by our members. We hope you enjoyed it!

We'd like to hear from you about things you would like to see included. We are always looking for Member Spotlights. Please send your ideas to: Laurie Young— Laurie@LaughWays.com.

Next Issue

- It's our INTERNATIONAL Issue with Member Spotlights shining from around the world.
- Your International articles— send them to us!
- Your funny story, images, or research you would like to share.
- Our December/January edition will focus on PLAY and in March our special topic will be HEALTH and HUMOR.

Think about including AATH on your donation list!

We are a 501c corporation, which means you can deduct your donation on your taxes. We are changing but volunteers can't do all that needs to be done and everything has a cost. Please keep AATH in mind.



Kay Caskey, She reads like Evelyn Wood. If you have long,

complicated texts—maybe even research—with big words, send them to her. Behind that big smile resides an enormous brain. Ask her how the US government recruited her when USSR first launched Sputnik. She is also the complaint department.

Most importantly, thanks to all the authors who have helped make this newsletter a reality.