

SEARCH



MAGAZINE
WINTER 2022

#KeepLaughing

**Stand-Up and
Succeed**

**The Crooning
Comedian**

**Sharing a
Laugh**

**Rokas the
Magician**



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Letter from the Editor

Comedy is a bit like French cuisine. When it's done poorly, you're left looking at ingredients and wondering how anyone thought they could be appetizing. It's repulsive. When done well, it is a mind-blowingly fulfilling meal, and incorporates elements in ways you never imagined. You seek that thrilling perfect bite forever after.

Sure, dramas and action films receive the majority of accolades. In books, it's the painful autobiographies that book clubs covet. However, humor is by far the trickiest of topics. The skill exhibited by good comedians and Rom-Coms are underappreciated. It takes wit to entertain so lightly. The most clever people I know aren't politicians or philanthropists, it's the comedian who can face down the reality of our world and present it with a chuckle.

Perhaps the reason humor isn't awarded as frequently is because, like taste, humor is subjective. When you find an author, comedian, or film that fits your sense of humor, is there anything better? Delight derived from entertainment that makes you laugh can be enough to turn a gloomy weekend bright.

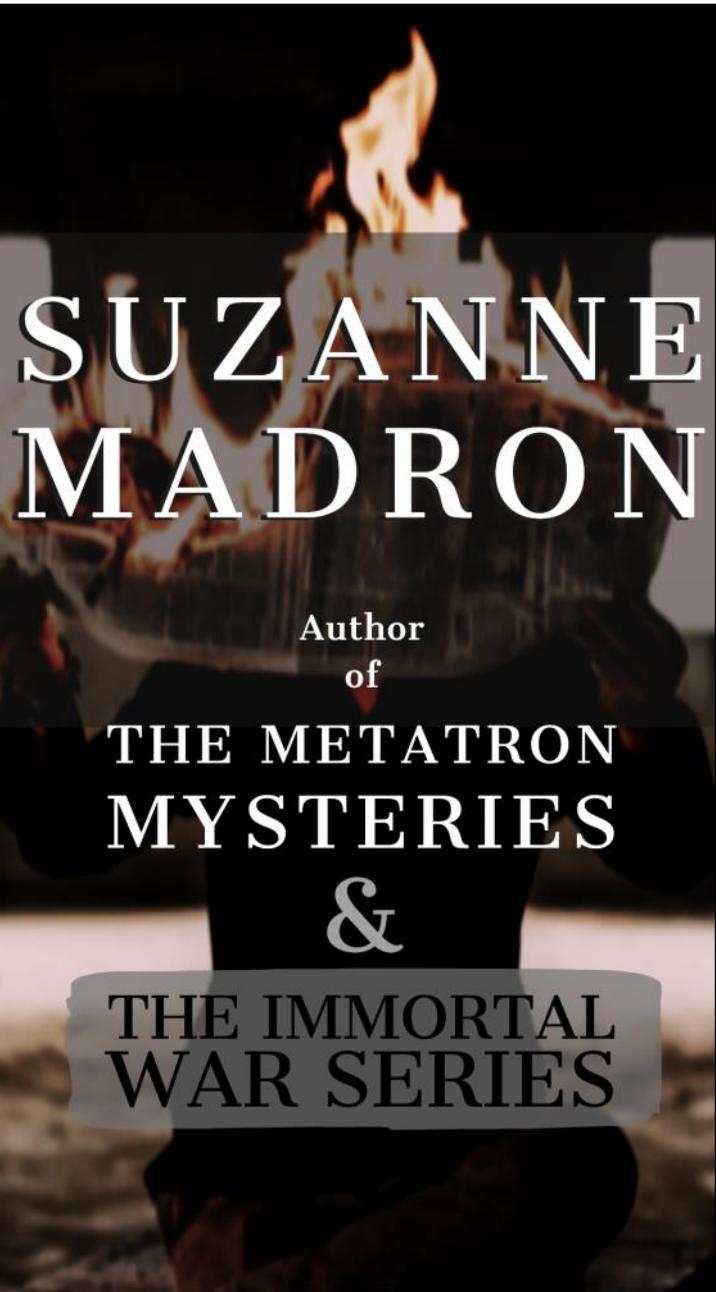
Whether your taste runs more Douglas Adams, Robin Williams, Dave Barry, Dean Martin, or P. G. Wodehouse, there's good reason to seek out humor. Just ask Tim Reynolds, our resident humor columnist and occasional stand-up comic. In this issue you can also learn a bit about Lithuanian magician Rokas, and enjoy our Mary Tyler Moore retrospective.

There's a reason we refer to comedy as "a sense of humor." Like other senses, it is an impression we experience and react to at a visceral level. Find something that doubles you over with involuntary laughter. Cry with mirth, and appreciate the subtle skill or the whack-in-the-crotch that got you there. Either way, we hope this issue hits the spot, not your funny bone.

Heather Roulo / *Editorial Director*



PHOTO BY LIDYA NADA



SUZANNE MADRON

Author
of

THE METATRON MYSTERIES

&

THE IMMORTAL WAR SERIES

When the demons are the
good guys, you know the
world has gone to hell.



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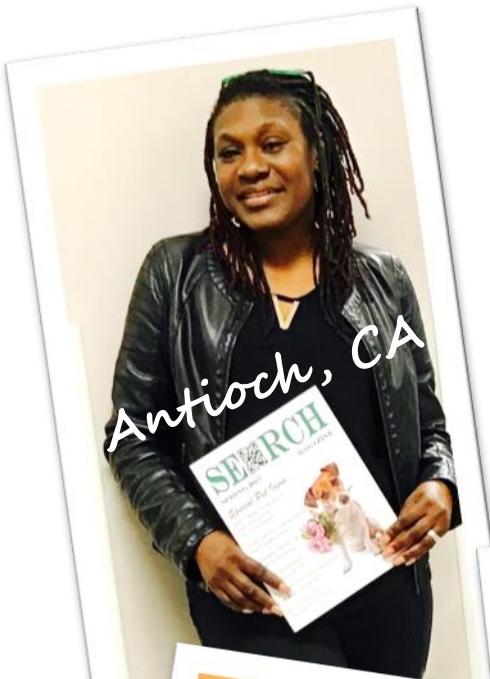
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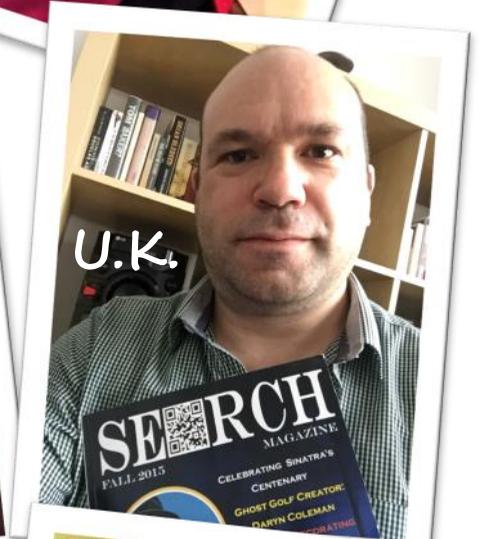
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PHOTOS BY EMERIAN RICH

CASCADE, COLORADO

Like most little kids, Christmas was my favorite holiday. I mean, who doesn't like two weeks off school, piles of presents, and being allowed to eat countless sweets?

ee, the park in Colorado was planned to be identical to the one he'd built in Lake Placid, NY. The story goes that in the 1940s, an 8-year-old girl described to Monaco what she believed Santa's home and village looked like. He translated her imaginings into blueprints. Twelve alpine village buildings were constructed, including the Claus home, workshops, a reindeer barn, a chapel, and even Mother Hubbard's Cupboard.

This vintage Christmas amusement park has dozens of rides designed for children, infants, and adults. The rides range from the usual Ferris wheel, carousel,



When I was five years old, my parents held my birthday party at The North Pole, or as we used to call it, "Santa Claus Land." It didn't matter that my birthday is in June or that it was a sunny day with not a lick of cold to speak of. At The North Pole in Cascade, Colorado, Christmas is a state of mind.

Located 7,500 feet above sea level at the foot of Pikes Peak—the highest summit of the Southern Front Range of the Rocky Mountains—The North Pole amusement park

opened in June of 1956. By the time I visited for my fifth birthday, it was 20 years old and still a wonder. It was the first place I experienced a roller coaster, rode a real-life pony, and saw a strange Christmas-clown juggle candy canes.

Believe it or not, in the 66 years since opening, it still fascinates both children and adults. The brain-child of Arto Monaco, a former Walt Disney employ-



and car rides, to the more unique rides like the Candy Cane Coaster and the Peppermint Slide. The Christmas Tree—a giant white spinning tree—is a statement piece in the middle of the park and brings to mind scenes from Whoville. No matter if it's the Sky Ride, the Mini-Himalaya, Santa's Sleigh Ride, or Tilt-a-Whirl, one thing all the rides share is the theme. Every ride is candy caned, dipped in snow, or topped with gumdrops.

Beyond the rides, there is so much to see and take part in at the park. They have their own post office, so be sure and bring your address book so you can post a letter or card postmarked from The North Pole. You can visit with Santa at his own house every day the park is open and get photos. No more waiting in lines at the mall for "fake" Santa. They have gifts, toys, and souvenirs in their village shops and even an on-site glass blower for that extra special gift.

As you walk down the path in Santa's village, you will feel like you've been transported into the Alps. Lined with log cabins trimmed in snow and gin-



gerbread woodwork, the shopping district is unlike any other place I've been. There are several interactive displays that sing songs or perform acts. You can pose with lots of snowy, winter friends such as elves, snowmen, reindeer, and a giant polar bear whose lap is ample enough to sit on. There really is a reindeer barn where you can see and sometimes feed the reindeer. Get into the Christmas spirit by touching the ice-cold North Pole (especially nice in the summer months). Festive holiday music pumped through loudspeakers will have you singing along and conjure up the feeling of it being, "The most wonderful time of the year." You can even sit by a fire pit and make s'mores.

This is an outdoor park close to the Rockies, so all dates open are subject to weather. Do a quick check on the website to save time and money when the weather seems especially rough. The park is open from May to December, and admission in the summer and fall is free. Rides are unlimited with the purchase of a wristband. November and December dates re-



quire a reservation.

If you're planning a trip to The North Pole from another state or country, I suggest you book two-to-three more days to take in the sights nearby. Natural wonders like Pikes Peak, Garden of the Gods, and The Cave of the Winds, as well as the town of Manitou Springs—with shops and their very own castle—are all six-to-twelve miles from the gates of The North Pole.

Taking a trip to The North Pole is sure to rekindle that holiday joy you enjoyed as a child. To plan your trip, visit: northpolecolorado.com ■





PHOTO BY ENIS YAVUZ

It was one of my very first performances as a solo harpist. The bride had asked me if there was a children's song that I could play that would cue her four-year-old niece when it was time to carry her basket of flowers down the aisle. Weeks ahead of the wedding, we agreed, "Little April Showers," from the Disney movie *Bambi* would be the flower girl song.

When the day of the wedding arrived, the archway where the couple would exchange vows was covered in the most beautiful purple wisteria I'd ever seen. Family slowly made their way to their seats while I played a prelude filled with love songs. The grandparents walked down the aisle to the song from their wedding, "I'll Be Seeing You." Then, the parents walked down to their wedding song, "Color My

World" by Chicago. Finally, it was time for the wedding party. Each wedding couple proceeded down the aisle in lavender gowns that matched that of the wisteria in the archway.

When the wedding coordinator gave me the cue, I began to play "Little April Showers," as planned. A little girl gingerly took about ten steps while enrobed in many layers of toile before she recognized the music being played for her. About mid-aisle, she stopped and set down her basket of rose petals. A tiny gasp could be heard from the wedding guests. Then, as if choreographed, the flower girl began to dance! With precision, she twirled, clapped, and made very deliberate steps. Being new to the soloist scene, I didn't know if I should stop or continue to play. My answer came in the form of a storm of videographers and photographers who pounced on the angelic scene like the paparazzi on royals. They caught the whole thing on film and digital. When she'd finished, the flower girl took two bows. She confidently picked up her basket and her audience went wild with applause. To say that she stole the show was an understatement.



PHOTO BY JUSTIN CLARK

“Thank you for rolling with it, today,” she said. The famous flower girl was asleep on the woman’s shoulder. “We thought that if you played a song Mandy knew, she wouldn’t be afraid to walk down the aisle alone. She had no idea that she remembered her Spring Program dance from her preschool concert.” We both laughed and Mandy’s mother gave her daughter a little hug.

“Mandy has set the bar high for other flower girls,” I joked. ■



The dancing flower girl picked up where she left off, sprinkling rose petals as she continued to make her way toward the bride and groom. Love was declared, happy tears were shed, and I—as the harpist—played the soundtrack to the day.

As the night came to a close, I packed up my things and a very happy but tired-looking woman approached me. She had kind eyes and a huge smile.

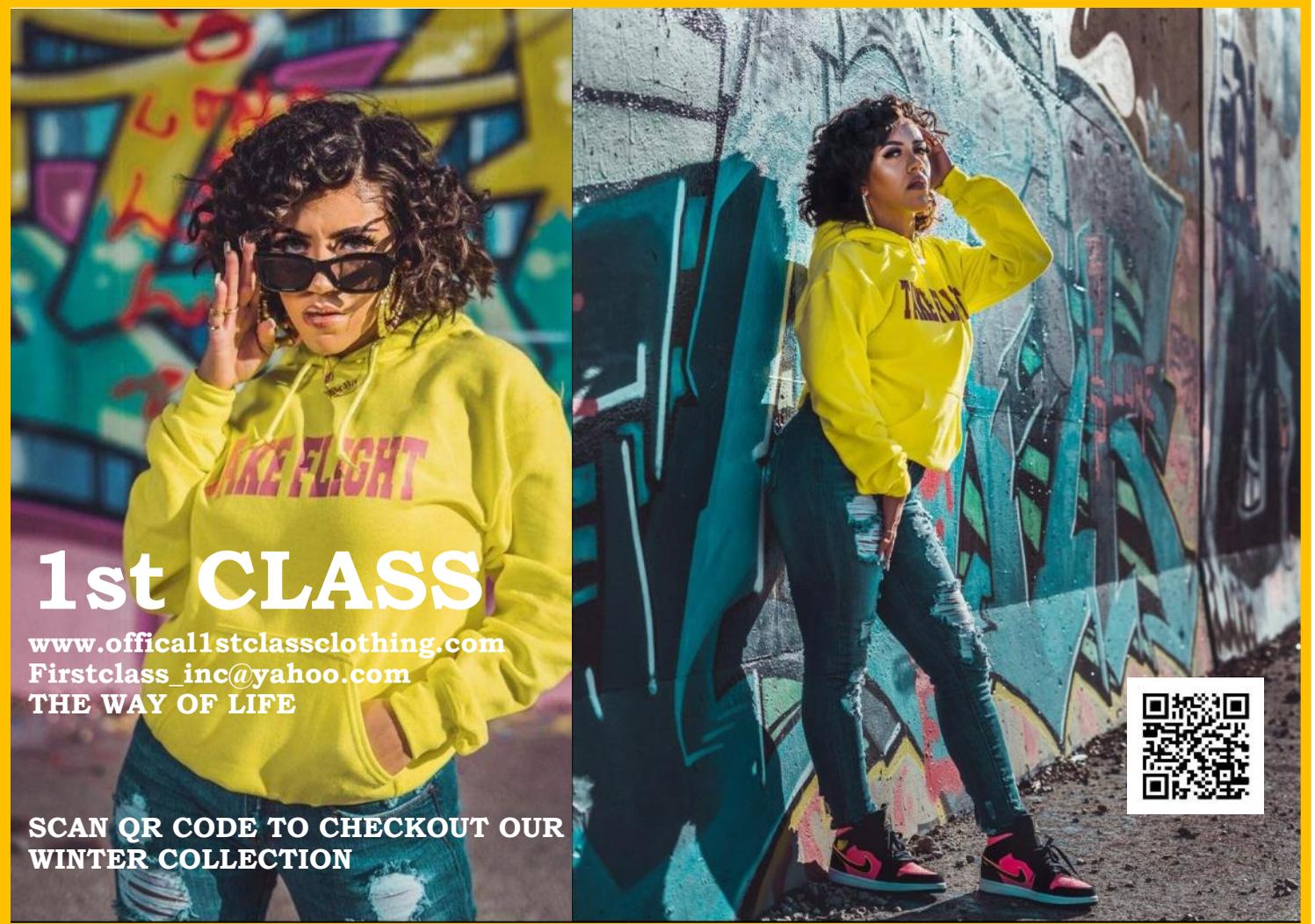
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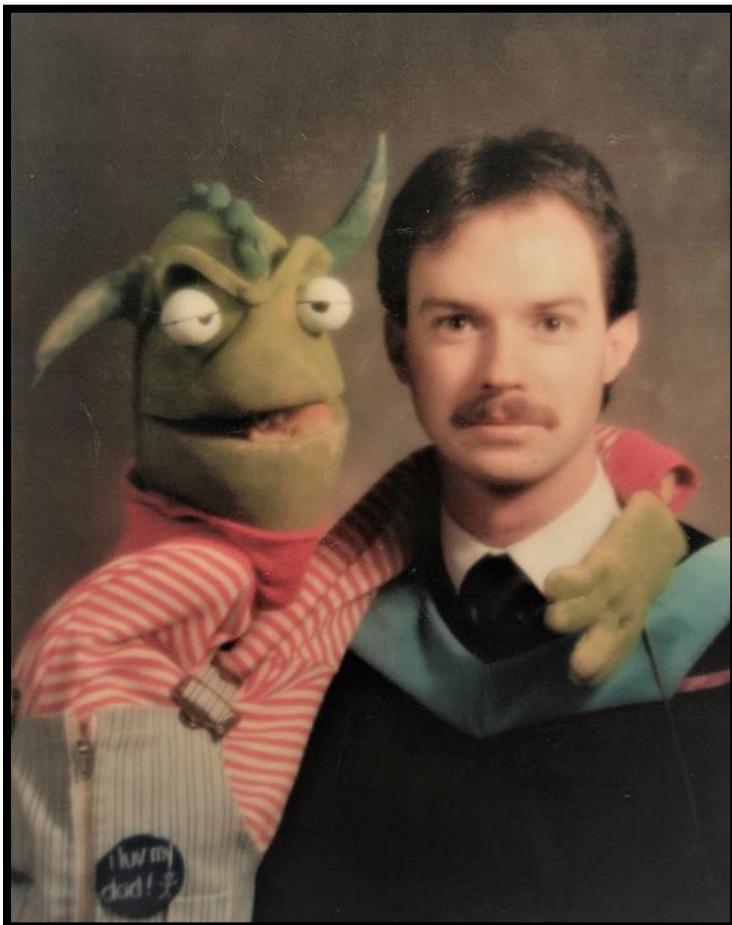


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What can you do when your BFF is a troublemaker and a bad influence? What can you do when your mother doesn't like your BFF and cringes whenever their name is mentioned?

What can you do when your BFF is a dragon puppet who wears a striped turtleneck, work boots, and size 6X OshKosh B'Gosh coveralls festooned with buttons that say "Why Be Normal" and "I Love My Dad?"

You do the same thing I did when Benny came into my life. When I say "came into my life" I don't mean he walked in the door and sat down on the couch with a beer, I mean I created him as an assignment in Children's Drama Class in college. As soon as I gave him a voice like an articulate Cookie Monster, though, he became his own...presence.

When I say "presence" I mean *he* got invited to floor parties in residence and the girls loved him. How much? Let's just say that Benny got kissed more in college than I ever did.

Although he was a wizard with little kids who

loved his imperfections—one horn goes up, one horn goes down, and he always looked like he just woke up and isn't complete aware of what's happening around him—the truth is, Benny's creation was inspired by more than a few of the casual stoners I knew both in college and in the resorts I worked at in summer. I'm not saying he ever did recreational drugs, but he was certainly pro-party and anti-establishment.

He came into my life when I was an undergraduate. He was a big hit and then helped me get through teacher's college two years later. He was so important to my success that year, that when it was time for that oh-so-serious grad picture to be taken, I arrived with Benny. The photographer exploded with glee.

Move on seven years later and I relocated to a resort in the Rockies, but a large puppet was hardly a welcome roommate (there were four humans in a 10x10 room) so, Benny and his suitcase went to live with my human BFF, Craig, in Thunder Bay. Why do you care where I stored my silly puppet? Because I'm a sneaky practical joker and a few years later I spoke with Craig's girlfriend, Susan (now his wife of 26 years!), whom I had never met in person, and we planned a surprise visit from me, unbeknownst to Craig.

At that time, Craig worked as both a paramedic and a firefighter, working those long hours around the clock. One morning, just before 8 a.m., Craig came in the front door of his house and Benny was sitting in the recliner, facing the door. Exhausted and confused, Craig just stared, until Benny started to move. Benny raised his hand-on-a-wire, waved, and asked in his distinctive voice, "How you doing, buddy?"

Craig was completely befuddled, so I stood up from behind the recliner, Benny on the end of my arm. All Craig could say was, "What the *bleep* are you doing in my living room?" The look on his face was worth the price of the airfare! ■

When a fantasy turns into a cold reality...

What will she do with her sexy cat burglar when she catches him?



Conservatory, Eternal Kingdom: A Vampire Novel, Agent For the Orchestra, Her Immortal Beloved, The Telephone Booth, and most recently, Terror Under the Lupin Moon (available on Kindle Vella).

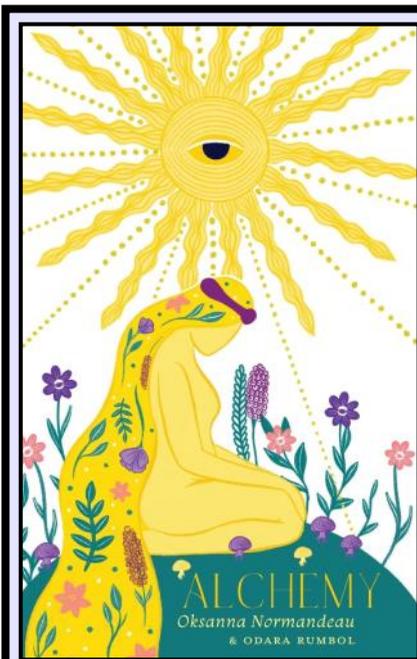
You've written for every issue of *SEARCH Magazine* since the beginning, which we really appreciate. What else do you do?:

When I'm not writing stories or the music column for *SEARCH Magazine*, I'm writing music...or playing it. I'm the owner of Michigan Conservatory, where I teach piano and all stringed instruments. I'm the Lead Harpist in the Pebble Creek Chamber Orchestra and I'm currently finishing my third album entitled, *Irish Goodbyes*.

Tell us about your new album: *Irish Goodbyes* doesn't imply that the album will have Irish or Celtic music (even though it will). An "Irish Goodbye" is slang for an immediate departure. It describes a person who makes a quiet and stealthy exit. There is no malice and yet no gratitude spoken for the party or the invitation. One minute the person is there, the next they're not. It seems a lot of people in my life have made "Irish Goodbyes" the fashion of the day. So much so, I decided to write some songs about it. I'm kind of a blunt, say-what-you-mean-to-say kind of person. My thinking is, if you live as upfront and honestly as you can, you live without misunderstanding or regret. An "Irish Goodbye" is the opposite of all I hold dear. It's an idea worth exploring. It's braver than me. Music and writing are places to dip a toe into the waters of the unknown and see where they lead. ■

Name: Michele Roger
Location: Michigan

What do you write?: I'm a Horror and Paranormal Romance writer. My writing works include *The*



Alchemy by Oksanna Normandeau

A story of realization, heartache, understanding, acceptance, and resilience.

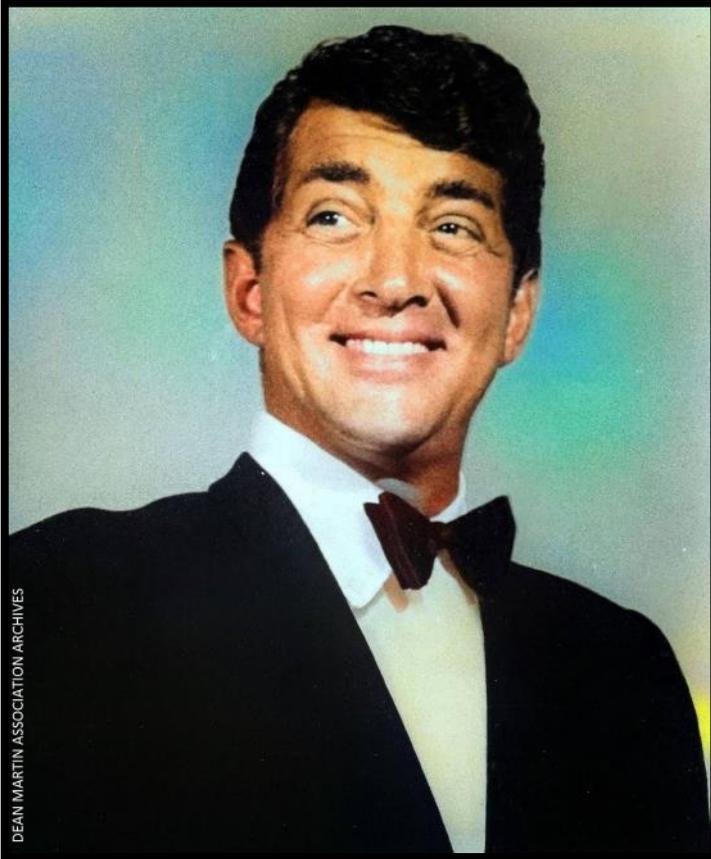
A collective of commentary poems on the corruption of various worldly issues.

The illustrations highlight the impacts made on the human psyche captured through a psychedelic lens in hopes of deciphering the truth within a broken foundation.

Illustrated by Odara Rumbol.

oncpoetry.com





In August 1969, *Billboard* declared Dean Martin “The Total Entertainer.”

While that’s not entirely true (he never performed live theatre nor starred in Broadway musicals), Dino owned his own restaurant, his own production companies, had shares in a Las Vegas casino, did hundreds of sell-out Vegas shows, regularly topped the music charts, starred in hit movies, and headlined his own ratings-busting NBC show. In 1968, he purportedly earned more money for that year than anyone in the history of show business.

Of those who knew and worked with him, we would all say the same thing, he was a perfect gentleman, respectful of his peers, and exceptionally hard-working. He just made it look easy! While music was the career that made Dino very rich and was a path he’d always longed to go down back when he was a busboy and a croupier in Steubenville, his natural flair for comedy was what brought him to the attention of millions.

He, of course, began his comedy career with Jerry Lewis. When I co-wrote the biography *Dean Martin Recollections*, I referenced a line spoken by Jason Statham’s character from the movie *Transporter 3*,

where he insisted that Dino was the funny one, not Jerry, and he could make people laugh by just holding a whisky tumbler and a cigarette. I’d guess why people watch a Martin and Lewis film today, is to see the Martin half.

Dino oozed charisma, his playful, comedic charm shining through, even when he was opposite the clownish behemoth that was Jerry. Take a look at *Artists and Models* (1955)—in particular the sequence where Dino’s character is taking a bath and Jerry tries to explain a phone call. The focus is of course on Jerry and his breathless antics in trying to explain to Dino what the call was about. Dino becoming exasperated by his partner’s inability to get the explanation across—all the while sitting in a bath—shows his subtle command of a hugely funny scene.

Away from Jerry, Dino showed the audience his clear abilities as a comedy actor in his own right and, while he wasn’t a slapstick performer, his inimitable style was on display. He found comedy to be very easy because he was naturally a funny person. *Who Was That Lady?*, *Ocean’s 11*, *What A Way To Go!*, *The Cannonball Run*, and more funny roles all gave him the opportunity to express his sense of humor. Even the not-so-great *Cannonball Run II* (his final picture) has him in a marvelous early scene with the illustrious Sammy Davis, Jr., hanging outside a hotel room window. It reaffirms Dino’s timing and wit, clearly enjoying the rapport with his old Rat Pack cohort.

But it was Dino’s weekly show for NBC where his talent to make people laugh was on full display. He encouraged playfulness and as the series hit its heights, every moment was filled with laughter. This was in part due to his unusual rehearsal techniques. He never rehearsed for his TV show in studio, with his guests. He would be on the golf course, in the car, or at home, listening over and over to tapes of the script while the guests would rehearse in studio with a stand-in for Dino. This certainly fueled the wrong accusation that Dino refused to rehearse.

“I wanted the spontaneity, the danger of live recording. If I go in and rehearse with these guys then where’s the risk of something going wrong? I knew my lines, they knew theirs, but we hadn’t worked together on them. That’s the danger,” he once explained.

It was this approach that gave his TV show an edge. It purposely wasn’t polished or perfect. Dino wanted the audience to see and laugh along with the mistakes. Often the production team would set up a gag that Dino never knew about. Two famous ones being where he crashed through a false studio floor and the time when a plywood mock-up of a piano splintered under him as he jumped up to sit on it.

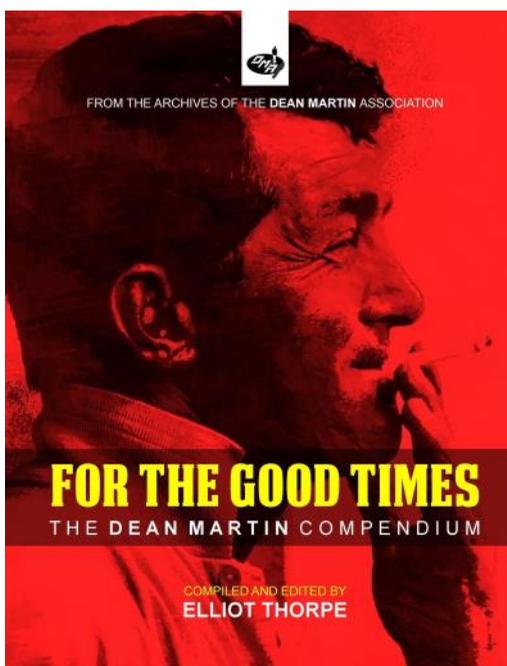


Surprise visitors would appear during the live recording and cause chaos, or a sketch would collapse because Dino and his guests couldn't control their laughter. This was all unique in TV at the time and clearly was a format that worked and appealed to audiences.

The shows became legendary. Where else would you have Hollywood icons such as Jimmy Stewart and Orson Welles in drag with Dino miming to the Supremes? Misquoting song lyrics kept his Gold-diggers

backing group in stitches. Only Dino could keep a joke running for weeks about a "mystery voice" competition, for owner of the mystery voice (Sinatra) to then actually show up unannounced on set. Looking back at the shows now, so many decades later, they are still fresh, hilarious, and leave you wanting more.

Oliver Reed, the late, great British actor, endeavored to make the air move around him. Dino? He made the air stop and watch. ■



During its first 50 years, **THE DEAN MARTIN ASSOCIATION** published a phenomenal 415 issues of its regular journal, containing news, articles, features, opinions, reviews and more, all about Dean Martin, his career, his peers, his admirers and his life.

Here, collected together in one volume, is a selection of the DMA's output from 1960 onwards, re-edited and updated. With exclusive brand new material and illustrated throughout, it includes: Contemporary reviews of Dino's live shows by those who were there; interviews with entertainers and artistes; rare press articles and product advertisements; retrospectives of Dino's music, films and TV work; essays, both new and old, about Dino and his legacy; contemporary news bulletins; DMA members' memories of Dino - and more!





PHOTO BY IGOR GUBAIDULIN

One of the great parts of doing what I do, is that when I travel, I often have the great fortune to meet a variety of interesting people. Rokas, a magician from Lithuania, is one such person.

I was in Las Vegas for a magic school and had the great pleasure of seeing him perform. His wit and humor, as well as skill, was entertaining and engaging.

Rokas has been to the U.S. several times, and has even performed on the show *Penn and Teller: Fool Us*, winning the Fool Us Trophy! He is a gracious, and delightful entertainer.

His home country, Lithuania, is located along the Baltic Sea and has an amazing variety of things to do and see. If you like amber, Lithuania might be a place you will want to visit, as they have what is called the Amber Road along the Baltic with shops, tours, and opportunities to hunt amber yourself. Lithuania also participates in the Eurovision Song Contest, something that gets overlooked in the United States.

While the official language is Lithuanian, English is common and accepted as the language most tourists speak, so travel there should be friendly. As part of the Schengen Area, visitors traveling between the other Schengen countries don't have to worry as much about visa or passport control, though keep in mind the 90-day limit. If you do plan to travel, double-check the entry requirements on the appropriate embassy website.

Rokas was kind enough to respond to some questions I had for him.

Thank you for taking the time to chat with me today. Would you be kind enough to tell people a little about yourself?

My name is Rokas. I am a Lithuanian magician and a Guinness World Record holder in card throwing. I feel blessed that I make a living by doing card tricks.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROKASMAGIC

What can you tell people about your home country, Lithuania?

It's a hidden gem. People don't know much about Lithuania. I travel around the world with my magic show and there are three main reactions I get when they hear I am from Lithuania.



First, they know Lithuania because they have ties with it. Their grandparents immigrated from Lithuania to the U.S., or their sister's husband is Lithuanian, and so on.

Second, Lithuania is pretty big with sports. They know Lithuania because of basketball players, MMA fighters, or Olympic swimmers.

And third—which is the most common—they know absolutely nothing about it. I am always very enthusiastic about explaining to people where it is located, and what it is famous for.

Recently I had a friend visiting me in Lithuania from the United States and she couldn't believe how beautiful, clean, and modern it is. She said she will return with her family and friends which melted my heart. It is an extraordinary country and I want more people to experience it.

If people were to visit, what must-see or must-do things would you recommend?

I would recommend seeing Vilnius Old Town and Trakai which is a small city around forty minutes from the capital city Vilnius. If you are a sea lover, Palanga and Nida. Palanga has party vibes and Nida has chill vibes.

How would you describe your style of entertaining?

I make people believe in magic and I do it in the most fun way.

What is it like to “be” Rokas? How would you describe a day in your life?

I am always working on the next project. I rarely have days where nothing is happening. August 15th I turned 30 and I gave myself a present—a two-week vacation—which meant no shows, no rehearsals, no meetings, no projects. I have to admit, I felt pretty tired after those two weeks. Working is the most fun thing I know. It gives me energy. It makes me feel creative, happy, and alive.

How did you get your start in magic? Any words of inspiration for anyone who might aspire to get into magic?

I was around thirteen-years-old when a friend of my grandfather showed me a simple mathematical magic trick. I was so blown away by the trick and at that moment I knew that magic was going to stay in my life. I didn't know if it was going to be my career or hobby, but I knew that it was here to stay. Not long after seeing that trick, I found my first magic teacher. I started performing and building magic and when I was twenty-two, I was already making a good living where I didn't need to find another job so I could pursue a magic career.

For more information on appearances or booking, Rokas can be reached at

rokasmagic.com ■

Stand-Up and Succeed

BY TIM REYNOLDS



Humor is such a vital part of our lives. We all grasp at moments of humor when they float by, desperate to raise our serotonin levels with a smile, a chuckle, or an outright, belly-splitting guffaw and tears. Sometimes it's hard to see the humor in the situation or the world around us...and that's why we need professional humor-makers—especially stand-up comedians—whether live on a stage, in a Netflix special, or on YouTube.

For six years I treaded the boards and stared into the spotlights as an amateur comic willing to grab any time on almost any stage. I have performed for Baptist church groups (they don't like jokes about farting dogs), lawyers and accountants (the more they drink, the less intelligent the jokes have to be), and I've had the rare honor of MCing a six-hour show featuring live music and burlesque acts, which is where stand-up comedy started—entertaining the audience while the stage hands reset the stage between acts of exotic dancers. Although, no matter what words were coming out of my mouth or what ears they were going into, there were basic rules I learned at the workshops given by working comics every Wednesday.

Working comics. The men and women who live and work in the trench-deep, stand-up world of Bates Motels, road-houses, broken-down rental cars, super-sized greasy pub food, and sometimes a variety of mood-altering substances best not detailed here. No matter their age, race, religion, nationality, or gender identification, they all have one thing in common—they live for the laughter. Working comics don't do it

to become rich, they do it because NOT doing it is unthinkable.

The rules are the same for all comics. From the open-mic amateur nights with three-minute sets, to the one-nighters in biker bars, to the festival competitions, and headlining in Vegas between seasons six and seven of their own sitcom.

To not know the rules is to court disaster, failure, or life as an accountant. Like anything else in life, though, you have to know the rules so you can know which ones to break and which ones to bend.

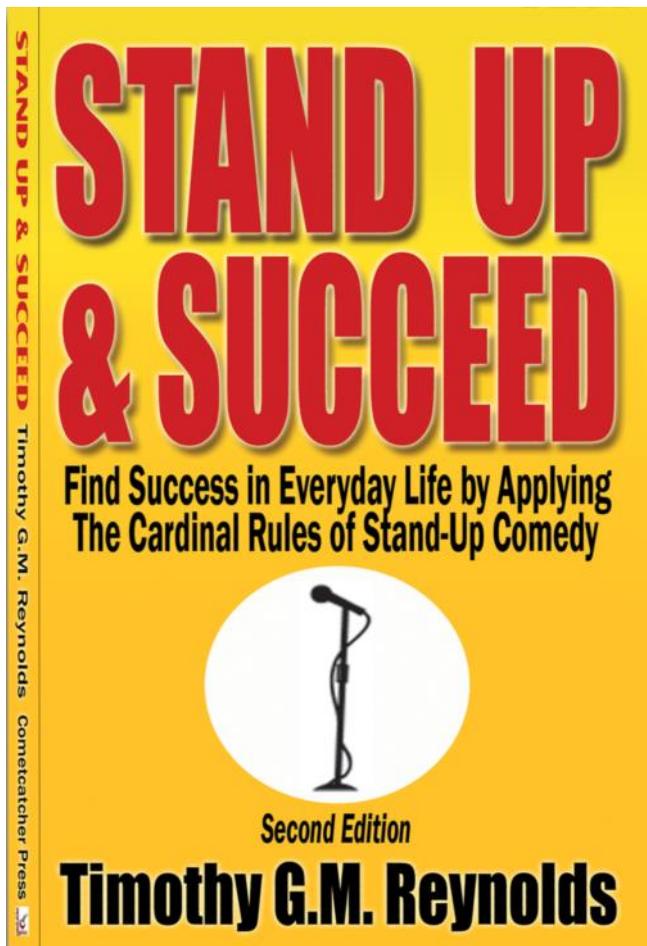
In stand-up comedy the breakable rules are performance rules like:

- Don't use props.
- Don't do Jack Nicholson impressions.
- A joke has a beginning, a middle, an end, and multiple tags, which are follow-up punchlines based on the first one.

These are rules that comics shouldn't break until they have the stage presence, the self-confidence, and the experience to know how to break them in just the right way.

But the *unbreakable* rules are the ones in which the wording is specific to the comedy industry and yet their meanings are so universal. At the heart of them are inviolable truths that, when applied to life, work, and play, you won't have to find success—it will find you. They're the little bits of wisdom dispensed by those working comics who've worked their way up and earned their place in whatever pecking order they're in.





Selected from my book, *Stand Up & Succeed*, I give you some of the best advice I was ever given for the stage, along with my notes on how to apply that advice to achieving success in life:

“The worst thing you write is better than the best thing you don’t write.”

~Mike Dambra

You could discover the cure for cancer or the secret of time travel, but if you don’t follow through and do something about it—write it down, record it, put it into action—you’re no closer to success than you were the day before your “discovery.”

“You’ve got forty-five seconds to a minute to establish your character on stage.”

~Jocko Alston

We’ve all been told to “Dress for Success,” but too many people still don’t realize that it’s more than just about the wardrobe, the haircut, or the mock-Gucci briefcase. It’s about “the package,” the way it all comes together to make that vital first impression.

First impressions make or break every relationship, whether professional or personal. That woman you give up your bus seat to could be your future mother-in-law or boss. That impatient jerk honking the horn in the Jaguar you give the finger to from the crosswalk could be your ten-o’clock meeting with the

\$5,000,000 account up for grabs. There’s no way to know, so make the most of that moment and remember to smile.

“When you’re willing to try anything and fail, that’s when you can grow as a comedian.”

~Chris Gordon

We learn most from our mistakes. When we succeed without mistakes, we learn only one way to succeed. We get complacent and often take the why-fix-what-ain’t-broke approach. But mistakes challenge our analytical minds and force us to try different approaches, look at different angles, and apply different methodologies. It is in the exploration of alternate possibilities where uniqueness is found, and it is in uniqueness where success above and beyond the mundane is achieved.

“Work on your craft and you don’t just focus on your career—your career has to have an underpinning of substance or your lack of knowledge will catch up to you.”

~Barry Kennedy

True lasting success simply doesn’t happen overnight. Even our “instant stars” from the various *Idol* shows have sung for years, often in church choirs or bands before they were “discovered.” Of course, lucky breaks can always play a part in success, but watch one of the bajillion Texas Hold-em poker tournaments on TV and note that when the cards suck, experienced players know when to either bluff or fold and wait for the next hand, and that’s when we see the substance of their craft shine through.

So, work on your craft and the experience base you build will give you the foundation your success needs. Have patience. Time spent on your dreams is never wasted.

“Enjoy your material. Ask yourself what makes you laugh.”

~Matt Billon

If you love what you’re doing and put your heart in it, people will feel that and want to be part of it. They’ll hop on your train just for snickers and giggles, and bring their business with them.

“Comedy at its most brilliant is when a comic stands on stage emotionally naked and honest.”

~Dan Quinn

Business is most successful when it’s stripped-down and honest. Start with that raw foundation and maintain a level of integrity in all your dealings, and people will trust you. When people trust you, more often than not, they will do business with you.



“Don’t be so afraid of silence. People like you and they are going to listen to you. At the end of a joke if you keep speaking, though, they will do just that—listen, not laugh—and laughing is the object of the game.”

~Dennis Ross

A moment of silence can speak as loudly as any words, and without being silent, you won’t be able to listen. Listen to your children, listen to your spouse, listen to your parents, listen to your neighbor, listen to the lonely stranger on the bus bench, listen to your employees and, yes, once in a while, occasionally, sometimes, every other Thursday, even listen to your boss. Don’t be in a rush to fill the moments of silence in a conversation, because that moment may be all the other person needs to finally take a deep breath and say what they really want you to hear.

“Don’t entertain with other people’s jokes.”

~Kevin Stobo

“Thou shalt not steal.”

~God, in an email to Moses.

It doesn’t get more basic than that, and nothing I can add will clarify or expand upon it.

“Leave your ego at the door.”

~Mike Dambra

Don’t mistake ego for drive, confidence, strength of personality, and character—they’re ALL necessary for success. A raging ego isn’t. Too many people think of success as just something they should strive for in business, but success in personal relationships is equally important. Forgetting to “leave your ego at the

door” in your relationships with your friends and family will create barriers to personal success which will grow and evolve until they become barriers to professional success.

“Turn a weakness into a strength.”

~Glenn Ottaway

A comic’s perceived weaknesses are often the source of their best material because it’s personal and people can relate to it. We’ve been raised to find what we do well in school, sports, business, and life, and put our efforts into those areas. But success requires balance and to be balanced, we need to acknowledge our weaknesses.

“Comedy never takes a holiday.”

~James Moore

“Never take a holiday” sounds pretty harsh, but the reality is, even when away on vacation, truly successful people are open to inspiration while they’re out and about. They might find inspiration in the fish-tossing show at Seattle’s Pike Place Fish Market, or in the marketing tricks of the 12-year-old twins selling sea shells on the beach in Zanzibar, or even in the innovative way the gondolier provides champagne service above and beyond his competition on the canals of Venice. Even when they’re “off the clock,” successful people always have one eye and one ear open to the world around them.

“You only hold your breath under water.”

~Mike MacDonald

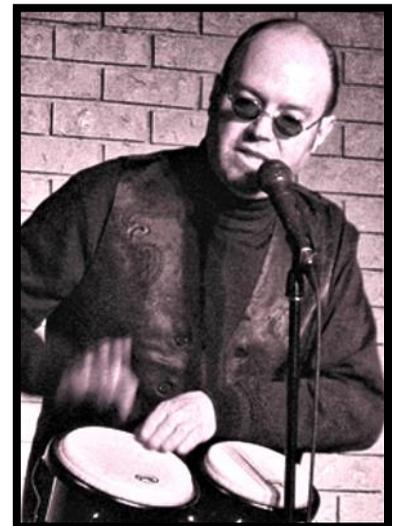
Be “cautiously optimistic.” Keep writing, keep selling, keep loving, keep doing whatever it is you’re doing, because if you do something great and then just hold your breath, waiting for success to see you and wave and come over to hang out, you’ll be disappointed—repeatedly.

Keep WORKING for your goal.

The last bit of advice I have for you I got from Tony Robbins at one of his seminars. This one sentence changed my life for the better.

“You can’t control what happens to you, you can only control how you react to it.”

So, let’s try to react with humor. ■



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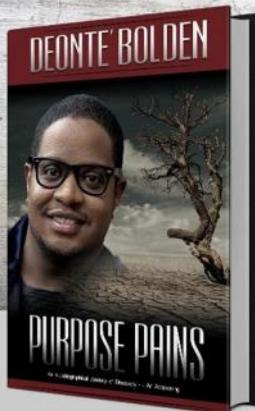
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PLAGUE MASTER: REBEL INFECTION BY H.E. ROULO



Trevor's return from the zombie infection makes him unique. It also makes him dangerous.

He's a hero on his homeworld, celebrated for finding a vaccine against the zombie virus, but the ruling Founders don't trust him and his low origins. When the revolution comes, Trevor is caught in the middle.

Despite his homeworld's troubles, a message from a Plague Master forces Trevor to seek reinforcements. He hunts for Kristin, the woman he left behind, and an answer to why the vaccine is failing.

He and his friends must fight on space stations and worlds overtaken with infected to discover the terrible truth about his cure.

THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW

CBS TELEVISION



She still turns the world on with her smile.

In 1970, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* premiere introduced Mary Tyler Moore as the idealistic Mary Richards, the new associate producer at perpetually low-rated WJM-TV Minneapolis News. Mary left her doctor fiancé, who couldn't say I love you.

She portrayed a modern working woman and the trials—and humor—to go with it.

The series tackles Mary living alone amid robbery fears and endears viewers with sitcom familiars from the beloved wife on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. Early in the series, ageism and divorced friends are addressed before pushing the envelope with career choices and the “lonely single gal guilt-tripped into working on Christmas Eve” trope. The awkwardness of someone short dating someone tall in “Toulouse-Lautrec Is One of My Favorite Artists” counters questions on solitary happiness versus women sprucing up to settle for the next man—which Mary won't do. She's not good at exerting authority and knows people try to take advantage of her being a good person, but Mary has to stand up and do what's best for her.

Later episodes explore mixing business with pleasure, infidelity, and winks about what a man

wants, such as during an interview when Mary objects to being asked personal questions irrelevant to her qualifications. She worries whether a dress is too sexy and shows just how much women go through to look good as one humorous disaster after another ruins the annual Television Editors Awards for the nominated Mary. While sick, with a sprained sprained ankle, bad hair, and ruined dress, she insists, “I usually look so much better than this.” Mary sticks to her convictions despite the nosy why-aren't-you-married-yet quips. She's unwilling to marry a man her parents prefer, but she doesn't love.

By its third season, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* adds more risqué domestic plots. Despite also moving to Minneapolis, we only see Mary's parents in a handful of guest appearances, for our progressive single gal can't fall back on running to her parents to solve every sitcom dilemma like her bemusing tax audit or humorously terrible parties. When she's out all night, Mary says her parents must accept they won't always know where she is and what she is doing. It's just none of their business. One of my favorite *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* winks comes when Mary's mother says, “Don't forget to take your pill,” to her father but Mary and her father both answer, “I won't.” Today's media is often so crass, but this then shocking admission doesn't have to say anything else as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* deftly grows from a more demure, safe, sixties television show into a self-



aware, clever, seventies-sign-of-the-times program, ushering in a new television age.

Alongside the ahead-of-their-time single working woman topics, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* also makes surprisingly modern statements as episodes such as “He’s No Heavy... He’s My Brother,” and “Some of My Best Friends Are Rhoda” address xenophobia, antisemitism, and cultural stereotypes with laughter. One of Mary’s disastrous shindigs leads to an unfortunate gay outing played for the punchline, but the love-who-you-love-and-we-can-all-be-groovy-together attempt was largely unheard of in 1972. Scab talk and picket lines are also laugh-out-loud relatable today. In “The Good Time News,” Mary discovers the previous, inferior male associate producer was paid fifty dollars more than her. Excuses he was a family man (so he deserved more) addresses inequality in the workplace.

The image-conscious station executives also demand a new, fresh, entertaining news hour, and this lighthearted approach divides the newsroom. Ed Asner plays the boss, Lou, a traditional newsman. He thinks the news should be the truth and not faked. He

compares it to using a dribble glass to make people laugh to gain higher ratings. It’s disturbingly relevant and simply fascinating that fifty years ago *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* called sensationalism for what it is. When Mary is suspended for two weeks without pay, she resents being treated like a child. She also strikes out at subsequent interviews for being qualified but too attractive for the job. She wants more challenging duties and has had proposals, but she is a career woman who goes her own way thanks to sophisticated humor, excellent characterization, and innovative topics.

With the laughter in the face of death in “Chuckles Bites the Dust” and the 1977 “The Last Show” tissue-inducing finale, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* punctuates its mark on television history. The breezy, colorful seventies nostalgia and groundbreaking storytelling provide lighthearted yet progressive winks reminding us how far television has come and how much—or how little—things have changed for women. Through it all, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* remains calorie-free comfort food making the whole family laugh. ■



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Baked Cauliflower Buffalo "Wings"



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE DAKES

In my younger days, I'd often entertain by holding study groups, small gatherings, dinner parties, and always throwing at least one large open house every year. Recent times have made that more difficult, but whether you are entertaining family, friends, or just yourself, this recipe is a delight.

Cauliflower has become increasingly popular in recent years. No longer just a steamed vegetable or an addition to a veggie combo, it's used for everything from pizza crust to a cauliflower steak main course. With this recipe, it makes a fabulous appetizer and—as we all know—appetizers go great with binge-watching your favorite new television shows.

Cauliflower, as we know it today, was man-made through a long process of selective breeding. Although it didn't start being cultivated in the United States until the 1900s, it was grown across Europe in the 1500s, and introduced to India in 1822 by the British. It's believed to have originated in Cyprus or Syria as early as the 12th century. Developed from

Ingredients

- *1 large, fresh cauliflower
- *1 medium orange
- *1 Tbsp. smoked paprika
- *1 Tbsp. sweet paprika
- *1/4 tsp. garlic salt
- *1/4 tsp. celery salt
- *1/4 tsp. ground turmeric
- *1/4 tsp. onion powder
- *1/4 tsp. fresh, black pepper
- *2 Tbsp. olive oil
- *6 Tbsp. corn starch
- *1/2 cup Buffalo wing dressing
- *Celery sticks (garnish)
- *Carrot sticks (garnish)
- *Blue cheese dressing (dipping sauce)

Brassica Oleracea, a broccoli variety, the genus Brassica includes broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, collard greens, and kale.

The subtle flavor of cauliflower makes it an ideal match for a dynamic sauce, and when it comes to Buffalo sauce, Teresa Bellissimo is the mother of this invention. In 1964 at the Anchor Bar in Buffalo,

New York, she prepared a late-night snack for her son and his hungry friends by deep frying chicken wings and tossing them in hot sauce, butter, and a few undisclosed “secret” ingredients. So, the “Buffalo” in “Buffalo sauce” has nothing to do with actual buffalo or bison, but, instead, with its city of origin.

Our recipe is a healthier version of this idea, with no deep-frying. For easier clean-up, we cover the top rack of a broiler pan with aluminum foil and bake the cauliflower. We created our own unique blend of spices for this dish, some of which you may not keep regularly stocked in your kitchen. Rather than chasing from grocery store to grocery store to find all of the spices, we prefer a local spice shop that sells us what we need in small re-sealable plastic bags. For the dipping sauce, we prefer to use a good blue cheese dressing as opposed to ranch dressing. It pairs well with the spices of the recipe and is much easier to find without MSG.



Preparation

- *Pre-heat the oven to 400 degrees.
- *Using a paring knife, trim leaves and stem from cauliflower.
- *Cut cauliflower into 1 1/2 to 2-inch diameter florets.
- *Place cauliflower florets into a microwave steamer with 1/4 cup water. Cover and steam in microwave on high for 6 minutes. When done, flush florets with cold water until cauliflower is cool to the touch. Drain cauliflower.
- *Using a citrus zester tool, remove zest from orange and mince into small pieces.
- *In a small bowl, mix smoked paprika, sweet paprika, garlic salt, celery salt, ground turmeric, onion powder, and fresh, ground pepper.
- *Place florets in a large mixing bowl. Add olive oil and mix until oil is evenly distributed.
- *Add half of the orange zest and half of the spice mixture to the mixing bowl and stir to distribute. Add remaining orange zest and spice mixture and stir.
- *Add all of the cornstarch, 1 Tbsp. at a time, while stirring to distribute.

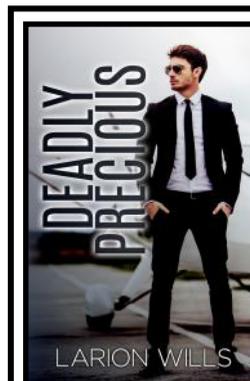


Cook

- *Using an oven broiling pan, cover the top rack with aluminum foil. Lightly spray foil with cooking spray.
- *Arrange seasoned cauliflower florets on top of foil-covered rack and put broiling pan in pre-heated, 400-degree oven.
- *Bake for 15 minutes. While the cauliflower is baking, wash mixing bowl and set aside to use later when applying the sauce.
- *Remove broiling pan from oven. Using kitchen tongs, turn each cauliflower floret over. Return broiling pan of cauliflower to oven and bake for 10 minutes.
- *Remove broiling pan from oven. Using kitchen tongs, place cauliflower florets in the clean mixing bowl.
- *Add half of the Buffalo dressing at a time to bowl, stirring to distribute.
- *Using kitchen tongs, arrange florets back on foil-covered roasting pan and return to oven for 5 to 10 minutes to set the sauce.

Serve

- *Serve hot with celery and carrot sticks, with blue cheese dressing as a dip. ■



amazon

Drew’s plan was to pay her expenses after the attack, walk away, and forget it. In no way could she know about his millions.

Or did she?

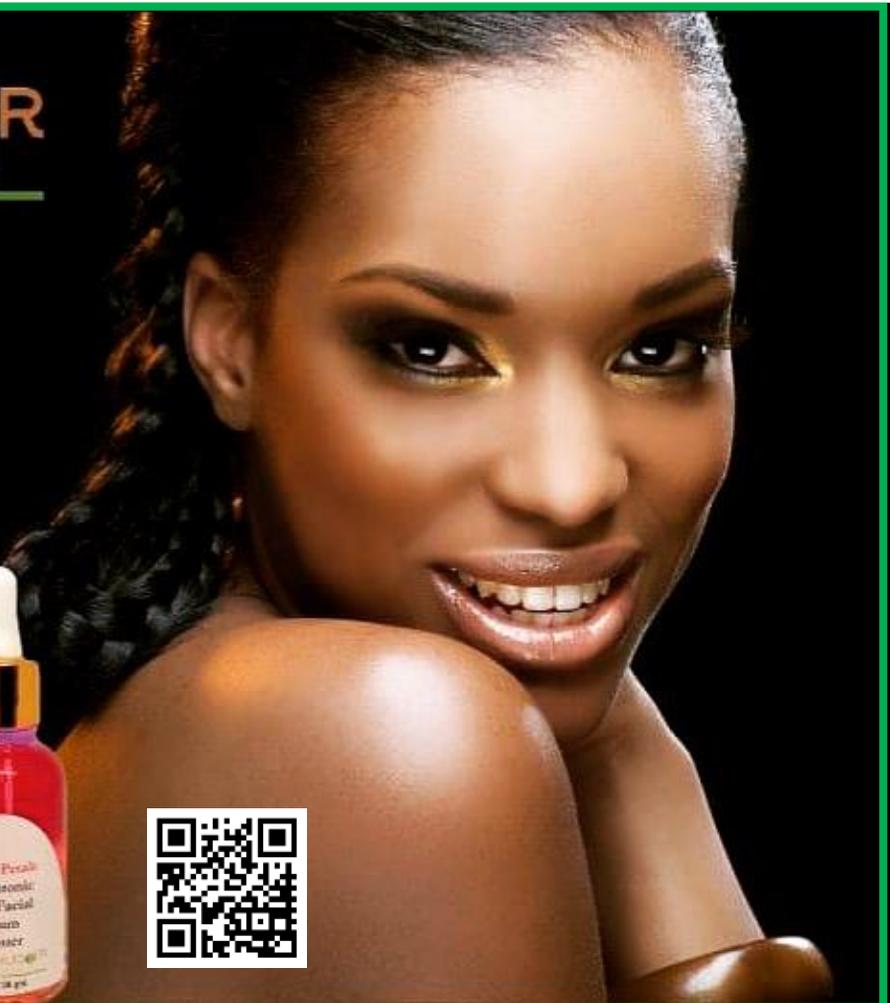
Was revenge her plan, not forgiveness?



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I first learned about the Wii as an Activities Director in the aughts. Every senior facility wanted Nintendo's newest console.

I also realized I had a very bad Lyme Disease case when I couldn't compete with my elderly charges and several years later my husband bought the *Wii*

Fit Plus to help my recovery. Most of my video game experience stemmed from Atari and *Space Invaders* or DOS with *The Ultimate Doom*, but the Wii's hook was that anyone can use it—even groups or non-gamers like me. I began with lighthearted *Sports* and gentle yoga before advancing to running multiple miles and the *EA Sports Active Challenge*. This daily Wii had me back in high school ice hockey shape!

Fast forward to the pandemic and my thicker middle called for the Wii again. The best selling console has certainly had its day—everyone who would buy a Wii has and Nintendo discontinued support in 2019. Using the Wii for internet perks or streaming Netflix is over, but bundles online cost near the original \$250 or less than \$100 for affordable, second hand systems. Our games work splendidly, however one of the rumble controllers and a fitness nunchuck doesn't always cooperate, making it tough for us to play two-player competitions.

Fortunately, the Wii remains a viable source for one-on-one fitness. Recently I've even taken a chance on new to me, \$3 games from Goodwill. Rather than stressing about calendar or calorie goals, now the Wii works at my pace as something fun to pick up on a rainy day during plague times. I enjoy the whiff of exercise and gentle guidance in these stressful times. Despite potential technical hiccups, the Wii remains excellent for personal enjoyment or family fun night. ■



PHOTOS BY YOUSEF SALHAMOUD

Located in eastern Washington, deep in the Palouse, Pullman is an adorable college town with cute coffee shops, bike paths, and rolling hills.

The Palouse region was formed following the ice age when glaciers moved down from Canada and ground up the earth below it, causing rock dust to cover everything in layers of silt. Wind blew the dust until it finally settled into the hills we see now.

Pullman is separated into several different parts. Washington State University sits in the center of the town on a massive hill. Students get “cougar calves”—named after the school’s mascot—from walking up and down the hill all day.

South of campus, is Pullman’s downtown. It has several great coffeeshops—such as Roost Coffee and Market, which makes their own syrups and Pups & Cups Cafe, which has an off-leash area for customers to let their dogs play in while enjoying their drinks. If you’re looking for something healthier, Sanctuary Smoothies has acai bowls and waffles that can be made gluten free. This district also has a few clothing stores such as Michelle’s Closet for amazingly priced consigned items and Flirt for trendier looks. Bruised Books is a great spot to pick up a new favorite novel.

There are several walking trails, for example River Walk Trail, which goes by the old train tracks along the north part of Pullman’s downtown. It’s flat and easy to walk, with lovely scenery. If you follow it long enough, eventually you’ll pass by Rolly’s—which makes rolled ice cream—and Cougar Country Drive In, a well-priced diner with great burgers.

If you’re looking for a pit stop along the border of Washington, Pullman is a wonderful spot to take in the beauty of the Palouse. ■





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NORTHANGER

Emmy Z. Madrigal

Kat is a horror fan. She loves to read, watch, and listen to ghostly, frightening things most people shy away from. When she meets her perfect match, Henry, she knows he's made just for her, but finding out his father may be a murderer, puts a different spin on their relationship. Is Henry's dad out for blood or just a misunderstood introvert who has lost his wife? Only a trip to the famed murder house, *Northanger*, will reveal the truth.



“*Northanger* is a delightful story based on Jane Austen’s classic, *Northanger Abbey*, that will appeal to both Austen fans and lovers of the gothic novel.”
 ~ Kara Louise, author of *Pirates and Prejudice*



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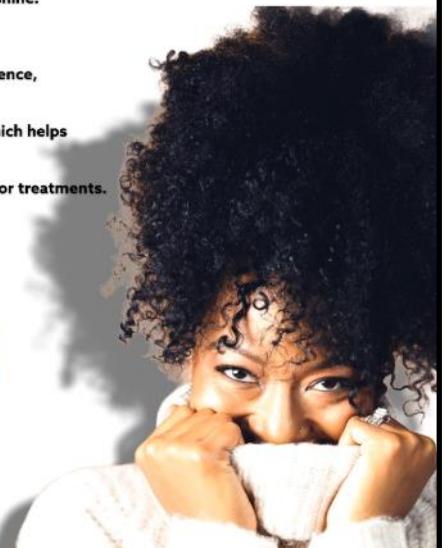


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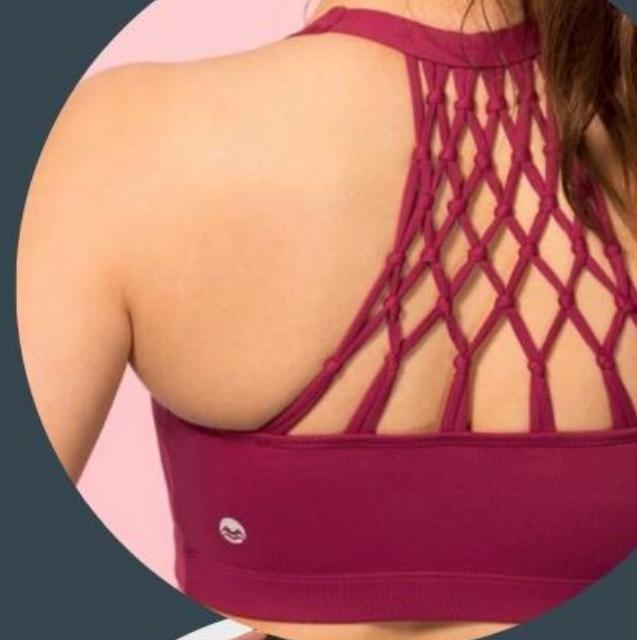
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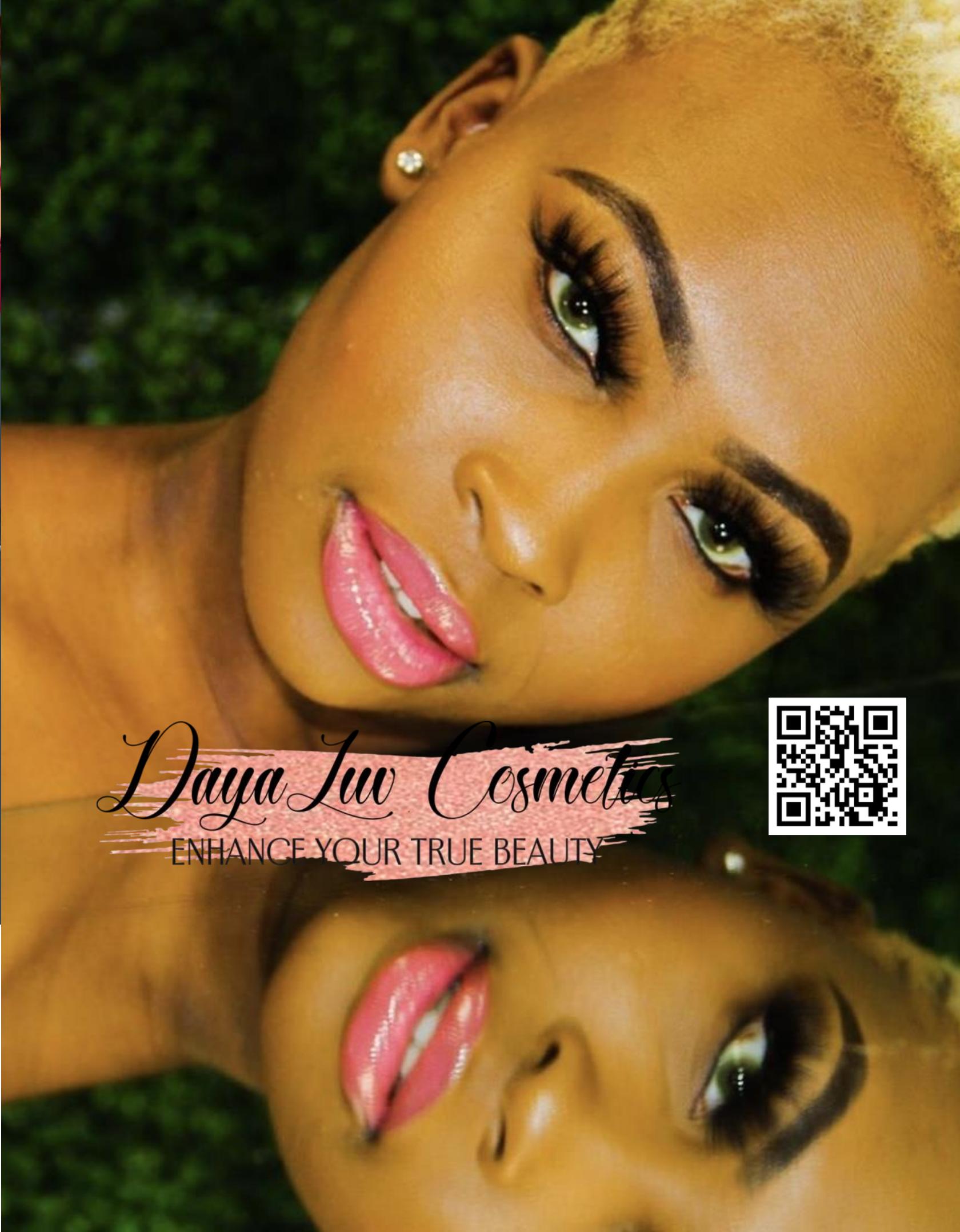


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Children and adults who have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) struggle with learning social skills. Symptoms of ASD often include difficulty making friends, understanding what other people are thinking or feeling, and appearing rude or not interested when they don't mean that at all. These symptoms can lead neurotypical people to think ASD people have no sense of humor. The truth is, ASD people may display a more authentic sense of humor than people who have been socialized to laugh or giggle whether or not what's being said is funny.

“One of the reasons autistic people are thought to lack a sense of humor may be due to the fact that they engage less than neurotypicals in ‘social interaction’ laughter,” says Claire Jack, Ph.D. of Psychology To-

day. “One study showed that autistic children displayed laughter primarily when they found something genuinely funny, as opposed to laughing as a means of social expression.”

When I stop by the local grocery store, I swap jokes with my favorite checker. Most of the time the jokes are silly puns. Here's the latest example:

**What kind of doctor is Dr. Pepper?
A fizz-ician!**

I share these jokes with my son, John. People on the spectrum tend to be very literal-minded. Like so many ASD kids, John identifies with the character of Drax in the *Guardians of the Galaxy* movies. Peter Quill makes a lot of jokes that involve irony, sarcasm, and double entendres. Drax thinks in very concrete terms. He never gets the jokes. Drax is a big guy with a lot of muscle, so smart people don't make fun of his confusion and anxiety.

John also loves the story of *Aladdin*. He has tracked down many versions, both animated and live action. Most recently he found an anime version of *Aladdin* that was dubbed in Italian. Lucky for me, we



could also get subtitles. I took five years of Spanish in school, so I can bumble along with some success when it comes to the Romance languages. John wanted to know what the Italian words meant. Between the cognates and borrowed words and just knowing the story really well, I could keep up with the action if not all of the dialogue. I narrated while John studied the animation style.

When *Aladdin* was over, John still had some TV time left. He watched *The Muppet Show*. One skit featured the Swedish chef.

“Mom?” John turned to me, quite serious. “Can you translate Swedish?”

I had to explain the Swedish chef is funny because he’s not speaking real Swedish, he’s just pretending. John looked puzzled. After a couple of minutes, he burst out laughing. Once he was done processing the information and making the cognitive leap, he got the joke.

Developing a good sense of humor can go a long way toward helping ASD people cope with the challenges of the classroom and the workplace.

“Humor is a big part of social behavior, it is vital to help people understand each other and to foster the connections our autistic children have,” Rachel Andersen says in her article “Autism and Humor” in the May 2022 *Autism Parenting Magazine*. “Doing so will help them feel accepted, understood, heard, and seen.” A “good” sense of humor is built around what’s termed affiliative humor, joking about things that are funny in everyday life. Affiliative humor is positive and fosters a sense of fellowship, happiness, and well-being.

This good sense of humor can help ASD kids and

adults protect themselves against the manipulative head games of bullies. Given that people on the spectrum are not good at interpreting facial expressions, body language, and tones of voice, they may not even realize they’re being bullied. Bullies often rely on sarcasm to entertain onlookers. ASD kids don’t get sarcasm, so they may view the first stages of bullying as being included in the group. This false friendship encourages a vulnerability in the bullies’ target that later makes the bullies’ cruelty all the more painful.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance encourages us to, “Talk to your child about the difference between banter and bullying. Banter is playful where both parties find it funny. Bullying is repetitive and hurtful.” Understanding this distinction provides an important antidote to aggressive humor.

“Bullying...involves cruel comments, humiliation and put-downs disguised as jokes. Someone is made to feel small and as a result they get upset. This is where the joking behaviour stops,” says Dolly Doctor in her article, “When Jokes Become Bullying.” When confused and/or anxious, ASD kids may look to their peers for some indication of how to react. Learning the difference between “being nice” and “being mean” is a cognitive stepping stone toward recognizing a bully and choosing positive friends.

All kids need to learn it’s OK to refuse to be treated badly. The person who tries to get away with claiming, “It’s just a joke!” is not worth being called a friend. A positive sense of humor will attract more positive people and build a healthy, supportive social network. ■





BOOK ILLUSTRATOR ODARA RUMBOL

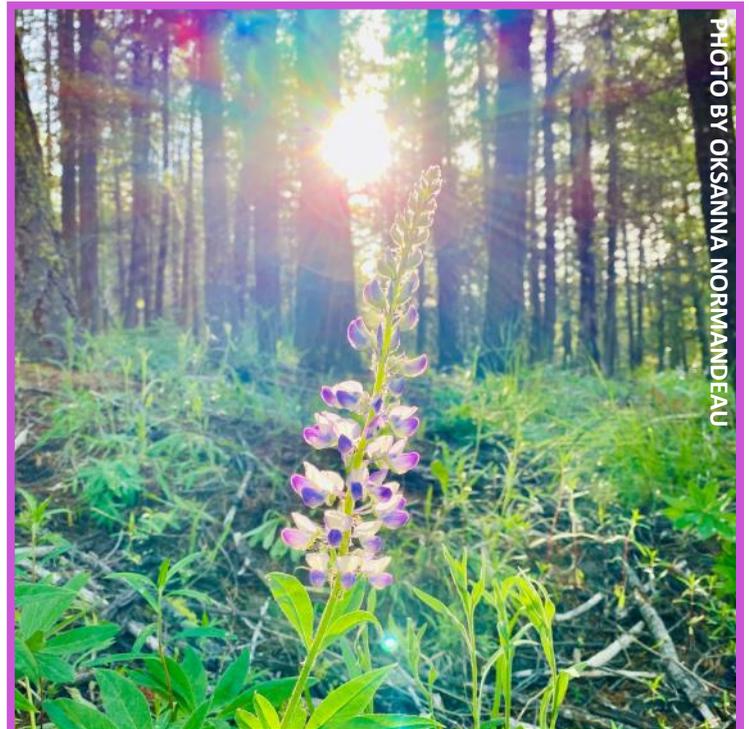


PHOTO BY OKSANNA NORMANDEAU

In everything I do,
I want to manifest

Joy, happiness, love.

The feeling of being...ALIVE.

My God,
How GOOD
It feels
To be ALIVE.

With a flawlessly imperfect flesh
carrying me,
A voice that soothes,
Even the most colicky of babies,
With eyes that are weak
but can still SEE every little detail
Of your lips that form
A perfectly crested smile,
Sending shivers
Down my neck...
I LISTEN,
With beautiful ears
Of intention

Because to SPEAK,
I must first
UNDERSTAND.

Do you
FEEL...FEEL...FEEL
It, too?

The world around you,
And how TURNED ON
And ACTIVATED you are,
By the light
The codes
The vibrations of the nations.

KNOW.
The joy
The happiness
The love
That ALWAYS
Surrounds you.

And if you need a subtle reminder,
I'll be around to help you through. ■

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