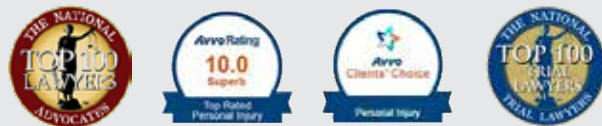




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**WHY LAUGHTER IS STILL THE BEST MEDICINE**  
*Reflections on the Importance of Humor*

I hope this newsletter finds everyone healthy and safe. With all the bad news on TV these days, I began to think about how humor helps lighten the load at times and about how “ahead of his time” my grandfather was. My grandfather practiced medicine in a rural community in Alabama and worked among his neighbors as a family doctor and general surgeon. I was too young to really know much about his medical practice, but I did know one thing that everybody talked about and adored him for: He always made people laugh, even his patients.

Laughter also stimulates many more organs in your body: your heart, lungs, and more, and increases the endorphins released by your brain. It turns out that whenever Doctor Gus made his patients laugh, he helped them feel physically relaxed, too.

Dr. Khajuria, a staff psychiatrist at the Twin Towers Correctional Facility in Los Angeles, California, agrees and adds that “humor may be the highest of the defense processes of the psyche, which we can invoke to guard against anxiety.” Dr. Khajuria says that laughter not only lowers blood pressure, epinephrine, and glucose levels (while increasing glucose tolerance), but it also helps break the cycle between pain, sleep loss, depression, and immunosuppression. There are many other benefits, too, like potentially assisting in the recovery and prevention of cancer by increasing natural killer-cell activity and more. We intuitively know that laughter is good for us, but having these benefits backed by scientific research only proves the power of human instinct.

My grandfather, or Doctor Gus as most people knew him, was a country doctor in the community of Lincoln, Alabama, and the surrounding area. He would not only see patients in the medical clinic behind his childhood home, but he would often travel because he made house calls. Whenever he needed to retreat from his busy medical practice and find someplace to rest, he’d go to his cabin in the woods. I remember visiting his cabin as a small kid and looking through his bookshelves, where I found cowboy humorist Will Rogers’ autobiography, Groucho Marx books, a book about bedside humor for physicians, and several joke books. He was someone who was invested in humor as a way to connect with his patients who were experiencing deep anxiety, fear, and pain. Doctor Gus was a great compassionate storyteller and jokester—and today, science is showing that he was definitely on to something.

Laughter doesn’t just make our day better, but it also “induces physical changes in your body,” according to the Mayo Clinic. The stress relief you may experience while laughing often manifests physically by improving circulation and muscle relaxation. This is partially how laughter activates a stress-relief response and results in a relaxed feeling in your body.



remarkable impact on the mental wellness of his community.

For me, I still have joke books that I share with my kids on long road trips, and humor plays an important role in our family life, in part because of my grandfather and in part because laughter creates a bond and lifts spirits.

To close, I’d like to share a couple jokes my kids love. First, my son’s favorite joke:

Q: *Why did the old man throw the clock out of the window?*  
A: *He wanted to see time fly.*

My daughter’s favorite joke:

Q: *Who cleans up the ocean?*  
A: *Mer-maids.*

Remember friends that July 1 is International Joke Day, so I hope you pick up a joke or two, share a little laughter, and feel a little happier and healthier this summer.

*—John Colvin*

**Celebrate National Ice Cream Day**  
*By Making Your Own Sweet Treat!*

Whether you’re a fan of mint chocolate chip or just plain vanilla, nothing cools you down on a hot summer day quite like ice cream. It’s only fitting then that National Ice Cream Day lands on July 19 — right in the middle of the hottest month in the U.S.

Ice cream’s history stretches as far back as 500 B.C. when Middle Eastern royalty combined sweet flavors with ice for a cool treat. Ice cream made its way to North America in the 1700s, and it remained a dessert for the wealthy and famous for years. George Washington even spent \$200 on ice cream throughout the summer of 1790. (That would be \$5,611.20 in today’s dollars!)

Thankfully, these days you don’t have to be rich to enjoy ice cream. In fact, you can even save money by making it yourself! Celebrate National Ice Cream Day by creating this everyday treat using these tips.

**MAKE IT HOW YOU WANT IT.**

You can flavor your ice cream however you’d like, but there are a few basic ingredients that are necessary for most batches: milk, sugar, gelatin, and eggs.



Dairy-based products like milk are the most common foundation for ice cream. Sugar adds the sweet, scrumptious flavor we all love, and gelatin aids in thickening the mixture. The eggs happen to be one of the most important ingredients because they give ice cream its classic texture while reducing the rate at which it melts. This ensures your ice cream remains in near “mint” condition as you enjoy it.

*Healthy Alternatives:* Use bananas or almond milk for dairy-free ice cream. For vegan ice cream, use agar powder instead of gelatin and eggs. For those looking to avoid sugar, honey is a naturally sweet substitute.

**GET TO WORK!**

You’ll need to heat your ingredients on the stove prior to churning and cooling your ice cream. An ice-cream churner is the easiest way to create a perfectly smooth texture, but if you’re looking for an activity to wear out the kids, then have them shake their own ice cream! Simply place all your ingredients in a small baggie, close it up, and place that baggie in a larger one with ice cubes. Shake firmly for at least 15 minutes for homemade creamy goodness.



# 6 Natural Ways to De-Stress

Six healthy, natural ways to de-stress and to create a habit of good health:

- Exercise:** This is a great way to de-stress with added health benefits! Physical exercise naturally releases endorphins, which naturally relieve stress and boost your mood.
- Meditate:** It is an ancient practice that continues to provide benefits to many people today. Taking time to meditate, focus on your breath, or practice mindfulness is proven to reduce stress and may also improve medical conditions caused by stress.
- Journaling:** Keeping a journal of your daily activities, thoughts, emotions, and worries can also help reduce stress. By putting your thoughts on paper, you force your brain to process the issues at hand and tap into



knowledge, healing, and insight within yourself.

- Take time to laugh:** The more you can laugh, the better! Laughter is proven to lower tension and improve blood flow and heart health.

- Go outside:** Fresh air, sunshine, and the natural landscape can instantly lower stress levels. Many studies support the healing benefits of nature on the human body and psyche.
- Be thankful:** Taking time to focus on the things you're grateful for is a great way to relieve yourself of stress and gain some life perspective. If you are ever feeling overwhelmed, take a few minutes to write down 10 things for which you are grateful.

De-stressing not only feels good, but it's also good for you. Stress-related illnesses are more and more common in our society. It is important to realize that stress is a toxin that requires active management in order to live a long, healthy, and happy life.

*Excerpted from Psychology Today (4/28/15).*

# Stay Safe as Everybody Returns to the Road!

## The 5 Most Common Causes of Car Accidents in TN



Many drivers are returning to the road after months of staying at home or simply not moving around as much. That's why it's very important to be extra cautious when you return to the road. While crashes occur for many different reasons, the vast majority happen because of human error. In fact, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that human error is the primary cause of 94% of auto accidents. So, what are the most common errors that drivers make?

### NO. 1: DISTRACTED DRIVING

Even a momentary lapse of attention can lead to an accident. Whether they're using their phone or losing focus on the road while having a conversation, drivers can face many distractions, which is a serious problem.

### NO. 2: SPEEDING

Don't ignore the speed limit! Road conditions vary, and not only does speeding increase the chances of a crash, but it also makes accidents more severe.

### NO. 3: TAILGATING (FOLLOWING TOO CLOSELY)

Even when drivers give their full attention to the road, it's impossible to know when a vehicle will be forced to make a quick stop. That's why it's important for drivers to leave enough room between their car and the cars in front of them.

### NO. 4: CHANGING LANES UNSAFELY

Far too many drivers in Tennessee simply assume they can "feel" when the lane next to them is available. While they may glance in their rearview mirrors, they may not turn their head around to check blind spots. These unsafe merges lead to many serious, life-changing accidents.

### NO. 5: INTOXICATED DRIVING

Nearly 1 in 3 deadly car accidents in Tennessee involves a drunk or drugged driver. These intoxicated drivers often speed, violate traffic rules, and fail to pay full attention to the road.

If you've been hurt in a crash, you can set up a no-fee, no-obligation review of your claim right away by calling our toll-free line, 877-359-7916. Your expert legal team at John R. Colvin's law office is ready to help.

# Did the U.S. Patent Office Really Shut Down? How Comedy Leaves Unique Marks on History



On May 19, 1987, President Ronald Reagan told a story to a graduating class of high school students about how the U.S. Patent Office was nearly shut down.

As Reagan told the story, it began in 1899 when Charles H. Duell, the commissioner of the U.S. Patent Office, advised President McKinley to close the office because "everything that can be invented has been invented." As more historians have looked into this particular story, however, they've found that there's little to no evidence that this actually happened. It's possible that one of Reagan's speechwriters had heard of an 1843 quote from Patent Office Commissioner Henry Ellsworth when he said in a report to Congress that "the advancement of the arts, from year to year, taxes our credulity and seems to presage the arrival of that period when human improvements must end."

However, this was hardly a proposal to shut down the office and more of a rhetorical comment. In context, Ellsworth recommended that the U.S. Patent Office receive more resources to perform its duties, not less. He explained that

great scientific progress was to be expected with electricity, especially with the use of telegraphs and railroads.

As it turns out, the saying, "Everything that can be invented has been invented," does originate from 1899. The earliest record of it can be traced back to an 1899 edition of Punch Magazine that was donated to Harvard University by the Pulitzer family. It features a "genius" and a "boy" serving at a patent office and goes like this:

*Genius: I want to see the manager of the book department.*

*Boy: Oh, there isn't one, Sir.*

*Genius: Well, who looks after the pictures?*

*Boy: That's done by machinery, Sir.*

*Genius: Isn't there a clerk who can examine patents?*

*Boy: Quite unnecessary, Sir. Everything that can be invented has been invented.*

Ultimately, it's quite possible that generations of American humor have preserved this 1899 joke into the finely woven threads of U.S. history.



## The Best Grilled Summer Vegetables

### Ingredients

- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp dried Italian seasoning
- 1 1/2 tsp garlic, minced
- 2 lbs assorted vegetables, trimmed and halved (asparagus, mushrooms, red onion, red bell peppers, baby carrots, and yellow squash are great on the grill)
- 5 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/4 cup parsley leaves, chopped

### Directions

- In a small bowl, combine salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, and garlic.
- Brush vegetables with olive oil and place in a large bowl. Top with lemon juice and seasoning mixture. Toss to coat evenly. Cover and refrigerate for at least 20 minutes but no longer than 2 hours.
- Prepare the grill at medium-high heat.
- Grill vegetables in batches, cooking 3-5 minutes on each side until browned and tender. (Carrots will cook longer, 6-9 minutes per side.)
- Remove from the grill, sprinkle with parsley, and serve hot.

*Inspired by DinnerAtTheZoo.com*

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