

Laughing All The Way To The 2020 Election

by Roz Warren

After President Trump was elected, my first impulse was to spend the next four years cowering under the bed, whimpering.

While I knew that I needed to keep track of what our new commander in chief was up to, watching the news made me too angry and too sad and just too overwhelmed. Then I read a profile of Mel Brooks and Cal Reiner, best pals, who, in their 90s, continue to enjoy life. The two of them hang out together every evening watching television and cracking each other up.

I couldn't invite Mel Brooks and Cal Reiner into my own living room every night (as much as I'd love to). But their example suggested the solution to my own dilemma - comedy news!

A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down, right? Maybe if I got each day's news from Stephen Colbert and Seth Meyers, the experience would be tolerable. Even enjoyable.

There's no shortage of comedy news these days. For the folks who turn life into laughs for a living, President Trump is the gift that keeps on giving. As junior Senator From Minnesota (and former Saturday Night Live cast member) Al Franken recently said about Trump's presidency, "I [used to make] a living recognizing the absurd -- and this is absurd."

Could I stay well-informed if 100% of my news consumption was via comedy news? I decided to give it a try. Rather than listening to "All Things Considered" and "Rachel Maddow" every day, I tuned into:

Stephen Colbert's opening monolog on "The Late Show."
Seth Meyers' "A Closer Look" segments on "Late Night."
"Pod Save America," (an informative and hilarious pod cast about politics run by former Obama White House staffers.)
"Real Time" with Bill Maher.
NPR's "Wait Wait Don't Tell Me."
"Last Week Tonight" with John Oliver.
"Full Frontal" with Samantha Bee.
"The Daily Show" with Trevor Noah.

And, of course, the all time champions of comedy news, "Saturday Night Live."

The metric I used to evaluate whether I was learning enough about current events this way was twofold: (1) Did I know enough to be able to write a daily irate letter to my republican Senator and (2) Could I contribute in a meaningful way to the conversation when my pals fumed and fretted about the current political landscape?

The good news is that I've been able to stay in the game, letter-writing and conversationally, without going nuts. Or losing sleep.

Sometimes, fortified by my new habit of regarding everything through a comedy lens, I am even able to read entire articles in the New York Times without throwing the paper across the room. Or throwing up.

Watching the news with a smile on my face definitely beats hollering at the set or whimpering under the bed. And I'm actually learning a lot. Not only because folks like Oliver and Colbert often create their comedy by running clips from actual news outlets, and then adding cutting commentary, but they also have teams of researchers to fact check Trump and his gang of idiots.

Of course, merely being well-informed is not enough. I protest. I march. I write to my senator. I support organizations like the ACLU and Planned Parenthood.

My pal Janet reads The New York Times, cover to cover, every single day. If I were a better person I'd probably do that too.

But until that happens, digesting each day's events with a spoonful of comedy sugar works for me.

(Roz Warren is the author of *Our Bodies Our Shelves: A Collection Of Library Humor* and *Just Another Day At Your Local Public Library: An Insider Looks At Library Life*.)

