

Humor Me

By Ronald P. Culberson

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“When it Rains, it Pours – Partly”

It was a dark and stormy night. But it wasn't supposed to be.

One partly cloudy evening, I rode my Harley to a church meeting. It was a pleasant night and the forecast had only predicted a 20% chance of rain starting *after* 10:00 p.m. Since my meeting ended at 8:30, I'd be home long before the rain started. It was a clear case of Cumulous Nimbus Optimus or “those don't even look like *rain* clouds.”

The clouds darkened on my way to the meeting and by the time I arrived, it had begun to drizzle. By 6:00 a steady rain had settled in. At that point, I remembered how lucky I was to own a high-quality motorcycle rain suit...that was hanging in the closet back home. Drat. I knew I was in for a tropical depression on the trip home.

Riding back, the rain was falling so fast, animals were walking two by two. While my leather jacket is waterproof – unlike the cow from whence it came – it has seams and openings where the water poured in. It trickled down my neck, my back and worst of all, there were several inches of precipitation inside my pants. It was an uncomfortable low pressure system that I had not experienced since I was a toddler.

Maybe I shouldn't have ventured out that night knowing there was a *chance* of rain. But that's exactly my point. The weather report underestimated the chance by 80% and missed its arrival time by more than four hours. How in the name of Doppler can that happen? Couldn't someone west of here looked out the window and said, “Hey, it's raining here. You're going to get it in a few minutes.”?

Weathermen, er, meteorologists are the only people I know who have a job in which they don't have to be right (as opposed to politicians who have to be right even when they're wrong)? I'd love a job like that. I'd be perfectly happy to live in a dense fog and still get paid. If it's good enough for Paris Hilton, it's good enough for me!

These geothermal shamans actually use terms like “partly cloudy” and “mostly sunny?” Think about that. There may be some clouds *or* some sun but neither are fully committed to covering the entire sky. Perhaps these weatherologists are just afraid of offending the clouds by using “mostly sunny” exclusively. Or it could be an example of atmospheric political correctness in which the Galactic Civil Liberties Union requires the sun and the clouds to get equal time regardless of their relative humidity.

And when exactly does “mostly sunny” *become* “partly cloudy?” I guess it’s like the American voting process. There doesn’t have to be a majority to declare a winner.

This would never happen in other jobs. Suppose you were on a business trip and when you arrived at your hotel, the desk clerk said, “Well, we are mostly full but partly empty.”? Then when you got to your room it was partly full...of people pursuing their own global warming (if you know what I mean). It would be a *record low* in Hell before you’d go back there.

And consider the whole rain thing. If the weather report says “rain,” it means, well, rain. But when they tell us “showers,” “scattered showers,” “thunderstorms,” or “isolated thunderstorms,” it’s like playing barometric blackjack. We have no idea where the dice will fall (I think I just mixed a metaphor but you get the point).

Unfortunately, we’re part of the problem and we enable these meteorological misfits. If it actually does rain, we say, “Boy that Doppler guy on Channel 5 is good!” And if it doesn’t rain, we’re just darn happy it didn’t. We’re letting them off the hook no matter how often their dew point interferes with our warm front – and I mean that in the most respectable way.

A meteorologist once said that weather predictions are based on similar conditions in the past. If the current conditions look like a previous weather pattern, they predict the same outcome will occur. In other words, they’re using educated guesses just like the ones I used in my college Calculus class. Take it from me; this is *not* a good system.

If I were a weatherman, I’d use an approach to differentiate me from all those other *windy* prognosticators. I’d simply say, “There is a 100% chance of weather tomorrow. Enjoy.”

Until next time, just humor me.

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Ron Culberson, MSW, CSP, CPAE is a speaker, humorist, and author of four books including Do it Well. Make it Fun. The Key to Success in Life, Death, and Almost Everything in Between. His mission is to change the workplace culture so that organizations are more productive and staff are more content. He shows people how to have more FUN while preserving the integrity of the work they do and the lives they lead. For more information, visit www.RonCulberson.com.