

February



“All the snow has turned to water, Christmas days have come and gone. Broken toys and faded colors are all that’s left to linger on”

- From Souvenirs by John Prine

Holidays? Done. Work? Back. Baseball? Not back. The sun don’t shine, the days are short, the nights are long. It’s February, the worst month of the year. For some, perhaps, January was a dry month, but February always feels like a hangover.

Up until this year, as a working person, all I could do about February was put my head down and power through until St. Patrick's Day when the world becomes a lot brighter. But this year is different. It’s my first year as a retired dude so I had some time on my hands. So I spent the first week of February exploring some new stuff. New to me anyway.

What have I learned so far? A lot. Let me share:

- **There are over 100 flavors of Bitters!**



As a bourbon drinker, and a person that appreciates a good *Manhattan* or *Old Fashioned* more than most, I knew that bitters was to a cocktail what salt is to soup. But I did not know until recently that there is an orange bitters, a chocolate bitters, a grapefruit bitters, over 100 varieties! Also, in addition to *Angostura*, whose classic aromatic bitters (pictured) was the only one I'd ever known, there are other bitter purveyors! *Bittermens*, *Regans*, *Peychauds* at least 5 more! There is even a book on bitters *Bitters: A Spirited History of a Classic Cure-All* by Brad Thomas Parsons. If this doesn't spice up your February you're not trying!

- **The Joe Pera Talks With You television series on HBO MAX, Hulu or Adult Swim.**



10-12 minutes per episode, this unique television series features comedian Joe Pera as a middle school choir teacher from Michigan's upper peninsula who talks to you about mundane subject matters such as iron, breakfast, fall drives, dancing music, sleeping and the grocery store. Joe is awkward, but this blend of very dry humor and humanity gives a person hope for the planet. Watch the episode where Joe discovers the Who's classic song *Baba O'Riley* and you will feel good for days. Joe is too good for this world and it shows. *Joe Pera Talks With You* gives hope that the world is not quite as fucked up as it appears.

- **Wireless Headphones**



Yeah, the whole world has ear buds, but I hate those things in my ear, and hate the look even more. But with a pair of wireless, ear muff headphones, you can go anywhere, listen to great music, and people stay away from you because they think you are hard of hearing. Nothing says "stay the hell away from me" like wearing a pair of these headphones over a hooded sweatshirt.

- **John Prine**



I'm a music lover but it was only recently that I discovered John Prine, the legendary country folk singer. This guy can out Dylan-Dylan. Songs like *Souvenirs*, *Speed at the Sound of Loneliness*, *Clay Pigeons*, *In Spite of Ourselves* and *Hello in There* are pure genius. Like with Joe Pera, listening to Prine gives you hope that humans have a soul.

- **Rocky Patel Decade Cigars**



Yep, as my wife says, cigar smoking is a disgusting habit. But nothing relaxes me more than a good cigar. And the best one I've found lately is the Rocky Patel Decade. In addition to a stunning '95' rating, Rocky Patel Decade was named one of Cigar Aficionado's Top 25 Cigars of the Year. The reviewers wrote, "Pressed with a great draw. The cigar has a rich and creamy texture with distinct notes of black cherry and a nutty finish. Balanced and elegant."

So when February, the longest month of the year (no matter what the calendar says) is getting you down, try this:

1. Watch a few episodes of *Joe Perra Talks With You*. They are only 10-12 minutes long, won't take long.
2. Make yourself an Old Fashioned, or a Manhattan. Don't forget the bitters. My personal recipe is 3 shots of Bulleit Rye, a quick hit of simple syrup, 3 *Badda-Bing* or *Luxardo* cherries, two shakes of *Angostura Classic Aromatic Bitters*, two shakes of chocolate bitters. Pour all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker over ice. Shake and pour into a heavy duty square cocktail glass.
3. Go outside with your cocktail. If it's too cold, light a fire, go to the garage, or wear a heavy coat.
4. Put your wireless headphones on over your hat.
5. Connect your wireless headphones to John Prine music.
6. Cut and light your Rocky Patel Decade cigar.

Soon, the emptiness of February will fade away.

Works for me.

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