

"No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world." ~ Robin Williams

## PLANET ROBIN

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# Closings

**G**oodbye, sweet Robin. I'm so happy to have played with you during your amazing, generous career, from 'Mork and Mindy' to Comic Relief, *Aladdin*, *What Dreams May Come*, and the Firesign's PBS special, "Weirdly Cool."

Our lives are our own; our choices are our own. You chose to leave us before life left you after dedicating your entire life to making the world laugh by channeling the anarchistic, surrealistic spirit of the Goons, Ernie Kovacs and The Firesign Theatre through your madcap muse. No man is an island, but you were a universe. We will miss you.

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## CLOSINGS | continued from front page

And I also miss the family of **Antaeus'** *The Curse of Oedipus*. One of our brilliant cast members, **Bernard Addison**, who shared the role of Teiresias, the blind prophet with the magnificent **Fran Bennett**, wrote of the end of the show in a most eloquent way, and with his permission, I want to share it with you:

*So, after tonight, we head back to our camps. We reacquaint ourselves with families, with the dogs, with the routine. We call our agents, or we go out in search of one. We heal our bodies, we catch up with friends that we have put off seeing.*

*We do the grind, read the sides, make it through the traffic to feel marginalized in those little rooms where we have to bring instant sparkle. We go back to school, the day job, the blog post.*

*But for a moment...we were heroes and heroines. We shared in this great accomplishment, continuing the infinite line of storytelling. We shared some laughs and even sang a song. We rocked some boards.*

*And for that, I am grateful to each and every one of you. I give thanks to each and every one of you. Thank you for making me a better life liver.*

*Esperance!*

Thank you, Bernard.

*"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter.  
Try again. Fail again. Fail better."  
~ Samuel Beckett*

## YODERS RULE!

I am a **Yoder** on my mother's Amish-Irish side as you can read in **Rossannah of the Amish** by my great uncle **Joseph W. Yoder**, and August 16 was St. Joder's "saint's day" in the Swiss Reformed church calendar. And here's how St. Joder --"Saint Theodore" in Swiss German -- outwitted the Devil:

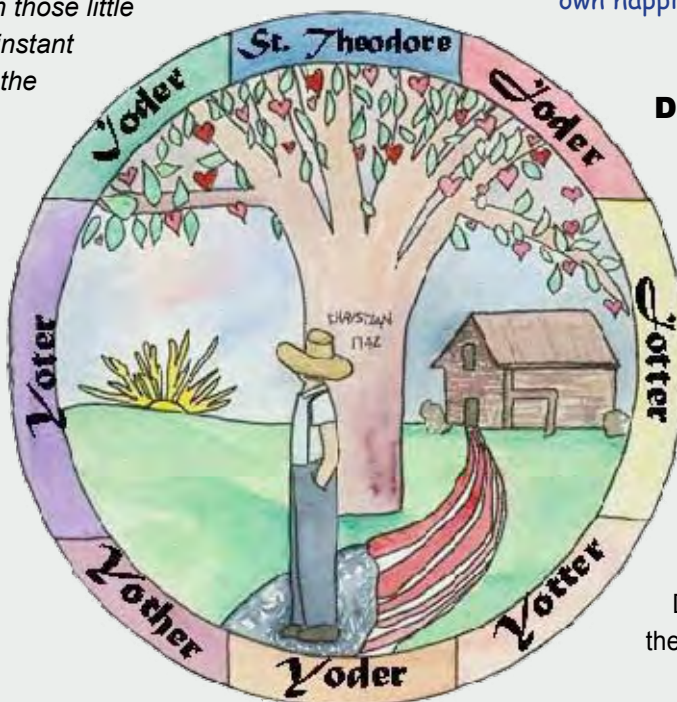
*The Pope had presented him with a bell to take back to his church at Sion, and although he had no way to get*

*the huge bell into the mountains, he trusted his power to make the Devil do his bidding; so Joder offered him a human soul if he could transport the bell up to Sion before the crowing of the cock. He then settled into the cavity of the bell, and the Devil eagerly bore him through the air.*

*However, the power of St. Joder was greater than the cunning of the Devil; and so, before dawn, a rooster crowed at his command, thus sparing his soul.*

Them's my relatives, folks!

*"The mind is the master over every kind of fortune. Itself acts in both ways, being the cause of its own happiness and misery." - Seneca*



## DOGGONE

Two Irish nuns arrived in the USA by boat, and one says to the other, "I hear that the people in this country actually eat dogs."

"Odd," her companion replies, "but if we shall live in America, we might as well do as the Americans do." And just then, they hear a pushcart vendor yelling, "Hot Dogs, get your dogs here," and they both eagerly approach the cart.

"Two dogs, please!" says one; and the vendor, pleased to oblige, wraps both franks in foil and hands them over.

Excited, the nuns hurry to a bench and unwrap their "dogs."

The mother superior is first to open hers. She begins to blush; and then, after staring at it for a moment,

leans to the other nun and in a soft brogue whispers:

"What part did you get?"

*"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see." ~ Henri David Thoreau*

THROUGHOUT THE 'PLANET,' CLICKING **DARK RED TYPE** OPENS A RELATED INTERNET LINK.

## HAPPY ST. JODER DAY

Angela Yoder's 2003 design includes many of the spellings used by present day American Yoder families. It celebrates the courage of our ancestors from the different lines, beginning a new life in America (her own being an Amish immigrant of 1742), and the heritage of love present in the many branches of the family.

YODER NEWSLETTER

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## LEFT OUT

In his book, *THE LIBERAL MIND*, psychiatrist **Lyle H. Rossiter, Jr., M.D.**, identifies irrationality as the Left's dominant attribute – an irrationality that is 'the product of psychopathology.'



### LIVING ON SUCKERS

Lyle H. Rossiter Jr., MD licks the left in *The Liberal Mind*

At the least, liberals are rank hypocrites. Instead of the bleeding hearts they claim to be, liberals are stingy toward the poor and needy; they are generous only with other people's money.

"Instead of treating all peoples by the content of their character, liberals are racially

discriminatory; some are black and brown supremacists.

Instead of the feminists they pretend to be, liberals are misogynists – hateful and vicious toward conservative women. Instead of their rhetoric of being for the common man, liberals are elitist snobs who constantly denigrate their political opponents by portraying conservatives as ignorant, dumb rednecks without a college education or the proper Ivy League credentials.

"At the root of the Liberal Syndrome is a mental and moral disorder. Liberals are miserable, bitter, malcontent people with a perennial chip on their shoulder. They are arrogant and narcissistic, with a self-serving relativist morality. That is why they resent religions that have a moral code, especially Christianity that believes human beings are a fallen creation who are redeemed only through the self-sacrifice of a loving but moral God."

Thanks to my conservative friends for setting me straight...

## MORON THE SUBJECT

*Golda Meir, the late Israeli Prime Minister, had it right when she said, "Peace will come when the Arabs love their children more than they hate us."*

~ **Just Sayin'**

## YOU KILL ME

"Although the long-running quiz show was titled '**You Bet Your Life**,' contestants did not literally bet their lives. Have you ever wondered how the show's title came about?"

"Well, as originally conceived, **Groucho Marx** was to have been armed with a loaded gun. A contestant would agree to try to answer a question, and would win a large sum of money if he answered correctly; but if he got the answer wrong, Groucho was to take out his gun and shoot the contestant dead on national television. This would not have been illegal as the contestants would be asked to sign a waiver, which would give Groucho permission to kill them if they answered a question wrong. The cash prizes offered were so big by 1950s standards that many contestants were willing to put their lives on the line for the possibility of winning an enormous sum of money. Hence the title, "You Bet Your Life."

"NBC executives were uncomfortable with this concept, and insisted that Groucho attack the contestants instead with gentle, all-in-good-fun insults in lieu of shooting them. With this modification of the intended format, the title 'You Bet Your Life' was no longer an accurate description of the show's format.

However, it was retained simply because it sounded catchy.

"As popular as the show was in its familiar incarnation, I imagine it would have been more exciting and drawn even larger audiences if the original concept of literally betting one's life had been used."

So wrote **Eric Perlin** to fellow Firehead and funnyman **Ray Lesser**.

"I don't care that they stole my idea, I care that they don't have any of their own." ~ **Nikola Tesla**



### GROUCHO THE MARXMAN

■ **CONTINUED**

## NOW HEAR THIS

The historic CBS Hollywood broadcasting facility completed in 1938 includes the famed 25,000-square-foot Columbia Playhouse, from which radio comedies featuring **Jack Benny**, **Burns and Allen**, **Edgar Bergen** and **Red Skelton** and works by the great **Norman Corwin** were broadcast live during the golden age of radio, and where **The Firesign Theatre** recorded our first historic albums in the late '60s.

New developers have now agreed to re-imagine the site as **NeueHouse**, an avant-garde communal environment where creative strangers can work independently or come together serendipitously with access to recording studios, postproduction and broadcast facilities, conference rooms, and performance spaces.

The first NeueHouse opened last year in a century-old building across the street from the Park Avenue Armory in New York's Upper East Side where one can hear Italian, French and Swedish.

Knock on wood in Italian is "knock on iron."  
- Phil's Phunny Phacts



## CEREAL KILLER

On July 30, 1898, **John Harvey Kellogg** and his brother, **Will**, invented corn flakes, but not as a cure for the midnight munchies as you might think. According to minutia-man, **Eddie Deezen**, the real reason was somewhat more – well – flakey. Kellogg thought sex was damaging to our physical, spiritual and

emotional wellbeing.

Indeed, he personally abstained from sex all his life and his marriage was never consummated. He and his wife slept in separate bedrooms, and they adopted all of their children. And self-abuse was even worse. "If illicit commerce of the sexes is a heinous sin," he wrote, "self-pollution is a crime doubly abominable."

His solution was to eat a healthy diet designed to curb sexual desire, starting with nuts and grains every morning. And so corn flakes were created as an anti-masturbatory morning meal. We recommend Groat Cakes.

*Crackers were created in 1792 after a baker burned biscuits and heard the "cracking" sound from the oven.*  
~ Phil's Phunny Phacts

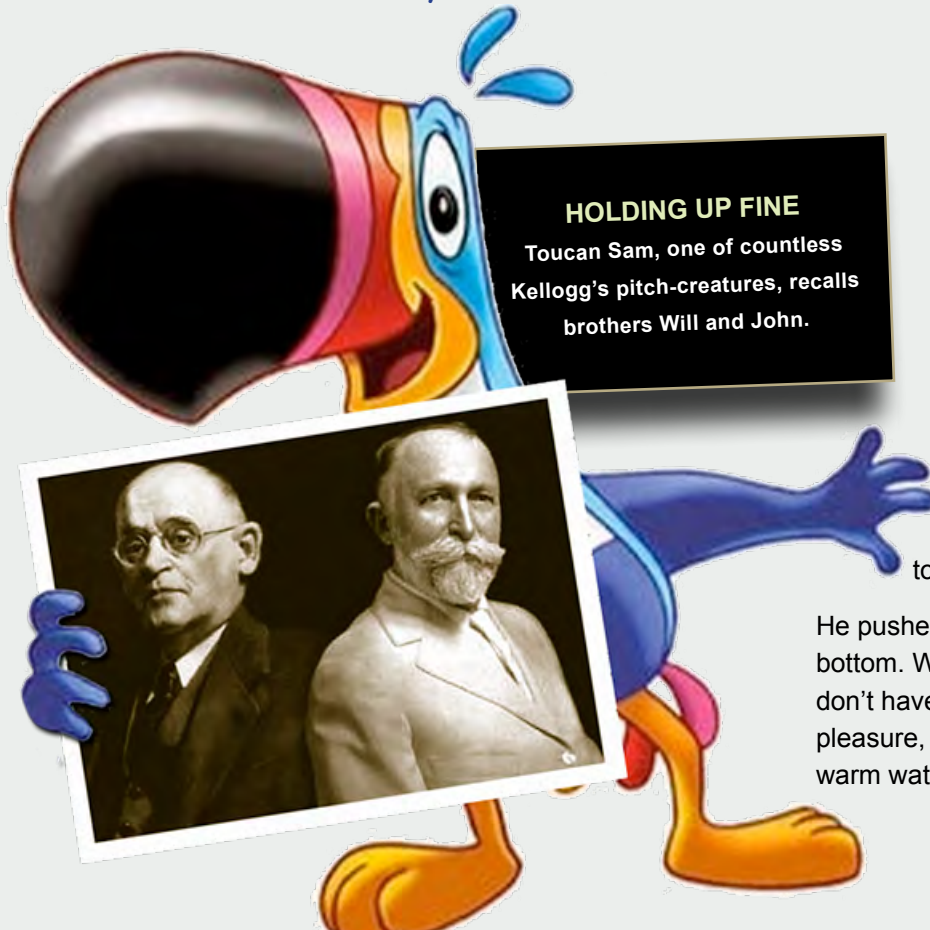
## MAN/WOMAN

In a Chicago hospital, a gentleman had made several attempts to get into the men's restroom, but it had always been occupied. A nurse noticed his predicament. "Sir," she said, "You may use the ladies room if you promise not to touch any of the buttons on the wall."

He did what he needed to, and as he sat there he noticed the buttons he had promised not to touch, identified by letters: WW, WA, PP, and one in red labeled ATR. Who would know if he touched them? He couldn't resist.

He pushed WW. Warm water was sprayed gently upon his bottom. What a nice feeling, he thought. Men's restrooms don't have nice things like this. Anticipating greater pleasure, he pushed the WA button. Warm air replaced the warm water, gently drying his underside.

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When this stopped, he pushed the PP button. A large powder puff caressed his bottom adding a fragile scent of spring flower to this unbelievable pleasure. The ladies restroom was more than a restroom, it was a tender, loving pleasure. When the powder puff completed its pleasure, he couldn't wait to push the ATR button, which he knew would be supreme ecstasy.

Next thing he knew he opened his eyes, he was in a hospital bed, and a nurse was staring down at him. "What happened?" he exclaimed. "The last thing I remember was pushing the ATR button."

"The button ATR is an Automatic Tampon Remover," the nurse said. "Your penis is under your pillow."

*"I swore never to read again after 'To Kill a Mockingbird' gave me no useful advice on killing mockingbirds. It did teach me not to judge a man based on the color of his skin, but what good does that do me?" ~ Homer Simpson*

## THE WORD FROM A TO C

*From a 2010 orbit, by Tom King...*

**BUD ABBOTT:** Super Duper Computer store. Can I help you?

**LOU COSTELLO:** Thanks. I'm setting up an office in my den and I'm thinking about buying a computer. - *Mac?* - No, the name's Lou. - *Your computer?* - I don't own a computer. I want to buy one. - *Mac?* - I told you, my name's Lou. -

*What about Windows?* - Why? Will it get stuffy in here? *Do you want a computer with Windows?* - I don't know. *What will I see when I look in the windows?* - *Wallpaper.* - *What if I don't like wallpaper?* - *Just change it.* - *Isn't that expensive?* - *No, it's free with Windows.* - I have to buy the Windows to get the wallpaper? - *It's free if you buy the computer.* - They give you windows for your office if you buy a computer? - *Certainly!*

**LOU:** Never mind the windows. I need a computer and software. - *Software for Windows?* - No: On the computer! I need something I can use to write proposals, track expenses and run my business. What have you got? - *Office.* - Yeah, for my office. Can you recommend anything? - *I just did.* - You just did what? - *Recommend something.* - You recommended something? - Yes. - For my office? - Yes. - OK, what did you recommend for my office? - *Office.* - Yes, for my office! - *I recommend Office with Windows.* - I already have an office with windows!

**LOU:** OK, let's just say I'm sitting at my computer and I want to type a proposal. What do I need? - *Word.* What word? - *Word in Office.* - The only word in office is office. - *The Word in Office for Windows.* - Which word in office for windows? - *The Word you get when you click the blue W.* - I'm going to click your blue "w" if you don't start with some straight answers. OK, forget that. Can I watch movies on the Internet? - *Yes, you want REAL.* - Sure I may want to watch a real one, maybe a cartoon. What I watch is none of your business. Just tell me what I need! - *REAL.* - Well, I don't want a fake one! - *Of course.* - So what do I get? - *Real Player.* - Yes, I want a real player. - *And you'll have one.*

**LOU:** A real player? - *Certainly.* - OK, I'm at my computer and I want to watch a movie. What do I do? - *You click the blue R.* - I click the blue what? - *The blue R.* - The blue are what? - *Just the blue R.* - The blue are what? - *The blue R nothing.* - If the blue are nothing how do I watch the movie? - *You click the blue R.* - Is that different from the blue W? - *The blue R is the Real Player and the blue W is Word.* -

What word? - *The Word in Office for Windows.* - But there's three words in "office for windows!"

- *No, just one. But it's the most popular Word in the world.* - What is? - *Word.* - *Word?* - Yes, but to be fair, there aren't many other Words left. *Word pretty much wiped out all the other Words out there.* - *Word?* - *Wooooord, dude!* - I don't know what you're talking about!

**LOU:** What about bookkeeping? You have anything I can track my money with? - *Money.* - That's right.

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# PLANETCLICK DISTRIBUTORS

What do you have? - *Money.* - I need money to track my money? - *It comes bundled with your computer.* - What's bundled with my computer? - *Money.* - Money comes with my computer? - *Yes. No extra charge.* - I get a bundle of money with my computer? How much? - *One copy.* - Isn't it illegal to copy money? - *Microsoft gave us a license to copy Money.* - They can give you a license to copy money? - *Why not? THEY OWN IT!*

*A few days later . . .*

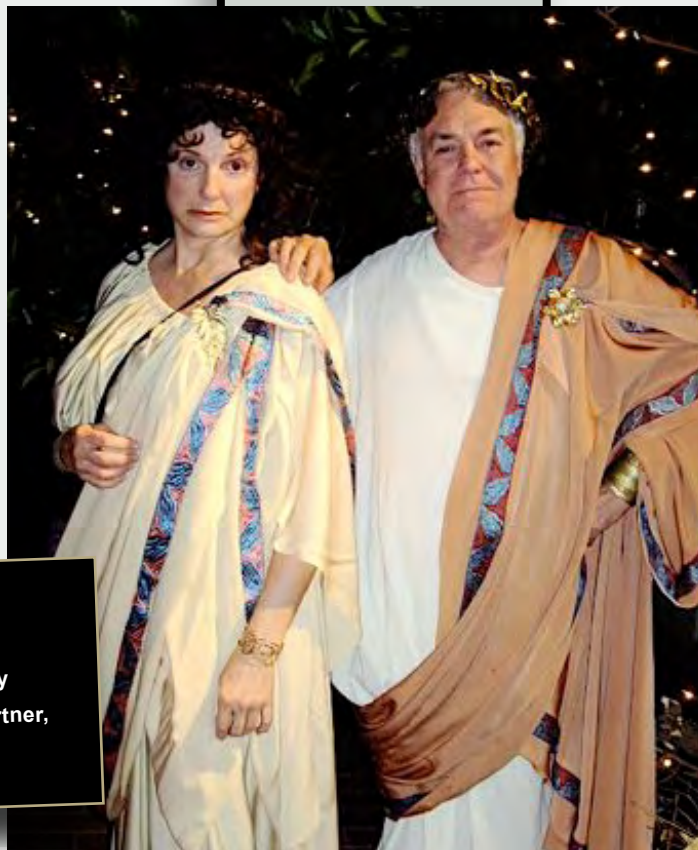
**BUD:** *Super Duper computer store. Can I help you?* - How do I turn my computer off? - *Click on START.* - Now don't you start that again! - *But I thought you wanted to stop?* - That's right. This thing has been on for 3 days and I can't find the stop button. - *Click on START.* - I don't wanna start! - *But you have to click on START.* - Why do I have to click on start? - *So you can stop.* - So I have to click on start to stop? - *That's so you can log off.* - I click start and then I log off? - *That's right, you log off.* - I log off. - *That's right, now go ahead and log off.*

**LOU:** What if I don't have a log? I DON'T EVEN HAVE A FIREPLACE!!!! - *No, you don't need a log. You just want to get the computer out of Windows.* - Which ones? - *Which what?* - Which windows? - *The only Windows you've got.* - So it doesn't matter which windows? - *You just want to get out of Windows.*

*Wood and metal scraping followed by breaking glass.*

**BUD:** *Lou, what was that?* - Oh, I threw the computer out the front windows! - *You what?!!!* - You said it didn't matter which windows, so the front windows was closer than the back ones....

*"Everyone is ignorant, only on different subjects."  
~ Will Rogers*



## TOGA TO GO

Romeward Bound . . .

And Happy Birthday to my darling wife and traveling partner,

**MELINDA**

## ATTENZIONE, TUTTI!

On September 15, **Melinda** and I will be taking off for an unprecedented 3-month adventure in Italy. We will be starting in the North, and then visiting friends like **Paul Magid** of **The Flying Karamazov Brothers** near Bologna, and later producer/director **Greg Snegoff** in Puglia, and ending up in Rome before flying to England to visit our friends, **George and Sue**, returning to LA on Xmas eve.

You can follow our travels on Facebook, and maybe I'll be able to launch some orbits while away. I'll also be editing my life story on the road, as co-authored by **Brad Schreiber** for an e-lease early next year.

Before I leave, I'm voicing parts for Pixar, more villains for video games and appearing as the cockney burglar in **Peggy Webber's** live CART presentation of **G.B. Shaw's Heartbreak House** at the Beverly Garland Theatre at 1:30 on September 7 at the Beverly Garland theater, featuring 100-year-old Norman Lloyd as Captain Shotover. **INFO**

*"Some college kids think Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Russians."  
~ Al Gossett*

## CONTRIBUTERS

Kenneth Wilhite, Jr., Victor Kopcewich, Magic Mike Berger, Keith Hebble, Kent McCaman, M.C. Gwynne, John Seinfeld, Kwana Martinez, Silvia Galini, Bill McIntyre, Jerry Anderson, George Riddle. And I narrate this dark, funny film by Bruce Stubblefield.

## FILM SITE.

*"Philology is the love of learning and literature."  
~ Phil's Phunny Phacts*

■ CONTINUED



# This just in

Well-known comedy group **The Firesign Theatre** will be the subject of an upcoming feature-length documentary to be produced and directed by filmmaker **Luke Poling**. The film, with the working title of ***Dear Friends, Not Insane: The Life and Legacy of The Firesign Theatre*** is currently in pre-production.

The film will use archival material, some previously unseen, and recent interviews with the group and their fans to examine the impact the group has had on both comedy and the world at large. Called "The Beatles of Comedy" by **The Library of Congress**, the four-man collaboration wrote and performed together for almost 50 years, but their early studio work (1968-1975) for Columbia Records remains their best known and most influential.

The iconic comic voices of the counter-culture generation, Firesign chronicled pop, politics, media, and technology in a tense one listener called "the Future Inevitable." They've been compared to **Kurt Vonnegut**, **Ken Kesey** and **Bob Dylan** in their original use of language and to the surrealists in their psychedelic storytelling methods. The original albums, intricately produced in multi-track

recording, were designed for multiple listenings and meanings - an audio Theatre of the Absurd.

The Firesign Theatre's **Peter Bergman** passed away in 2012. Remaining Firesigns **Phil Austin**, **Phil Proctor** and **David Ossman** have worked since then to preserve the long heritage of their partnership. All their major albums are still in print, some eighty hours of their early radio broadcasts have been released in **Duke of Madness Motors**, and two matching volumes preserve their early radio plays ("**Exorcism In Your Daily Life**") and stage plays ("**Profiles in Barbeque Sauce**"). Luke Poling co-wrote and co-directed ***Plimpton!***, starring **George Plimpton** as himself, which played theatrically nationwide before airing on PBS as part of the popular American Masters program. *The New York Times* called Plimpton, "A skilled portrait of a literary light," while IndieWire said the film was "a brilliant example of creative and biographical filmmaking." The film is now available on DVD.

*"We work in the dark. We do what we can. We give what we have. And our passion is our task. The rest is the Madness of Art." ~ Henry James*

**"I intend to live forever or die trying." ~ Groucho Marx**

**BEARWHIZ BEER** <http://www.eagletshirts.com>

**FUNNY TIMES:** <http://www.funnytimes.com>

**FST:** <http://www.FiresignTheatre.com>

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