



2011 - 3

PLANET REV

February 28, 2011

"Dear Egyptians - Please do not damage the Pyramids.
We will not rebuild them again." ~ **The Jews**

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

WEIRD SCIENCE

What a month! Is it the new ice age? But last year was among the three warmest on record – how can this be? [OR](#) Those of us who believe that the impact of the Industrial Revolution and unreasonable and continuing over-dependence on foreign fossil fuels has raised the overall temperature of the planet (physically and socially) are increasingly mocked in the face of record snows and frigid temperatures.

Yet according to climatologists, it's the very global warming they deride that has released more moisture into the atmosphere. And furthermore, reports THE WEEK, the loss of over 30% of Arctic ice since 1979 has breached the former boundary of dense, cold air circling the pole, allowing it to drift southward, creating this extreme weather. So, as always in

today's topsy-turvy world, politics trumps paradox...

But then a survey of predictions by pundits has confirmed that "The future is impossible to predict." Liberals, moderates and conservatives were "equally ineffective" in foreseeing global events while the most celebrated experts tended to be the worst, because they're so sure of themselves that they deny evidence that contradicts their conclusions. "In other words," adds UC psychologist **Philip Tetlock**, "Our political discourse is driven in large part by people whose opinions are less accurate than a coin toss."

I'll buy that!

*"The more I make revolution, the more I want to make love. The more I make love, the more I want to make revolution."
~ **Herbert Marcuse***



■ TO BE CONTINUED

LET US PREY

In the face of all the national unrest regarding teachers' unions, I'd like to remind you of the role educators play in our lives. As one recently wrote:

"Let me see if I've got this right. You want me to go into that room with all those kids, correct their disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse, monitor their dress habits, censor their T-shirt messages, and instill in them a love for learning.

"You want me to check their backpacks for weapons, wage war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, and raise their sense of self esteem and personal pride. You want me to teach them patriotism and good citizenship, sportsmanship and fair play, and how to register to vote, balance a checkbook, and apply for a job.

"You want me to check their heads for lice, recognize signs of antisocial behavior, and make sure that they all pass the final exams. You also want me to provide them with an equal education regardless of their handicaps, and communicate regularly with their parents in English, Spanish or any other language, by letter, telephone, newsletter, and report card.

"You want me to do all this with a piece of chalk, a blackboard, a bulletin board, a few books, a big smile, and a starting salary that qualifies me for food stamps. You want me to do all this and then you tell me -- I can't pray?"

Or negotiate...?

*"Great minds discuss ideas.
Average minds discuss events.
Small minds discuss people."
~ Eleanor Roosevelt*

HERE COME DA JUDGE

In 1873, **Alferd E. Packer** was sentenced to death for having killed and eaten five companions in order to survive a Colorado blizzard. After the conviction, **Judge M. B. Gerry** is purported to have told Packer,

"Stand up, you man-eating son-of-a-bitch and receive your sentence."

"There were seven Democrats in Hinsdale County," Gerry said. "But you, you voracious, man-eating son-of-a-bitch, you ate five of them!

"I sentence you to be hanged by the neck until you're dead, dead, dead," he concluded, "as a warning against reducing the Democratic population of the state!"

"When you're born in this world you're given a ticket to the freak show. And when you're born in America you're given a front row seat. - George Carlin

WEIRDER SCIENCE

This month, an IBM computer named "Watson," after its creator, handily beat (Look ma, no hands!), two Jeopardy champs, **Ken Jennings** and **Brad Rutter** in a head-to-head competition (Look ma, no head!) by racking up \$77,147 in winnings. Quoting from "The Simpsons," Jennings graciously conceded:

"I for one welcome our new computer overlords."

Then, a solar-powered "Dick Tracy" watch is being developed by the army to supply soldiers with real time battle stats on a flexible plastic screen worn on the wrist.

Next up – Post-It notes and animated Harry Potter headlines?

It was also announced that a firm in Monrovia, CA has successfully constructed a miniature spy plane disguised as a **HUMMINGBIRD** with tiny robotic wings, that has to be seen – or has to see you – to be believed. Just keep it away from sugar water.

"Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions." ~

Albert Einstein



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WALKIES

Did you hear about the guy in a bar who was so drunk he couldn't walk? Well, a group of strangers took pity on his condition and decided to be good Samaritans and escort him home.

First the "designated walkers" had to stand him up to extract his wallet and find out where he lived, but the poor guy kept falling down. Sadder still, he slipped out of their grip many times on the way to the car, hitting the pavement with a thud.

And when they finally got him home he slumped to the ground repeatedly as they struggled to get him up the steps to the front door; and when his wife finally opened it, one guy said, "Sorry to wake you, M'am, but we thought it was best to bring your husband home."

"Well, thanks," says the wife. "But where's his wheelchair?"

"Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been." ~ Mark Twain

WEIRDEST SCIENCE

BABY GAGA ice cream, which goes on sale today in London's Covent Garden, is composed of 25% cow's milk and 75% "free range, organic" human breast milk from paid donors, plus natural flavorings – or in this case, "flavourings. It sells for US \$23 a serving and comes in a double cone shaped like a bra – or you can order a dish of "Baby GAG-GA" and eat it with a spoon.

And speaking of natural things, a process called **Bio-Cremation** developed in Europe in the '90s, can dissolve a body in a pressurized water-filled chamber in just three hours, leaving a coffee-colored sludge that can be poured down



WHO KNOWS BETTER?
A scoop of mother's finest earns a sourpuss (above), while (below), a UC study is readily embraced by students.

the drain or into the ocean, or a stream, or on the funeral flowers.

And a study at **UC Berkeley** has suggested that naps, dreaming, laughter, lucky charms, sighing and massage are all really good for you, but sleep deprivation, daydreaming, too much sitting or salt or television are bad, as are running shoes (which can hurt your knees), pets (which can trip you) and printed cash receipts – due to the toxic chemical BPA in the ink. Or maybe, it's just the negative effect of viewing your dwindling bank account?

Finally, no less an expert than **Peter O'Toole** notes that "The nicest buttocks in the world" can be found in Ireland because "Irish women are always carrying their husbands home from pubs." It's the "greatest posture-builder in the world," he concludes. I'll drink to that!

"I love cats because I love my home and little by little they become its visible soul." ~ Jean Cocteau

FUTURE/SEX

President Obama has spoken out for gays and against DOMA – the Defense of Madness Act – establishing a dangerous precedent that could open the doors for marriage with pets, blow-up dolls, siblings, parents and (gasp) politicians! And what's worse, it could lead to relations and relationships with machines... Watch "**NO TO ROBOT MARRIAGE**" for the ghastly details...

But on the plus side, robots, which were portrayed in **Chapek's** play R.U.R., as cheap labor, can actually offer us a neat way out of the recent Mark Twain "Tom Sawyer" n-word censorship controversy: **LOOK HERE YOU!**

And finally, even though a new survey revealed that Americans are branching out sexually and are much more willing to experiment, the most revealing statistics state that despite concerns, 62% of teenage boys and girls reported that they're "largely not having sex with anyone but themselves." And the over-60 gang reports that 38% of men and 25% of women have enjoyed oral sex over the last year. Count me in!

"The propagandist's purpose is to make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human." ~ Aldous Huxley

WO/MAN

A rough-and-ready testosterone-fueled biker's group pulled over when they spotted a shapely young chick poised prettily on a bridge – about to leap into the raging waters

■ **CONTINUED**



below! The leader of the pack yelled up to her and asked "What are you doing, honey?"

"I'm gonna kill myself," answered the distraught hottie, her short skirt whipping in the wind, exposing a beautiful pair of stems. Thinking fast, the brawny brute responded, "Well, cutie, before you do anything rash, why don't ya come down here and I'll give you a big goodbye kiss."

After a frightful pause, she finally acquiesced and hopped down and gave him a big, sloppy, lingering smooch to everyone's great relief.

"Wow!" the bike hog sighed. "That was the best damn kiss I've ever had! You're a beautiful, young, sexy and passionate person. Why the Hell do you want to end your life?"

The girl sighs, wipes the tears from her big, blue eyes and says, "My folks hate it when I dress up like a girl."

"Don't worry about what people think, they don't do it very often." ~ Phil's Phunny Phacts

A SAD WEEK

Our longtime friend **Kenneth Mars**, best remembered for his brilliant turn as the Hitler-obsessed playwright in **Mel Brooks'** "The Producers" and as Der Inspektor with an uncontrollable arm in "Young Frankenstein," died at his home of pancreatic cancer at 75. I first met Kenny (and his dog "Beezer") back in the 70s in a series of industrials for Tratec, and later we worked together in The Smurfs and scores of other animated projects. Last time we personally enjoyed



the pleasure of his company was a year ago, this month on Valentine's Day. Kenny was truly one -- or several -- of a kind.

We also salute the passing of musical comedy and film legend **BETTY GARRETT** who after a long, eventful life turned off the ghost light at 93. **Melinda** performed with her at Theatre West, in



"Night Mother," and busy

Betty was inspiring us with stories and struttin' her stuff right up to the end.

Then, feisty character actor **Len Lesser**, best known as Uncle Leo on "Seinfeld," shuffled off his mortal coil at 88. We both knew Len, but it was my wife who starred with him and **James Farentino** in "My Father's House" at the 7 Angels Theatre in Waterbury, CT, directed by **Michael Haney**.

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"The secret to happiness is not in doing what one likes to do, but in liking what one has to do." ~ Ingrid Bergman

GOODBYE TO BABS

Then came the most personal loss of all, when our dear friend and Antaeus patron, **"Babs" Mandel**, lost her courageous fight with pancreatic cancer at 84. Her son, writer/director/composer **Jeff**, tells her story:

Her stage name was **Renee Donnat**, photo next page, taking the last name of her stepfather, and she got into the biz when her cousin, actor/director **Edward Reese**, called her in Chicago and offered her the chance to replace an ailing ingénue on a Milwaukee stage. He got her a script and a train ticket and told her to learn the part on her way there.

MEMORY LANE.
[Clockwise from top] Betty Garrett recently, and with Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly in 'On the Town'; Len Lesser and Jerry Seinfeld ("You're an Adonis!"); Kenneth Mars in two roles for Mel Brooks, Inspector Kemp in 'Young Frankenstein' and the playwright in 'The Producers.'



She went straight to the theater for a run-through, and premiered that night to great acclaim, and in the audience was a rep from the Goodman Theater who invited her to join the company.

At 19, Babs moved out to LA to join Eddie in his little theater group called the North Hollywood Players.

The "resident playwright" was **Warren Mills**, who got her into The Teenage Series of films for Monogram and since Warren had a crush on Babs, he gave her enough lines that she soon got her SAG card.

Eventually, she decided to give up playing bit parts for more screen time and more importantly, more money as an extra, leading to appearances in musicals like "An American in Paris" and "Singing in the Rain," among others. She was probably in 100 movies, but then she met Jeff's dad and gave up the business, although later she started a travel agency of her own.

"Somehow or other," Jeff concludes, "she allowed my brother, Steve, to perform as an infant in the film, "The Garment Jungle," doubling for a little girl and **Lee J. Cobb** does a whole scene carrying him around. I was never so lucky.

"I think I was 4 when mom was driving her Pontiac convertible through Park La Brea, and **Charlton Heston** began honking at her and made her pull over. 'Him! He's the one! I want him!' he said. He wanted me to play him as a baby in 'The Ten Commandments.' But Mom told him I was only 4 -- and that was the beginning and the end of my acting career.

"But I was almost Moses! I just know I would have looked great in the rushes..." **MORE**

"There is always one thing to be grateful for - that one is one's self and not somebody else's." ~ **Emily Dickenson**

SPOILIN' FER SPOILIN'?

They're baaack! Our uber-talented friends **Donna Dubain, Danny Mann, John Mariano, Anna Mathias, Gail Matthius, David McCharen, Edie McClurg, Pat Musick** and **Jonathan Schmock** will be appearing once again for the first time

(they're an improv group, after all) at the Theatre Palisades, 941 Temescal Canyon Road, Pacific Palisade, and they want you to know that they've been playing together since they all used pagers; are the only ensemble in the world with seven players whose last names start with the letter M; have more cast members from the movie "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" than any other group in the world -- and are the only ones trained by the godmother of improv herself: **Viola Spolin!** Cash and checks will be accepted at the door...

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to cheer somebody else up." ~ **Mark Twain**

FRIENDY

Peter Johnson, Rich Carlson, Nick Oliva, Merle Reagle, Garry Margolis, Richard Laible, Jayne Stahl, Kenneth Wilhite, Jr., Mary Willard, Andy Thomas, Tim Osburn, John Apicella, Joan Allemand, Bill Coombs, Scott W. Langill, Allen Newcomb, Victor Kopcewich, Melinda Peterson and to **Merl Reagle**, because I forgot to acknowledge him in the last orbit! All Hail the Puzzle-Meister!

"Truly, the twitter is mightier than the sword."
~ **Laurence Budd**

PLANET CLICK

TRENDY

- DOMM
- DEARDOG
- HOMOS
- KLEPTO KITTY
- BEESTS
- BABYBASH
- HUMANPLANET
- BIRU
- DRUMMIN
- MOON ME
- MAMBO5
- OH, CANADA
- SUPER
- BEDBUGS
- ANTS
- LIGHTS
- TEST
- GLASS
- ROBOHO

CLICK THE WORD TO GO TO THE SITE

"Peace begins with a smile." ~ **Mother Teresa**

FIRESIGN CDs: <http://www.laugh.com>
BEARWHIZ BEER <http://www.eagletshirts.com>

FUNNY TIMES: <http://www.funnytimes.com>
FST: <http://www.FiresignTheatre.com>