



2012 - 3

PLANET BERGMAN

April 5, 2012

"O you Gods! Why do you make us love your goodly gifts and then snatch them straight away?"

~ Armin Shimerman, paraphrasing Shakespeare

THROUGHOUT THE 'PLANET,' CLICKING

BOLD, DARK RED TYPE

OPENS A RELATED INTERNET LINK.

"PETE'S GONE . . ."

So said **Phil Austin** on Friday, March 9 into my phone at 6:30 am on a gloomy, storm-swept Friday morning at our Princeville, Kaua'i timeshare. His death wasn't totally unexpected. We knew **Peter**

Bergman had been admitted to St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica a few days before in failing health, but it was nonetheless unthinkable.

Peter had been diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia back in October of 2011, but he didn't share the news with us, his Firesign partners, until late February; and in fact, I was to learn later from his dear ex-wife, **Maryedith Burrell**, that the Bergs had skipped his annual physical for at least three years and could well have been harboring the



FOR PETE'S SAKE

Shave and a haircut performed by Proctor on Bergman, circa 1975, and Peter at the controls for one of his final RADIO OZ broadcasts earlier this year.



condition unawares for a while, explaining somewhat his sudden decline. He was 72.

I could fill the Planet with surreal and side-splitting stories of our travels and adventures together, from the first time we collaborated at the Yale Dramat in 1958, through the

■ **CONTINUED**



night we escaped death in the infamous San Francisco Golden Dragon Massacre, right up to all the laughs we shared in our last months together, transcribing the words of our NPR radio serial "Power" in his cozy Marina del Rey apartment, for publication later this year. But that will have to wait.

We were all collectively stunned and deeply moved by the public outpouring of condolences and personal reminiscences that flooded our Facebook pages, and by the sincere and intelligent tributes to Peter's unique contribution to our common comic culture on radio, in *The NY Times*, *The LA Times*, *The Boston Globe* and *TIME* Magazine, and so many other places in print and cyberspace.

Firesign will be celebrating his life and comic genius at a Firesign Tribute at the **Kirkland Arts Center in Washington** on **April 21** and a week later at the more intimate **Electric Lodge in Venice, California**, where Pete performed; and we will gladly honor donations to his

daughter Lily's college fund at the events and **ONLINE**.

And even if you can't appear in person but wish to celebrate Peter, I encourage you to send stories to me **HERE**, which I will read to his family and friends at the Lodge, and I encourage you to visit our website for links to many more fabulous, joyful and tear-enticing articles.

We also plan to tape *Bergman's Big Brouhaha* in Kirkland for later distribution at our website. And thanks to all our Dear Friends for their selfless support and sacrifice to ensure that **RADIO FREE OZ** – where it all began – continues, even after the Wizard has flown away over the rainbow into the clear, blue sky . . .

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Peter Bergman
Polaroid by Michael

PETER'S LAST OZ-CAST

"Take heart, dear friends.

We are passing through the darkening of the light.
We're gonna make it and we're going to make it together.
Don't get ground down by cynicism.
Don't let depression darken the glass through which you look.

This is a garden we live in.
A garden seeded with unconditional love.
And the tears of the oppressed,
and the tears of the frustrated,
and the tears of the good will spring those seeds.

The flag has been waived.

It says occupy.
Occupy Wall Street.
Occupy the banks.
Occupy the nursing homes.
Occupy Congress.
Occupy the big law offices.
Occupy the lobbyists.
Occupy...yourself.

Because that's were it all comes together.
I pledge to you, from this moment on, whatever it means,
I'm going to occupy myself.
I love you.
See ya tomorrow."

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea." ~ **Antoine de Saint-Exupery**

AFTERTHOUGHTS

To my mind, the reason for Firesign's enduring and passionate following is not just about a few quotable lines or memorable characters. It's about the spirit of art against the machine, of Chaplin and Keaton, of commedia dell'arte, of trickster Coyote. People recognize that cultural heritage in your work, and understand that Firesign has never and will never sell them down the river. Sometimes we all need to be reminded that the big prize ends up being a bag of shit, that the king's mask still hides the face of a fool. Setting down the needle on a Firesign record once in a while makes for a very affordable therapy session.

Best, Conch

"Enjoy the universe, Mudhead."
~ **Sean Benton** on Facebook

"Driving along it occurred to me that Peter moved on during a massive solar storm. And he was cremated. There's a fire sign for you." ~ **Andy Thomas**

My daughter Beatrix, when she was 3-6, used to have a doll called Lt. Bradshaw who would ask her, 'Where's the fire Beatrix?' to which she would reply, 'In your eyes Lt. Bradshaw.' Oh and I forgot that my wife's brother permanently changed his name from Jim to Nick because his friends called him Nick Danger. Your work lives forever even if you cannot.

Take Care, Rich Zander

RIGHT BRAIN/LEFT BRAIN

A study at University College London in the UK has found that conservatives' brains have larger amygdalas than the brains of liberals. Amygdalas are responsible for fear and other "primitive" emotions. At the same time, conservatives' brains were also found to have a smaller anterior cingulate — the part of the brain responsible for courage and optimism.

If the study is confirmed, it could give us the first medical explanation for why conservatives tend to be more receptive to threats of terrorism, for example, than liberals. And it may help to explain why conservatives like to plan based on the worst-case scenario, while liberals tend towards rosier outlooks.

READ UP

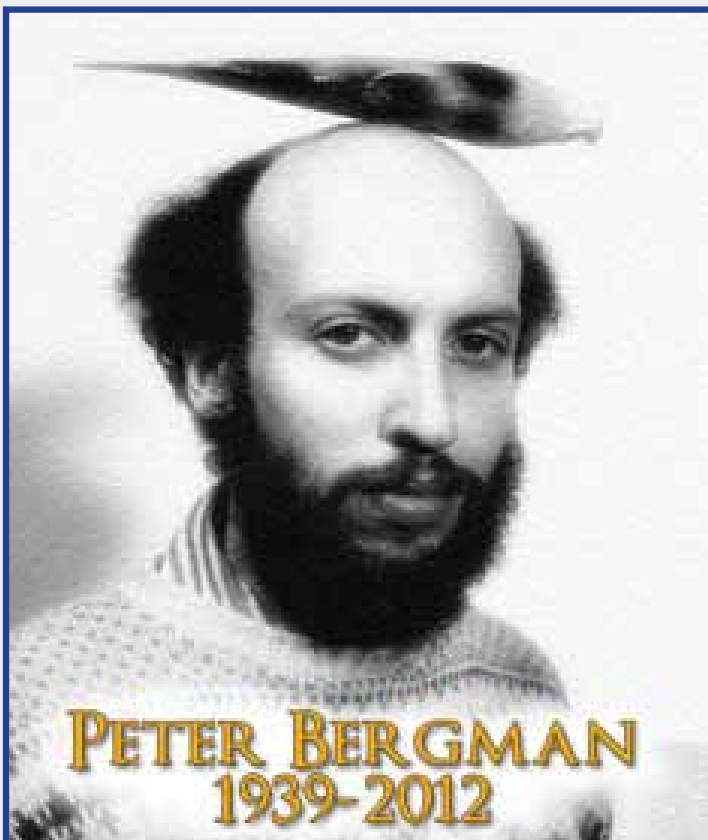
"Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we often might win, by fearing to attempt."
~ **Jane Addams**

TIMING

She was standing in the kitchen, preparing our usual soft-boiled eggs and toast for breakfast, wearing only the 'T' shirt that she normally sleeps in. As I walked in, almost awake, she turned to me and said softly, "You've got to make love to me this very moment!"

My eyes lit up and I thought, "I am either still dreaming or this is going to be my lucky day!" Not wanting to lose the moment, I embraced her and then gave it my all—right there on the kitchen table.

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Afterwards she said, "Thanks," and returned to the stove, her T-shirt still around her neck.

Happy, but a little puzzled, I asked, "What was that all about?" She explained, "The egg timer's broken."

"I married her for her sense of humor because I knew she could never be as funny as me."

~ Phil Proctor

PERFECT TIMING

A man walked out to the street and caught a taxi just going by. The cabbie said, "Perfect timing. You're just like Brian!"

"Who's that?" asked the passenger. "Brian Sullivan. He's a guy who always did everything right. Like my being there when you needed a cab? Things like that happened to Sullivan all the time."

"Well," offered the rider, "there are always a few clouds over everybody."

"Not Brian Sullivan," affirmed the driver. "He was a terrific athlete. He was a whiz at tennis; he could golf with the pros, he sang like Pavarotti and danced like a Broadway star, and you should've heard him play the piano. He was an amazing guy."

"Sounds like he was really special."

"There's more. He was a snappy dresser and had a memory like a computer – never forgot a birthday. And he knew all about wine, which foods to order and which fork to eat them with. And he could fix anything! Not like me. I change a fuse and the whole street blacks out."

"Wow. Some guy, then."

"And most important, he really knew how to treat a woman and make her feel good. He would never answer her back even if she was clearly wrong. He never made a mistake. He was the perfect man! No one could ever measure up to Brian Sullivan."

"What an amazing fellow. How did you meet him?"

"Well, I never actually met him. He died. I'm married to his f**kin' widow."

"Elsewhere. Academy Award voters hailed 'The Artist' as the ultimate fantasy film, since it depicts a world in which the French are silent."

~ Andy Borowitz

ANOTHER LOSS

Our friend and fellow Antaeus board member **Abby Gail Palanker** passed away recently in her sleep. Abby was the "go to" person you turned to when you wanted to get something done and we cannot overestimate how much she will be missed.



For years she answered to "call Abby" with her famous garlic pickles and brownies and goodies galore. She fed audience and actors alike, organized fundraising events, openings and pot lucks and worked with our dear **Rhonda Aldrich** to ensure that every gathering was a party and every party a success. Our condolences to her family, co-workers and beloved friends. Thank you Abby for all you gave and did. We will miss you—and your food!

"All compound things are subject to breaking up. Strive on with mindfulness." ~ Buddha

OBLIGATORY OVERDUE ST. PAT'S JOKE

An Irish daughter returned home after a five-year absence, and her irate father cried, "Where have ye been all these many years, and without a word from ya? Can ye not fathom what ye put yer poor mother through?"

And the colleen replied, through copious tears, "Dad, (sniff) – I've become a prostitute."

"Ye WHAT!?" cried the old man. "Out with ye, ye shameless harlot! You're a disgrace to this Catholic household!"

"OK, dad, I understand," said his daughter, "I only dropped by to give mum this fur coat and the deed to a ten-bedroom country mansion, and for me little brother, this gold Rolex. And for you, Dad, a brand new Mercedes convertible sports car, parked in the driveway and an invitation for you and the family to spend New Year's Eve on board my brand new yacht in Cannes."

"Well now, wait a minute there, daughter. What was it again ye said ye'd become?"

"A prostitute, Dad.," she sobbed. "A prostitute!"

"Oh, BeJesus," sighed her father, "Come give yer ol' dad a hug! I thought ye said 'a Protestant!'"

"I distrust camels, and anyone else who can go a week without a drink." ~ **Dean Martin**



LIFE GOES ON

I will be participating in the next annual **Writers of the Future Awards** show at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre on Sunday, April 15, and then **Melinda** and I will be

'BORROWED GLORY'
Melinda (above in a previous show with Kristin Campbell) and Phil return to the Golden Age.

performing together in **L. Ron Hubbard's** wonderful story "Borrowed Glory" at the Golden Age of Pulp Fiction space in Hollywood the next evening. As you must know by now, I am a dedicated booster of live audio theater, and these shows are among the best. Come see us and be thrilled...

And congratulations to our amazing **Antaeus Company** for winning the Best Revival *LA Weekly*



Award for *Peace in Our Time*. And please come see the final performances of *The Seagull*. **MORE INFO**

"Diplomacy is letting someone else have your own way."
~ **Lester B. Pearson**

THANKEES

Magic Mike Berger, Robert Greenwald, Patty Paul, Jim Terr, Jayne Stahl, Nick Oliva, Kenneth Wilhite, Jr., Victor Kopcewich, Michael C. Gwynne, Lance Rucker, Jim Reynolds, Bill Coombs, Kurt Ericson, Joan Allemand, Scott W. Langhill – and the Firesign support team: Taylor Jessen, Ted Bonnitt, Maureen Weston, Phil Fountain, Bill McIntyre, Scott Wild, Dave Maloney, Tim Maloney, Thomas O'Neill, Thomas Gedwillow, Brian Westley, Maryedith Burrell, Gretchen Steiner, Judith Walcutt, Andy Thomas, and Lily Oscar Bergman. I hope I remembered you all...

"Next time I'll talk to you about gravity and its opposite, comedy." ~ **Nino the Mind-boggler** in "Everything You Know is Wrong"

PLANETCLICK

PRANKEES

ARIGATO
MITT MUTT
MUSIC
PHOBIA
10,000
OUCH
TERR ATTACKS
SCALE
FARTS
F-OFF
CURSORS!
SEE
TESLAS
JESUS DECK
ST PATS
GLASS
BRITS
BEAR WITH ME
BEE STINGS
PALIN
IT TAKES BALLS

CLICK THE WORD TO GO TO THE SITE

"A good time to laugh is any time you can." ~Linda Ellerbee

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

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

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

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