



Among the 'The Best' are Dakin Matthews (left) and John Larroquette (center between James Earl Jones and Candice Bergen).

"Laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as require civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors."  
~ Thomas Jefferson

# A month in the country

**W**e are back, briefly, before heading to Minneapolis, MN on July 4th for the **CONvergence** science-fiction convention after a jumpin' June that started in New York, NY on our way to my 50th Yale reunion and ended in West Plains, MO., where we taught and performed at the **National Audio Theatre Festival**.

In Manhattan, we saw friends and plays -- and friends in plays -- including **The Best Man** with **Dakin Matthews** and **John Larroquette** (above), **Harvey**, with **Angela Paton**, **Larry Bryggman** and **Chuck Kimbrough**, **One Man, Two Guvnors**, with **Ben Livingston**, and **Peter and the Star Catcher**, where we knew no one but loved everyone.

■ **CONTINUED**



Phil and Melinda get downstage before the watchful eyes of Sam Waterston, Alex Garvin, Ellis Wisner, and David Honneus.

Returning to Yale was a total blast; and standing on the main stage again with **Sam Waterston** for the welcoming show brought back such wonderful memories of my years at the Dramat with **Austin Pendleton, Tom Ligon, Marcia Rodd, Victor Miller, Nikos Psacharopoulos, John Badham, Peter Hunt, Dave Honneus, Finkle and Weeden, Maltby and Shire, Joan Van Ark, John Guare, Dan Travanti, Bill Francisco, Lee Starnes, John Stewart, Charles Kimbrough, Bill Stott, Bart Giamatti,** and, of course, **Peter Bergman**, to name a few.

Melinda and I were proud to be included in the

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

entertainment, deftly designed by the antic musical duo **David Finkel** and **Bill Weeden**, and our Irish shaggy dog story was greeted with a torrent of laughter from the crowd of 300 plus. Kudos to all our classmates for a great good time!

*"I love the Beatles, they're lovely people. They're extraordinary people because they're so ordinary."  
 ~ Late actor **Vincent Spinetti***

## IT'S A MYSTERY

After visiting friends and relatives in New England, we flew off to Owensboro, KY for our fourth annual **International Mystery Writers Festival**, which this year honored festival founder **Zev Buffman** and featured a ■ **CONTINUED**

virtuoso performance by **Gary Sandy** as **Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer** in *Encore for Murder* which won the Best Production Award this year and was brilliantly adapted by **Max Allan Collins**, best known as the author of *Road to Perdition*.



**HARD-BOILED HAMMER.**  
Melinda as Velda; Phil as Don Luigi

Melinda played Hammer's hard-boiled partner, Velda, and I got to play three roles, including Mafia boss, Don Luigi. I

also acted the lead role in *Lost at Sea* by **Donald Drake**, adapted by director **David Ossman** and his producer wife, **Judith Walcutt**, where Melinda played my sexy "business assistant," Louise.

*"I'm a man trapped outside a woman's body"*  
~ **Sixth Form Poet**

## WE'RE HONORED

Then, at the **National Audio Theatre Festival** in West Plains, Missouri, the **Firesign Theatre** was honored to receive the **Norman Corwin Award for Excellence in Audio Theatre**. Later, we taught audio acting before taking on multiple roles (including a tough little dog for me) in a live podcast of original radio plays.

The Recording Academy also recently awarded me a lifetime membership after 34 years, including a year representing Spoken Arts on the Board of Directors which now allows me to waive or donate my dues to the Grammy Foundation or Museum – or I could just sign up to the **Obama Event Registry!**

"Got a birthday, anniversary, or wedding coming up?" the site asks. "Let your friends know how important this election is to you -- register with Obama 2012, and ask for a donation in lieu of a gift." Easier, I guess, than starting a Secret Super Pac...

*"My administration will...  
make the hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts  
necessary to reduce spending to 20% of GDP  
by the end of my first term, and then,  
without sacrificing our military superiority,  
I will balance the budget."*

~ **Phil's Phunny Phacts** or a quote from **Mitt Romney?**

## DUMBIN' DOWN

"Didn't do so great on that last vocabulary test?" writes **Newser's EVANN GASTALDO**. "That's OK, there's a place in Congress for you. The current class of congress members speaks at a 10.6 grade level—down almost a full grade from 2005's 11.5 grade level," and one reason is the flood of **Tea Party Newbies**. In fact, "all of the 10 members who speak at the lowest grade levels are **Republicans**, and nearly all are freshmen."

And, of course they probably don't believe in science, either, and might applaud the recent bill in North Carolina which seeks to outlaw sea level projections based on climate change data because business interests fear that it would be a "death sentence" for coastal development projects. As Steven Colbert notes, "If your science gives you a result you don't like, pass a law saying the result is illegal. Problem solved!"

*"We don't want to open a box of Pandoras."*  
- **Gov. Bruce King**

## AH, YES, I REMEMBER IT WELL

I came across this phrase yesterday: 'fender skirts.' And that started me thinking about other words that quietly disappear from our language like 'curb feelers' and 'steering knobs,' aka 'Suicide Knobs' or 'Neckers Knobs.'

Remember 'Continental kits?' They were rear-bumper extenders and spare-tire covers that were supposed to make

any car as cool as a Lincoln Continental. And when did we quit calling them 'emergency brakes?' At some point 'parking brake' became the proper term. But I miss the hint of drama that went with 'emergency brake.'

I'm sad, too, that almost all the old folks are gone who



**TRYING TO GET THE FEELING AGAIN.**  
'Curb feelers' and 'Steering Wheel Knobs'  
were all about feeling where you stood . . .

called the 'accelerator' the 'foot feed.' Many today do not even know what a 'clutch' is or that the 'dimmer switch' used to be on the floor. And didn't you ever wait at the



street for your daddy to come home so you could ride the 'running board' up to the house? And does anyone remember the 'rumble seat'?

Here's a phrase we heard all the time in our youth but never anymore - 'store-bought.' Once was bragging to have a store-bought dress. 'Coast-to-coast' is a phrase that once held all sorts of excitement and now means almost nothing. Now we even take the term 'worldwide' for granted. Then in the '50s, everyone covered their hardwood floors with 'wall-to-wall carpeting!' Today, everyone replaces their 'wall-to-wall carpeting' with 'hardwood floors.' Go figure.

And when was the last time you heard the quaint phrase 'in a family way?' It's hard to imagine that the word 'pregnant' was once considered too graphic and too clinical to use in polite company.



So we heard all that nonsense about the stork and 'being in a family way,' or simply 'expecting.'

Here's a word I really miss - 'percolator' -- and what was it replaced with? 'Coffee maker.' Mr. Coffee, I blame you for this! I miss those made-up marketing words too, that were meant to sound so modern and now sound so retro. Words like 'DynaFlow' and 'Electrolux' and -- "Introducing the 1963 Admiral TV, now with SpectraVision!" What was that? Able to see ghosts? Probably, since that's what we called the double images we got on early TV sets...

And was there a Telethon that wiped out 'lumbago?' Nobody complains of that anymore. Maybe that's what Castor oil cured, because I never hear mothers threatening kids with Castor oil anymore, although I took a spoonful every day, and I'm still alive!

Some words aren't gone but are definitely on the endangered list. The one that grieves me most is 'supper.' Now everybody says 'dinner.'

Save some great words. Invite someone to supper and discuss fender skirts...

*"Computers are like women...They bring us happiness, enjoyment and make life worth living, but who can figure them out???" ~ Eddie Deezen*

## A SENIOR MOMENT

A balding, white-haired man from New York walked into a jeweler's store in a local shopping center last Friday evening with a beautiful, much-younger girl at his side. He told the jeweler he was looking for a special ring for his girlfriend. The jeweler looked through his stock and brought out a \$5,000 ring. The man said, "No, I'd like to see something more special."

At that statement, the jeweler went to his special stock and brought another ring over. "Here's a stunning ring at only \$40,000," the jeweler said. The lady's eyes sparkled and her whole body trembled with excitement. The old man seeing this said, "We'll take it."

The jeweler asked how payment would be made and the man stated, "By check. I know you need to make sure my check is good, so I'll write it now and you can call the bank Monday to verify the funds and I'll pick up the ring Monday afternoon."

On Monday morning, the jeweler angrily phoned the old man and said, "There was only \$25 in your account."

I know, said the old man, "But let me tell you about my GREAT WEEKEND!"

"Statistics show that teen pregnancy drops off significantly after age 25."  
~ Sen. Mary Anne Tebedo

## IT'S A BLAST

The **United States Marine Corps** has banned audible farting in Afghanistan because it is culturally offensive to civilians working with the military and members of the **Afghan National Army**, although no mention of flatulence could be found in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Responding on the **Battle Rattle** blog was **Dian5**, who wrote, "If we are at the point in our relationship where this has become too

offensive to ignore, then perhaps we have worn out our welcome and should immediately withdraw our troops."

**Jim Campbell** expressed his outrage over the decision as well: "So now we understand that

Muslims in Afghanistan are offended by the sound of anal gas explosions but are quite comfortable with beheading, stoning, female genital mutilation, pedophilia, amputations, and hanging or burning homosexuals."

"A fart on you," I say, echoing a line in **Arthur Miller's *The Crucible***.

"People who complain about taxes can be divided into two classes: men and women."  
~ **Phil's Phunny Phacts**



## TAKE DOWN THE WALL

A CNN journalist heard about an ancient Jewish man who had been going to the Western Wall to pray twice a day, every day, for a long time, so she went to check it out, and indeed, there he was, walking slowly up to the holy site. After about 45 minutes, when he turned to leave, moving very slowly with a cane, she approached him and said,

"Pardon me, sir, I'm **Rebecca Smith** from CNN. Can I ask your name?"

"**Morris Feinberg**," he replied. "And how long, may I ask, have you been coming to the Western Wall to pray?" Morris said, "For about 60 years."

"That's amazing! What do you pray for?"

"I pray for peace between the Christians, Jews, and the Muslims. I pray for all the wars and all the hatred to stop. I pray for all our children to grow up safely as responsible adults and to love their fellow man. I pray that politicians tell us the truth and put the interests of the people ahead of their own."

"Well, I'm impressed. And how do you feel after doing this for 60 years?"

"How do I feel? Like I'm talking to a fucking wall."

"I don't know anyone here that's been killed by a handgun."

- **Rep. Avery Alexander**

## HOWL

An old Cherokee told his grandson, "My son, there is a battle between two wolves inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, jealousy, greed, resentment, inferiority, lies and ego.

## PLANETCLICK

### LINKAGE

CA QUOTES

JIMBO

RUSH

LINKS

DOGGONE

SPIDEY

ATABOY?

MERRYME

ACTING

SINKINGFEELING

AMERCIA

POTTY CACA CAT

HHH

JAGG

PARROTY

COCKRAP

CLOWNING  
AROUND

WHA

STAYIN'ALIVE

ENLIGHTENING

CLICK THE WORD TO  
GO TO THE SITE

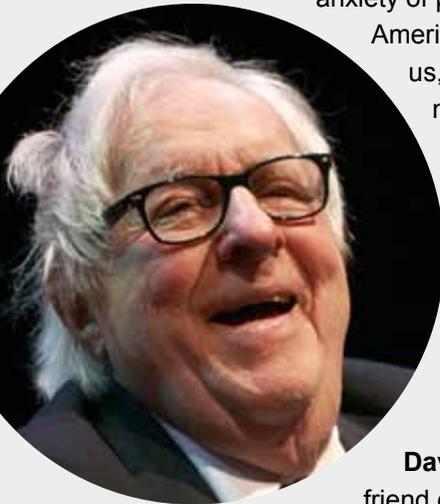
The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, humility, kindness, empathy and truth."

The boy thought about it and asked, "Grandfather, which wolf wins?" And the old man quietly replied, "The one you feed."

"You should love your crooked neighbor with all your crooked heart." ~ Anon

## RAY GONE

**Ray Bradbury**, master of science fiction, whose lyrical evocations of the future reflected both the optimism and anxiety of post Second World War America, died at home not far from us, at 91. During his lifetime more than 8 million copies of his books were sold in 36 languages, including *The Martian Chronicles*, *The Illustrated Man*, *The Golden Apples of the Sun*, *Fahrenheit 451* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*.



**Dave Ossman** was a close friend of Ray's and thanks to him, Melinda and I met and worked with Ray

on several occasions, and indeed, The Firesign Theatre once appeared at a movie theater in Sunland right after a showing of *Fahrenheit 451*. The marquis in front read "Next week: The Marquis Chimps." **MORE**

"The federal income tax system is a disgrace to the human race." ~ **Jimmy Carter**

## A POET PASSES

**Jack Thomas Poet**, 80, passed away before dawn on May 8, with his devoted wife **Patti** and daughter **Heather** by his side in Santa Barbara, CA. Jack served in the US Air Force Special Services as a boxer, entertaining the troops during the Korean War before attending UCSB and Occidental where he studied Political Science. He went on to own and run five car dealerships; and on July 20, 1969, to promote

Highland Park Volkswagens, he wrote "Jack Poet Loves You" across the smoggy LA skies -- the day Apollo 11 landed on the moon.

Later, Jack hired the **Firesign Theatre** to create a series of surreal VW TV spots still enjoyed on the Internet, and he "paid" us by giving us psychedelically painted bugs to drive around town, pissing off the national VW advertising agency who closed down his business and repossessed our cars!

## READ IT!

In the late 1970s, Jack began a fresh daily, organic juice company **Pure Juice** and to promote medical marijuana, he embarked on what would be his final fight for the good and the right by founding **Santa Barbara Patients Group**.

Jack was indeed always a "head" of his time, his sense of humor was incomparable, and his non-judgmental treatment of his fellow man was rare and fine. Donations may be made to **The Make-a-Wish Foundation**, **Cottage Children's Hospital**, or **DAWG**.

"If the President does it, that means it is not illegal."  
- **Richard M. Nixon**

## THANKYOU

**Jayne Lynn Stahl**, **Melinda Peterson**, **Robert Riddle**, **Ed Ryba**, **Michael Fish**, **Joan Allemand**, **Michael C. Gwynne**, **John Strachan**, **Patty Paul**, **Eddie Deezen**, **Hannah Baldwin**, **Victor Kopcewich**, **J & D Paulshus**, **Magic Mike Berger**, **Bill Coombs**, **Kenneth Wilhite, Jr.**, **Roger Olsen** and **Roxi Witt** and **Andrew Davis** for their artistic perseverance in the face of financial adversity.

"I can't believe I actually masturbated to pictures of my sister wearing a bikini. I mean, what was I doing wearing a bikini?" ~ **Emo Phillips**



**FAREWELLS.**  
Jack Poet, above, and Ray Bradbury, opposite.

"If we do not change our direction, we are likely to end up where we are headed." ~ **Sam Stoddard**

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

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

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

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