

# Upside Down Planet



"I started out with nothing,  
and I still have most of it left." ~ From John Gaza



**A**s I write this, we are still Down Under in Australia. In marvelous Melbourne, we saw a zany and tasty send-up of **Noel Coward's *Brief Encounter*** by UK's touring **Kneehigh Theatre** which had us rolling with laughter and featured an innovative blend of video projections and stagecraft unlike anything we've seen before, and like ***The Shadow King***, an Aboriginal adaptation of *King Lear*, which we saw with fellow Antaeon **Tony Amendola**, in town for a convention.

Afterwards, we found an off-the-street Japanese eatery right next to the theatre, where we shared a table with an Indian-Australian who's great-grandfather created the Bollywood movie craze, which early on even featured a shocking five-minute silent film kiss.

Today, we finished up a five-day stay in sophisticated Sydney, where we saw a smashing contemporary take on the Romeo and Juliet story at the **Sydney Opera House** and another modern take on the Orestes tale called ***Small and Tired*** at the **Belvoir**. We banged all over town by bus and foot, visiting **The Rocks, Darling Harbour, Chinatown, The Barracks Penal History Museum** and the **Bondi Sculpture by the Sea Art Walk** on our last, but first totally sunny, day!

Now, we are on to a motoring adventure in Southern New Zealand and then a reunion with our friend **Hal Josephson**, at Hawkes Bay in the North. Follow our adventures with pictures and comments on **Facebook**. (A sample of them are in the slide show you'll see if you click our faces above. Captioned at right.)

"Never trust the weather in Melbourne.  
You get all four seasons in one day."  
~ Phil's Phunny Phacts

#### SLIDE SHOW CAPTIONS

- COVER** *At Bondi*
- 2** *The Victoria Railway Hotel -- although no passenger trains have been stopping here for maybe two decades*
- 3** *We drove the Otega Peninsula*
- 4** *In the Ozzie Post Office: proof the continent was taken over by aliens who do not understand human language or customs...*
- 5** *At the Sydney Opera House for Romeo and Juliet.*
- 6** *High atop the Eureka building in Melbourne, something weird happened.*
- 7** *And we flossed after our meal...*
- 8** *Off to Manly today. Love this sign...*
- 9** *At the Lord Nelson, with pub crawlers celebrating the end of Rugby Season.*
- 10** *And my favorite Hallowe'en sculpture...*
- 11** *I'm clueless...*
- 12** *And yes, I'm sharing the driving.*



"Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you."

~ Pericles (430 B.C.)

## GLITCHES

The **American Medical Association** has weighed in on Obama's new health care package. The **Allergists** were in favor of scratching it, but the **Dermatologists** advised not to make any rash moves.

The **Gastroenterologists** had sort of a gut feeling about it, but the **Neurologists** thought the Administration had a lot of nerve. Meanwhile, **Obstetricians** felt certain everyone was laboring under a misconception, while the **Ophthalmologists** considered the idea shortsighted.

**Pathologists** yelled, "Over my dead body!" while the **Pediatricians** said, "Oh, grow up!" The **Psychiatrists** thought the whole idea was madness, while the **Radiologists** could see right through it. **Surgeons** decided to wash their hands of the whole thing and the **Internists** claimed it would indeed be a bitter pill to swallow. The **Plastic Surgeons** opined that this proposal would "put a whole new face on the matter."

The **Podiatrists** thought it was a step forward, but the **Urologists** were pissed off at the whole idea. **Anesthesiologists** thought the whole idea was a gas, and those lofty **Cardiologists** didn't have the heart to say no. In the end, the **Proctologists** won out, leaving the entire decision up to the assholes in Washington.

"Give a man a mask and he will tell you the truth."

~ Oscar Wilde

## CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

When a California college student was shot dead by a stranger on a crowded commuter train in San Francisco last month, none of the dozens of passengers on board saw it coming, because they were too absorbed in their mobile devices.

Surveillance footage showed a train car full of passengers within feet of the accused 30-year-old gunman, **Nikhom Thephakaysone**, who shot to death 20-year-old San Francisco State University student **Justin Valdez**, "for no apparent reason," as he got off the train.

San Francisco District Attorney **George Gascon** said the surveillance tape showed that people did not even notice a man brandishing a gun. He added that he hopes people "will consider the risks posed when they lose track of their surroundings. After all, a life can be ruined in the blink of an eye."

The gunman exited the train and walked home after the shooting.

"Bread and circuses is not the policy of a republic, but rather of an empire entering moral senescence."

~ Willam Galston

## PRETTYPRETTY BANGBANG

A rare **Phanto I Maharajah Tiger Car** custom-built for hunting and delivered to **Umed Singh Ilin** in 1925, was recently up for auction in Las Vegas. It features front- and rear-mounted searchlights, a nickel-plated snake horn, gun racks, and oversized tires for better road clearance.

■ CONTINUED



TEXTING ONE, TWO, THREE  
Passengers to oblivion.



#### DON'T FOLLOW TOO CLOSE

The Phanto I Maharajah Tiger Car was custom-built to discourage tailgaters.

Later, more armaments were added, including deadly .450-caliber hand-cranked machine-gun towed behind, a rear-bumper-mounted elephant gun and a double-barreled pistol for shooting fish in a barrel. It was painted a bright red, and they hope to collect a lot of green from some committed collector.

*"I take pleasure in announcing to friends that I once could boast of a seven-and-a-half-inch column of silver dollars, but now I'm down to half a roll of dimes."*

~ Norman Mailer at 87

#### A MURDER OF CROWS

Researchers for the **Massachusetts Turnpike Authority** found over 200 dead crows near greater Boston recently, and there was concern that they may have died from Avian Flu. A Bird Pathologist examined the remains of all the crows, and, to everyone's relief, confirmed the problem was definitely NOT Avian Flu. The cause of death appeared to be vehicular impacts.

However, during the detailed analysis it was noted that varying colors of paints appeared on the bird's beaks and claws. By analyzing these paint residues it was determined that 98% of the crows had been killed by impact with trucks, while only 2% were killed by an impact with a car.

MTA then hired an **Ornithological Behaviorist** to determine if there was a cause for the disproportionate percentages of truck kills versus car kills. The ornithological behaviorist quickly concluded the cause: when crows eat road kill, they always have a look-out crow in a nearby tree to warn of impending danger.

The conclusion was that while all the lookout crows could say "Caw, Caw!" none could say "Truck!"

*"The best cure for sea sickness, is to sit under a tree."*

~ Spike Milligan

#### THE WINDOW OPENS

Recently, director/writer **Samuel Warren Joseph** appeared with producer **John Densmore** at a Q&A at Toronto's Real Indie Film Festival, following the premiere of *Window of Opportunity*, featuring **Oliver Muirhead, Jack Maxwell, me, Ty Granderson Jones, Rayna Tharani** and **Kym Jackson**.

Later, moderator **Lee Eckley**, a DJ at The Rock 94.9, Toronto's biggest pop station said, "*Window Of Opportunity* is a stab to the heart of corporate hubris ... Deep in the human genome lies accountability -- so Evil Doers, you're on notice. Darwin was right!" **MORE**

*Alcohol and calculus don't mix, so don't drink and derive.*  
~ Phil's Phunny Phacts

#### AH, YES, I REMEMBER IT WELL

Dr. Epstein was a renowned physician who earned his undergraduate, then graduate and medical degrees in his hometown, before settling in Manhattan, where he quickly rose to the top of his field.

Soon he was invited to deliver a significant paper at a conference back in his hometown, but as he placed his papers on the lectern, they slid off onto the floor, and when he bent over to retrieve them, at precisely the wrong instant, he farted stentorously.

The microphone amplified his mistake throughout the room and it reverberated down the hall! He was appallingly embarrassed but somehow regained his composure just enough to deliver his paper and ignoring the applause, he raced out the nearest exit, never to be seen in his hometown again.

Decades later, when his elderly mother was ill, he returned for a visit, arriving under cover of darkness and reserving a hotel room under the name of Brown. "Is this your first visit to our city, Mr. Brown?" asked the desk clerk, and Dr. Epstein replied, "Well, young man, no, it isn't. I grew up here and received my education here, but then I moved away."



"Why haven't you visited?" asked the desk clerk. "Actually, I did visit once, many years ago, but a very embarrassing thing happened, and since then I've been too ashamed to return."

The clerk consoled him. "Sir, while I don't have your life experience, one thing I have learned is that often what seems embarrassing to me isn't even remembered by others. I'll bet that's true of your incident too." Dr. Epstein replied, "Son, you're probably right. It happened a long time ago"

"Really," replied the clerk, "Was it before or after the Epstein Fart?"

*"Without question, the greatest invention in the history of mankind is beer. Oh, I grant you that the wheel is a fine invention, but the wheel does not go nearly as well with pizza." ~ Dave Barry*

## YOUR BRAIN IS NOT THE BOSS

Or maybe it is? **Einstein** was found to have a highly developed and "brawny" corpus callosum – the thick bundle of nerves that connects the brain's right and left hemispheres. Scientists from East China Normal University found it was thicker than a group of 15 elderly men and 52 men at Albert's age during his "Miracle Year" in 1905, and earlier, in 2012, Florida State's **Dean Falk** and his researchers wrote a paper citing other abnormalities, including unusual parietal lobes which relate to visualization and mathematical abilities, an "extraordinary" prefrontal cortex, related to abstract thinking, and extended somatosensory visual cortices which may have been developed by his violin playing.

Indeed, **Firesign Theatre** often posited that our dreamlike, free-associating mind-trips exercised some area of the brain that encouraged such interactivity. Maybe this is it. But then, such a development is also present in the brains of skilled Chinese ping pong players.

And new studies at the University of Rochester show that a kind of housecleaning occurs that flushes out wastes when people get enough sleep, while another discovery implies that the Abominable Snowman might be a hybrid of a prehistoric polar bear and a modern brown bear as both share a common DNA captured in a hair sample.

And speaking of hair, scientists in the US and UK have successfully cultured human follicles for the first time using cells from circumcised foreskins. Talk about getting some head...

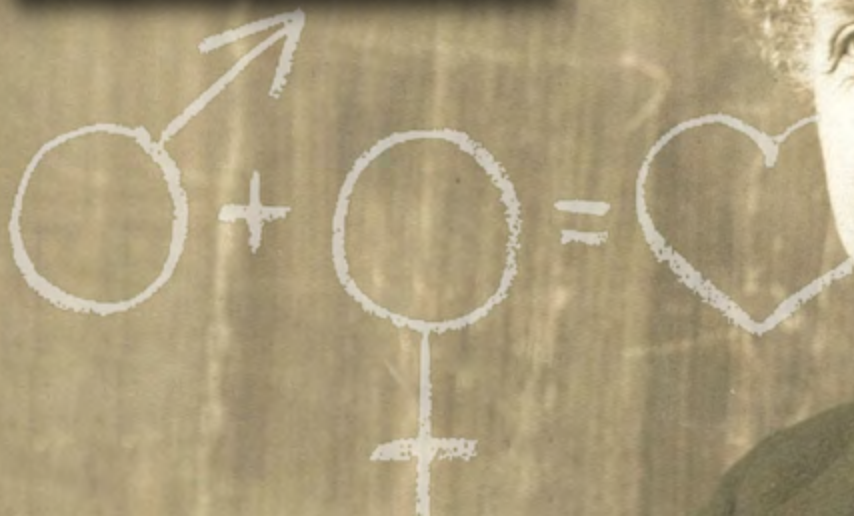
*"If you want to travel fast, go alone. If you want to travel far, go in a group." ~ Old African saying, quoted by new Senator Cory Booker*

## SILENCED SONGBIRD

The legendary **Linda Ronstadt**, known as the Queen of Rock in the '70s, has revealed in a just-released memoir, **Simple Dreams**, that she is suffering from Parkinson's disease and can no longer serenade us. I knew her early in her career when she lived for a while at **The Farm** – a hippie retreat just off Cahuenga Pass which was also sometimes home to **Tie-Dye Annie**, **John Sebastian**, **Jack Poet** and **Peter Bergman** among other movers and shakers of the time.

### CHALK TALK

His Einess and The *Other* Theory of Relativity.





Her father gave her his grandfather's guitar when she was a teen and repeated his father's words, *Ahor que tienes guitarra, nunca tendras hambre*. ("Now that you have a guitar, you will never go hungry.")

In an article in the *L.A. Times*, she concludes, "Mexican music opened the door to everything. From that I learned how to sing in a joyous way about terrible sorrow.... Joy isn't happiness, it's transcending the horrific."

*"Please send me an autograph which I will be putting in my book for me to pass down to my kids when I have kids so if you can send me one that would be cool."*

~ **American fan**

## TELL ME A STORY, DADDY

Once upon a time, a Prince asked a beautiful Princess, "Will you marry me?" The Princess immediately said, "No!"

And the Prince lived happily ever after, and rode motorcycles and dated thin, long-legged, full-breasted women, and hunted and fished and raced cars, and went to titty bars and dated ladies half his age and drank whiskey, beer and Captain Morgan, and never heard bitching and never paid child support or alimony, and dated cheerleaders and kept his house and guns, and ate spam and potato chips and beans, and blew enormous farts, and never got cheated on while he was at work, and all his friends and family thought he was friggin' cool as hell, and he had tons of money in the bank, and left the toilet seat up. The End.

*In 1773 the King of Tonga presented Capt. James Cook with a giant turtle that died in London in 1966.*

~ **Phil's Phunny Phacts**

## THE END – OR IS IT THE BEGINNING?

A San Antonio judge announced Monday that he is leaving the Republican Party, citing the GOP's "pettiness and bigotry" toward the gay community. In a YouTube video announcing his reelection bid, **Judge Carlo Key** said the GOP is "at war with itself."

"Make no mistake: I have not left the Republican Party. It left me," Key said. "I cannot tolerate a political party that demeans Texans based on their sexual orientation, the color of their skin, or their economic status." Key will instead run as a Democrat. A court-at-law judge for Texas' Bexar County, Key referenced San Antonio councilwoman **Elisa Chan**, who was caught on tape earlier this year describing homosexuality as "disgusting to even think about."

Key concludes, "I will not be a member of a party in which hate speech elevates candidates for higher office rather than disqualifying them."

*"A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kickboxing." ~ **Emo Philips***

## THE SCREEN GOES DARK

Film critic **Stanley Kaufmann** rolled his final credits at 97; and despite his long career, he said he never got bored. "No matter how much I know about a film's makers or its subject before I go," he wrote, "I never really know what it's going to do to me – depress me with its vileness, or just roll past, or change my life in some degree, or some combination of all three, or affect me in some new way that I cannot imagine." **READ MORE**

"Besides," he continued, "I still get a thrill out of getting in free."



And **Anthony Hinds**, the producer behind the Hammer horror film franchise, which chilled many of my generation with films like *The Curse of Frankenstein*, *The Horror of Dracula*, *The Mummy*, and *The Quatermass Xperiment*, has died a less than horrible death in his sleep at 91.

He called himself, “a monster, a ghoul who exploits the basest, most degraded tastes in human nature for personal profit,” yet nonetheless told his next-door neighbor for over 20 years that he was a hairdresser.

They don't call it a bowel movement Down Under; they call it a bowel motion.”  
~ Phil's Phunny Phacts

### A COMIC'S COMIC

Planeteer **Rex Joyner** wrote that an **ARTICLE** in **The Comic Book Resources** website on the '50s anti-comics crusade has “a curious mention of one young fan who wrote to the **Kefauver Committee** in support of comic books: Phil Proctor.”

“We don't buy these mags because we have a thirst for blood, we buy them for the stories, the snap endings, the artwork, and because they deal with the unknown,” he wrote.

As I told researcher **Carol Tilley**, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois, I turned to satire because “I wanted to ridicule the blue-nosed, tight-assed censors” like the ones attacking EC comics, who also created *Mad* and *Panic*, that greatly influenced me.”

“It is part of human life to hate the man you have hurt.” ~ **Tacitus**

I distrust camels and anyone else who can go a week without a drink. ~ **Phil's Phunny Phacts**

### DON'T ASK

During a recent visit to a mental asylum, I asked the director how he determined whether or not a patient should be institutionalized.

“Well,” said the director, “We fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup, and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub.”

“Oh, I understand,” I said. “A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup.”

“No,” said the director. “A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?”

“Berrinches” in Mexican slang means, “spoiled little rich kids.” It's the term they use to describe American politicians.  
~ Phil's Phunny Phacts

### CONTRIBUTORS

**Keith Hebble, Bill Coombs, Alan Sharpe, Bob Joles, Dan Weisz, Jim Phillips, Kenneth Wilhite, Jr., Kristin Campbell, Michael Fish, Greg Snegoff,** and a fond farewell to *The Simpsons'*

**Marcia Wallace**, whose untimely passing was well noted here in Australia and the rest of the world. She was a gem.

“The pressures and complexities of the presidency have grown to a state where they are almost too much for one man to endure.” ~ **Harry S. Truman**

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Resist the headlong tumble into the next moment. ~ **Phil's Phunny Phacts**

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